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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

**A Comprehensive Study of Muslim American Discrimination by Legislators, the
Media, and the Masses**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

in

Political Science

by

Nazita Lajevardi

Committee in charge:

Professor Zoltan L. Hajnal, Chair
Professor Marisa A. Abrajano
Professor James Andreoni
Professor Matt A. Barreto
Professor James H. Fowler
Professor Seth J. Hill

2017

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The dissertation of Nazita Lajevardi is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Chair

University of California, San Diego

2017

DEDICATION

To my mother Sohayla

EPIGRAPH

But let us remember that we form a government for millions not yet in existence. I have not the art of divination. In the course of four or five hundred years, I do not know how it will work. This is most certain, that [Catholics] may occupy that chair, and [Muslims] may take it. I see nothing against it.

– William Lancaster

Delegate to the North Carolina Convention.

July 20, 1788

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Chapter 4 is currently being prepared for submission for publication. Lajevardi, Nazita. “The Media Matters: Muslim American Portrayals and the Effects on Mass Attitudes.” The dissertation author is the primary researcher and sole author of this paper.

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Brandy Kennedy, Adam Butz, **Nazita Lajevardi**, and Matthew Nanes. *Race and Representative Bureaucracy in American Policing*. In Production. Palgrave Macmillan. Expected in print June 2017.

Wong, Tom K., **Nazita Lajevardi**, and Michael Nicholson. “Immigrants, Citizens, and (Un)Equal Representation: A Randomized Field Experiment.” In *The Politics of Immigration: Partisanship, Changing Demographics, and American National Identity*. Tom K. Wong. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Steven P. Erie, Vladimir Kogan, **Nazita Lajevardi**, and Scott A. MacKenzie. “Paradise Regained: Nonpartisan Appeals and Special Election Rules in the 2013 Mayoral Race.” In *The Keys to City Hall*. Routledge, 2014.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

A Comprehensive Study of Muslim American Discrimination by Legislators, the Media, and the Masses

by

Nazita Lajevardi

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

University of California, San Diego, 2017

Professor Zoltan L. Hajnal, Chair

Overview of my dissertation. In my dissertation, I focus on one question: *to what extent do Muslim Americans face discrimination by legislators, the media, and masses?* As such, it provides the first comprehensive analysis of Muslim American political discrimination. This question is important because while anecdotal signs of increasing Islamophobia in each of these domains are pervasive, they are unsupported by quantitative evidence. In contrast, my dissertation uses quantitative methods, including survey experiments, field experiments, and text analysis of media transcripts, to systematically develop a nuanced theory of America's racial hierarchy that (a) takes into a

account a new group (Muslim Americans) and (b) demonstrates that racial groups exhibit malleable status relative to other groups over time.

Argument. There are 3.3 million Muslims in the U.S., about 1% of the total population. Attacks on Muslim Americans have become increasingly common, particularly since the attacks of September 11, 2001, and have surged in response to episodes of violence perpetrated by Islamic extremists and to the political rhetoric by GOP presidential nominee Donald Trump (Abdelaker 2016). Despite their increasing political relevance, however, very little is known about the treatment of and political attitudes towards Muslim Americans. I argue this rampant racialization of Muslim Americans – that is observable in the media, by legislators, and among White attitudes – has led to a shifting racial hierarchy where Blacks no longer are at the bottom, but which is malleable over time and in different contexts. The shift in mass attitudes has likewise moved the racial hierarchy to situate Muslim Americans near the bottom and has stark implications for their status in American democracy.

Part I. Through two audit studies, the first part of my dissertation evaluates the quality of legislator responsiveness to Muslim Americans. The first experiment was conducted on *all* state legislators and evaluates responses to individual constituents who ask for an application for a political internship. The second was run on state legislators from states with large Muslim American populations, and evaluated responses to requests for a legislative visit by a Muslim American religious leader in that state. These two experiments find widespread discrimination against Muslim Americans across the country. However, in states with larger Muslim American populations, Democratic legislators exhibit less discrimination, supporting a theory of substantive representation.

Part II. Next, my dissertation examines how public attitudes towards Muslim American candidates for political office. Little information exists on how the public assesses and treats Muslim candidates for political office. To fill this gap, I ran multiple

candidate evaluation survey experiments to answer the question: “Do individual Americans demonstrate discriminatory behavior against Muslim-American candidates relative to Whites?” In Democratic primaries, respondents are significantly less likely to vote for the Muslim American as opposed to the White candidate. In Republican primaries, however, Muslim American candidates were not statistically disadvantaged compared to their White counterparts. All of this supports the theory that minority Republicans can be uniquely advantaged.

Part III. Finally, my dissertation examines how television news has framed Muslim Americans in its broadcasts, relative to other groups, and how this coverage, in turn, affects public’s attitudes. For this project, I collected all available CNN, MSNBC, and FOX news broadcast transcripts from 1992-2015, conducted sentiment analysis, and ran a survey experiment on a nationally representative sample of Whites. I find evidence for a shifting racial hierarchy that has varied over time and has situated Muslim Americans at the bottom. I also find that negative coverage increases resentment towards Muslim Americans and increases support for policies restricting their freedoms, while positive coverage has no effect.

Conclusion. These bleak findings have stark implications for the quality of Muslim American participation and representation in American democracy. Moreover, my method of *reconstructing* America’s racial hierarchy through the sentiment each racial group experiences in its media coverage repositions groups and argues for a more fluid racial hierarchy that is tied to the events of the day.

Chapter 1

Introduction

There is growing concern about the status of Muslim Americans in the United States today. Polls over the course of the 2016 presidential campaign demonstrated that a new tide of Muslim American resentment is afoot. A YouGov survey conducted throughout the course of the campaign from March 24-25, 2016 found that only 19% of Americans had very favorable or somewhat favorable attitudes towards Islam, whereas 61% of Americans had very unfavorable or somewhat unfavorable attitudes towards them. Americans also were not blind to this increasing state of Muslim American discrimination. They generally agreed that discrimination against Muslims living in the United States was increasing as well. The same YouGov poll found that approximately half of all Americans across the general, socioeconomic, and political spectrums agreed that Muslim Americans are facing increasing discrimination.

Yet, despite widespread agreement that discrimination against Muslim Americans was increasing, a whopping 51% all Americans and 81% of all Republicans agreed that there should be “a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country’s representatives can figure out what is going on.” Moreover, the majority and 56% of Republicans and 35% of all Americans believed that Muslim

Americans were more sympathetic to terrorists than other American citizens. The majority of Republicans (74%) and almost half of all Americans (45%) agreed with then Republican Presidential contender Ted Cruz that “we need to empower law enforcement to patrol and secure Muslim neighborhoods before they become radicalized.” Many Americans also believed that Muslims should be subject to more surveillance than others, with 60% of Republicans and 38% of all Americans believe that Muslims living in the U.S. – no matter their citizenship status – should be subject to more scrutiny than people from other religious groups. Finally, the majority and 59% of all Americans and 83% of Republicans believe that the Islamic religion is more likely than other faiths to encourage violence among its believers.

This is the sociopolitical context in which my dissertation is situated. In this dissertation, I focus on one question: *to what extent do Muslim Americans face discrimination by legislators, the media, and masses?* As such, it provides the first comprehensive analysis of Muslim American political discrimination. It examines whether discrimination by elected officials, the media, and the masses inhibits Muslim inclusion in American democracy. While I do not posit that any one of my empirical tests is sufficient on its own to provide concrete evidence of discrimination against Muslim Americans, I contend that the totality of bias in each of these domains is convincing to bring evidence to bear on this fact.

This dissertation fills an important and unexplored gap in the literature despite anecdotal signs that Islamophobia is increasing in each of these domains. I use quantitative methods, including survey experiments, field experiments, and text analysis of media transcripts, to systematically develop a nuanced theory of America’s racial hierarchy that (a) takes into account a new group (Muslim Americans) and (b) demonstrates that racial groups exhibit malleable status relative to other groups over time. My bleak findings have stark implications for the quality of Muslim American participation and representation in

American democracy.

The chapters are organized as follows. In Chapter 1, I provide an overview of the existence of a loose Muslim identity prior to 9/11 and document their status in America today. I outline the rest of the dissertation as well. In Chapter 2, I evaluate the quality of legislator responsiveness to Muslim Americans through two audit studies. Together, these experiments point to widespread discrimination against Muslim Americans across the country. However, in states with larger Muslim American populations, Democratic legislators exhibit less discrimination, supporting a theory of substantive representation. In Chapter 3, I examine how public attitudes towards Muslim American candidates for political office through multiple candidate evaluation survey experiments. I find support for a nuanced theory of representation whereby Republican Muslim candidates fare better than their Democratic counterparts. In Chapter 4, I examine how television news has framed Muslim Americans in its broadcasts, relative to other groups, and how this coverage, in turn, affects public's attitudes. I find evidence for a shifting racial hierarchy that has varied over time and has situated Muslim Americans at the bottom. I also find that negative coverage increases resentment towards Muslim Americans and increases support for policies restricting their freedoms, while positive coverage has no effect. My conclusion provides argues that the rampant racialization of Muslim Americans – that is observable in the media, by legislators, and among White attitudes – has led to a shifting racial hierarchy where Blacks no longer are at the bottom, but which is malleable over time and in different contexts. The shift in mass attitudes has likewise moved the racial hierarchy to situate Muslim Americans near the bottom and has stark implications for their status in American democracy. I also provide an overview of future extensions and links to my future research research agenda examining the effect of discrimination on Muslim Americans.

1.1 Muslim Americans Before September 11, 2001

Little information about the political experiences of Muslim Americans exists before 2001. This is of course presumably due to the fact that a panethnic Muslim American identity did not form until the years after 9/11. Prior to the 9/11 attacks, Muslims in the U.S. were more likely to experience discrimination based on their national origin. For instance, the Iranian hostage crisis during the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and the TWA hijacking in 1985 in Lebanon resulted in widespread usage of racial slurs and ethnic epithets (such as “camel jockey”) against individuals of Middle Eastern origin (Elver 2012, Aziz 2009). Yet, this discrimination was tailored to a person’s country of origin, rather than to their religious background. During this time, Muslim Americans were generally perceived as model immigrants, with high education levels (the second-highest level of education among the major religious groups) and low crime rates. On other demographic factors, Muslim Americans mirrored and continue to mirror the American population as a whole.

1.2 Muslim Americans After September 11, 2001

Since September 11, 2001, U.S. domestic counter-intelligence efforts have been framed largely as targeting the transnational Muslim American terrorist. In the days and years after the terrorist attacks, Muslim Americans have become the victims of a great number of hate crimes, racial profiling, and discrimination by the American public, the mass media, and politicians (Bakalian and Bozorgmehr 2009).

The relationship between the US and Muslims deteriorated dramatically during this time. After 9/11, the U.S. has endorsed racial policies such as the USA Patriot Act, the establishment of the Guantanamo Bay Prison, the Iraq War, the Abu Ghraib prison abuse scandal, and the creation of the Controlled Application Review and Resolution program.

Abdo (2005) argues that these policies were racial in nature and were implemented with Muslims in mind, despite widespread obedience by Muslim Americans to police and law enforcement out of fear of punishment for noncompliance (Tyler et al 2010). The author contends that some of these policies stemmed from a fear by the American public that a lack of integration of Muslims into American mainstream would eventually lead to their radicalization on U.S. soil (Abdo 2005). These policies, however, have marginalized the Muslim American population. Abdo (2005) notes that Muslims are not strangers to unlawful detentions, deliberate security checks, and raids on their homes, offices, and mosques in the name of the war on terror and it is this attention on them as a whole that continues to foment this cycle of alienation (Abdo 2005).

1.3 Islam Today

Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world today. While there are between 1.6-2.1 billion Muslims, they constitute the second largest religious group behind Christianity.¹ In terms of their global importance, the Muslim population is forecasted to increase by 35% in the next 20 years.² Moreover, while the size of the Muslim American population is difficult to measure because the U.S. Census does not track religious affiliation, Muslims are estimated to constitute 2.6³ - 12 million⁴ people the U.S. today.

¹There are 1.6 billion Muslims in the world today: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/06/07/worlds-muslim-population-more-widespread-than-you-might-think/>. Accessed February 16, 2017. The CIA Factbook lists the largest religions of the world in the following order: Christian 33.39%, Muslim 22.74%, Hindu 13.8%, Buddhist 6.77%, Sikh 0.35%, Jewish 0.22%, Baha'i 0.11%, other religions 10.95%, non-religious 9.66%, atheists 2.01% (2010 est.) <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/xx.html>. Accessed February 15, 2017.

²<http://www.pewforum.org/2011/01/27/the-future-of-the-global-muslim-population/>. Accessed February 15, 2017.

³There are 2.6 million Muslims in the United States as of 2010. <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/01/27/the-future-of-the-global-muslim-population/>. Accessed February 15, 2017.

⁴Some estimates place this figure at over 12 million. https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/after-paris-and-california-attacks-us-muslims-feel-intense-backlash/2015/12/03/bcf8e480-9a09-11e5-94f0-9eeaff906ef3_story.html?utm_term=.2c8e0e866d0a. Accessed February 21, 2017.

Pew's population projections indicate that the number of Muslims in the U.S. will more than double over the next two decades, rising from 2.6 million in 2010 to 6.2 million in 2030 by their conservative estimates.⁵ During this time, Pew forecasts that the Muslim share of the U.S. population will grow at such a fast rate that Muslims will be roughly as numerous as Jews or Episcopalians today.⁶ By 2030 and in the next fifteen years, the U.S. is projected to have more Muslims than any European nation.

Muslim Americans are also a unique group to examine in American politics for several other reasons. First, they are one of the only groups where many of its members have been protected by a cloak of "whiteness," with little attention placed on them for since their arrival to the U.S (Tehrani 2007). Second, they are one of the only groups to have had this veil removed to experience tremendous prejudice in its place. Third, despite this new era of discrimination, Muslims have remained a relevant group in American politics. More than 1 million Muslims have registered to vote and have voted in elections despite being viewed as "election year outcasts" since 2001 (Zoll 2008, Baretto and Dana 2010). Yet, in the aftermath of 9/11, there has curiously been a dearth of American politics literature examining them.

1.4 Literature to Date on Muslim American Discrimination

Some studies have examined Muslim American political discrimination. The theoretical insights of each, while valuable in having laid the groundwork for future work, lack rigorous quantitative testing and do not lend themselves to the creation of a complete

⁵<http://www.pewforum.org/2011/01/27/the-future-of-the-global-muslim-population/>. Accessed February 16, 2017.

⁶<http://www.pewforum.org/2011/01/27/the-future-of-the-global-muslim-population/>. Accessed February 16, 2017.

theory of Muslim discrimination. In this section, I detail the existing literature on the treatment of Muslims by legislators, in the media, and by the masses, and outline key limitations of each.

1.4.1 Literature on legislator discrimination of Muslim Americans.

The literature on legislator discrimination of Muslim Americans is sparse. Only one study to date has measured substantive representation and its findings are limited to a unique point in time. The rest of the work on legislator discrimination is purely theoretical in nature. While this research is necessary to understand the dynamics that govern legislators' treatment of Muslims, they are not tested.

Testing substantive representation, Martin (2009) compares roll-call votes in the 109th Congress (2005-2006) to Muslims' policy preferences. The author examines the relationship between a congressperson's policy votes on 3 issue areas significant to Muslim Americans. He finds that the percentage of Muslims in a congressional district has a positive and significant effect on the probability that the district's representative will vote in keeping with their preferences on surveillance and domestic counter-terrorism votes (Martin 2009).

Martin's (2009) study is limited in a couple of ways, however. First, it does not cover a large enough time frame to determine if Muslims experience substantive representation outside of this cross-sectional moment in time, especially because surveillance and counter-terrorism policies have worsened over time (O'Connor and Jahan 2014). Second, it is limited in scope as it ignores votes on other issues that Muslim Americans may have substantively cared about at the time, such as the Iraq War and the Afghanistan War. Finally, while it lends support to substantive representation, it does not change that fact that the literature continues to lack a direct test of legislators' treatment of Muslim Americans.

Other literature on this topic tends to be theoretical in nature. Abdo (2005), for instance, presents a theory that legislators both proposed and endorsed racial policies such as the USA Patriot Act, the establishment of the Guantanamo Bay Prison, the Iraq War, the Abu Ghraib prison abuse scandal, and the creation of the Controlled Application Review and Resolution program. Tyler et al. (2010) extend this theory and argue legislators with discriminatory intent implemented these policies with Muslims in mind. While these non-empirical studies are rich in theory, they lack quantitative tests that measure how legislators actually treat Muslim Americans relative to the rest of the public. In this dissertation, I directly test whether legislators discriminate against Muslim individuals and communities.

1.4.2 Literature on media coverage of Muslim Americans

To date, two studies have analyzed media portrayals of Muslims. Both include a systemic analysis of newspaper transcripts and agree that after 9/11, Muslims began to face discrimination in the media. They differ, however, in the volume and timeframe of the articles they incorporate. Nevertheless, neither study attains a useful baseline measure of the media's pre-9/11 Muslim sentiment.

Nacos and Torres-Reyna (2002) analyze the news media's effect on the public's frame of Muslim Americans. In their study of the three largest New York daily newspapers, Nacos and Torres-Reyna (2002) analyze front-page coverage on Muslims during the 12 months before and 6 months after 9/11. They find that the impact of 9/11 on the news media was significant: while Muslims rarely made the front pages in the year before, 10% of the New York Times' front-page news stories featured Muslims in the subsequent 6 months (Nacos and Torres-Reyna 2002). While their results demonstrate that Muslims became a more salient group in the news media after 9/11, they do not answer a number of important questions about the tone of Muslim depiction in the media. Nacos and

Torres-Reyna (2002) show that coverage increases, yet they fail to identify any changes in sentiment. Additionally, because its focus is on the three largest print media outlets in New York, the sample is unrepresentative of the U.S. print media as a whole. Moreover, its sole examination of front-page news stories is biased towards sensationalist coverage of dramatic events such as terror attacks. Thus, while the Nacos and Torres-Reyna (2002) article is a good start to understand how the Muslim American news frame changed after 9/11, section 4(a) outlines how I intend to improve upon this analysis.

Like Nacos and Torres-Reyna (2002), Bail (2012) contends that 9/11 had a significant impact on Muslim portrayals in the media. In his study, Bail (2012) uses plagiarism detection software to compare 1,084 press releases about Muslims to 50,407 newspaper articles and television transcripts from 2001- 2008. Based on this data, the author argues that angry and fearful fringe organizations not only exerted powerful influence on the media discourse about Muslims in the aftermath of 9/11, but also ultimately became some of the most influential mainstream groups in the field (Bail 2012). Nevertheless, to more comprehensively assess how the media changed its portrayals of Muslims over time, sophisticated text analysis (such as Structural Topic Modeling) and sentiment analysis are needed. In chapter four, I analyze news coverage data that extends 20 years (1992-2015) and assess its tone.

1.4.3 Literature on the public's discrimination of Muslim Americans.

Few published studies have measured how the masses perceive Muslim Americans. Here, I discuss two studies: (1) candidate evaluation experiments and (2) results from a survey.

Candidate evaluation experiments are one way to measure how the masses evaluate minority representatives. Braman and Sinno (2009) conducted two of these exper-

iments on undergraduate respondents and examined their preferences. They provided respondents one of two mock newspaper articles on statewide elections, featuring candidates with distinct religious backgrounds (Braman and Sinno 2009). The fictional candidates were running for two political offices: State Attorney General and United States Senator. In both experiments, the challenger was a Muslim Democrat running against a Republican Christian. The authors found that respondents generally did not evaluate the Muslim and Christian candidates differently, except in the case of lax prosecution of a terrorism case. In my prospectus, I intend to improve on their research through a more convincing research design and representative sample.

Evaluations of the public's attitudes towards Muslims, in general, also constitute a fruitful direction of study to assess discrimination. Jung (2012) examines data from the American Mosaic Project Survey, which surveyed 2,610 respondents and asked them which religion they had the least respect for. Using simple cross-tabulations, Jung (2012) finds that a vast majority of Americans (75%) held Muslims in low esteem. Why Muslims are viewed in this manner, however, is left unexplored. Chapter 3 fills this gap through the development of two candidate evaluation experiments that test how the candidate's race, religion, party affiliation and the voter's party affiliation and racial resentment scale that measures potential explanations for these attitudes.

1.5 Theory

Scholars contend that minority groups enter a cycle of racialization from the moment they arrive in the United States. Unlike other minority groups, upon their entry to the United States, Muslims were not placed into the racial hierarchy. Instead, they were protected under a cloak of white privilege. Today, they are in a comparatively disadvantaged position, because in contrast to others, they have lost this status. I present

a theory that can be broken down into three parts, as follows:

First, prior to 9/11, Muslim-Americans were not a salient group. Rather, when they did face discrimination, it was on the basis of national origin. Muslims were protected under the law and given the privileges of “whiteness,” a rare feat given that many groups that are immediately racialized upon their arrival. Second, 9/11 and subsequent events have led to a massive shift in attitudes toward Muslim-Americans. As the frequency of negative Muslim portrayals increased (priming), these attitudes became commonplace. Third, this discrimination is so acute that surveys have shown that both Whites and Muslims perceive its existence.

The culmination of each of these points leads me to expect *actual* deep-seated discrimination. This section expands on this theory and presents its derivable hypotheses.

1.5.1 Pre 9/11 Muslim-American status

An evaluation Muslim-Americans before 9/11 is necessary to motivate my theory of discrimination. During this time, Muslims were considered White under the law.⁷ *Dow v. United States* was a landmark case decided in 1915 that gave Middle Eastern Muslims legal “White privilege.” In that case, a Syrian man, who was originally denied naturalization on the basis that a Syrian of Asiatic birth was not a free White person, was ultimately considered “White” under the law. The Fourth Circuit reasoned that some inhabitants of Asia, including Syria, should be considered “White” because they were so closely related to their European neighbors.⁸ Thus, given that many Muslims immigrated to the U.S. after *Dow v. United States* was decided, those of Middle Eastern descent were not immediately placed in to the racial hierarchy upon their entry. Rather, the courts allowed them to enjoy “White privilege” long before other groups were granted similar

⁷Dow v. United States, 226 F. 145, (4th Cir. 1915).

⁸Id.

liberties.

Prior to 9/11, Muslims were more likely to experience discrimination based on their national origin. For instance, the 1979 Iranian hostage crisis during the Islamic Revolution and the 1985 TWA hijacking in Lebanon resulted in widespread usage of racial slurs and ethnic epithets (such as “camel jockey”) against individuals (Elver 2012, Aziz 2009). Yet, this discrimination was tailored to a person’s country of origin, rather than to their religion.

During this time, Muslims were generally perceived as model immigrants, with high education levels (the second-highest level of education among the major religious groups) and low crime rates.⁹ On other demographic factors, they mirrored and continue to mirror the American population as a whole.¹⁰ Additionally, they were rarely discussed in the media. However, after 9/11, they became increasingly relevant and discussed. Thus, a pre-9/11 measure is empirically needed as a baseline to measure when their portrayals began and the extent to which they have worsened.

1.5.2 September 11, 2001 and subsequent events have led to a massive shift in attitudes toward Muslim-Americans.

Three factors have shaped and subsequently changed public views: (1) events themselves including 9/11 and subsequent events, (2) the media, and (3) legislators. I contend that these factors together have led to an increase in discrimination against Muslim-Americans.

The attacks on 9/11 and subsequent real-world events thrust Muslim-Americans into the national spotlight. These events led many Americans who had never given

⁹Muslims are considered affluent relative to other groups in the United States. <http://www.cfr.org/united-states/muslims-united-states/p25927>. Accessed March 16, 2015.

¹⁰<http://www.people-press.org/2011/08/30/section-1-a-demographic-portrait-of-muslim-americans/>. Accessed March 16, 2015.

Islam a thought beforehand to make sense of these incidents and the faith that ostensibly inspired them.

At the same time, legislators with information created narratives that they both directly and indirectly transmitted to the public. Through correspondences, speeches, newsletters, and media appearances, legislators contacted the public at large and provided them with information on Muslims. Over time, their discussion of Muslims became overwhelmingly negative.

Moreover, the media played a dual role in increasing discrimination against Muslims. First, it was a conduit for the political communications of others. Second, based on these messages, it generated negative frames that it disseminated to the public.

Finally, the public's attitudes toward Muslim-Americans have shifted since 9/11. Upon consulting the news, the public was often at the mercy of the media and other key political agents, which presented them with negative Muslim frames. Over time, their attitudes changed and translated into discrimination against Muslim-Americans.

1.5.3 Surveys have shown that the public has negative attitudes about Muslims and that Muslims perceive this discrimination

Legislators acknowledged the pervasive nature of Muslim-American discrimination after 9/11 within the very text of the USA Patriot Act (U.S. H.R. 3162 Title I, Sec. 102). Section 102 reads in part:

(a) Congress makes the following findings:

- (1) Arab Americans, Muslim Americans, and Americans from South Asia play a vital role in our Nation and are entitled to nothing less than the full rights of every American.
- (2) The acts of violence that have been taken against Arab and Muslim Americans since the September 11, 2001, attacks against the United States should be and are condemned by all Americans who value freedom.
- (5) Muslim Americans have become so fearful of harassment that

many Muslim women are changing the way they dress to avoid becoming targets.

The very fact that the legislation begins by discussing Muslim-American discrimination is telling of the reality, scope, and largesse of this phenomenon.

Surveys have shown that Americans view Muslims unfavorably. Despite being one of the most socioeconomically integrated groups, a 2010 Gallup poll found that Americans have sharp negative attitudes toward Muslims.¹¹ Even among those Americans who report not experiencing any personal prejudice toward Muslim individuals, one-third report having an unfavorable opinion about Islam (36%). Moreover, those prejudice toward Muslims, did not hold negative beliefs about religious minority groups in general. I expect that the public exports these attitudes to their treatment and evaluation of Muslims in politics and in everyday life.

There is evidence that Muslims feel the ramifications of these attitudes. A 2011 Pew Survey on this group reveals that they believe it became more difficult to be a Muslim after 9/11. They also believe that the government's anti-terrorism policies single them out. In the survey, the majority (52.02%) of respondents felt the government singles them out in its anti-terrorism policies. Only 33.93% did not believe the government's policies were targeted at them.

1.5.4 There is actual and deep-seated discrimination against Muslim-Americans.

The culmination of each of these elements is the existence of actual deep-seated discrimination against Muslim-Americans. Given the theory above, I derive the following general hypotheses:

¹¹<http://www.gallup.com/poll/157082/islamophobia-understanding-anti-muslim-sentiment-west.aspx>. Accessed on May 14, 2015.

General Hypothesis 1: Legislators discriminate against Muslims.

General Hypothesis 2: As evidenced in the frequency of their media portrayals, Muslims were not a salient group before 9/11 but became so afterwards. Once they became salient, the tone of the media changed and became negative.

General Hypothesis 3: The public harbors racially resentful attitudes towards Muslim-Americans.

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Chapter 2

Access to Politics: Discrimination in Muslim American Representation

Evidence that elected officials continue to underrepresent their constituents along racial lines is pervasive. Audit studies have found that public officials are racially biased in whether and how they respond to constituent communications (see Butler and Broockman 2011; Butler et al. 2012; Broockman 2013; Butler 2014; Distelhorst and Hou 2014; Carnes and Holbein 2015; Grose, Malhotra, and Parks Van Houweling 2015; White, Nathan, and Faller 2015; Einstein and Glick 2016). Yet, the existing scholarship has failed to assess the quality of Muslim American representation, which is one of the most salient and largely unanswered questions in the race and ethnic politics literature today.

Islam is the fastest growing religion in the United States and is predicted to become the country's second largest by mid-century. During this time, Muslims in America have simultaneously become increasingly demonized in the public sphere (Dana et al. 2017; Oskooii 2015; Kalkan et al. 2009; Sides and Gross 2013). Throughout the 2016 presidential campaign, Muslim Americans were situated at the forefront of the national discourse and received increased attention by elites. In the last year, the national focus on Muslim Americans peaked in part due to targeted attacks by Republican presidential nominees, Donald Trump and Ted Cruz. While Cruz called for the wholesale

policing of Muslim American neighborhoods, Trump ran on a platform that advocated for a ban on Muslims from entering the country, a national database of all Muslims in the United States, and the wholesale surveillance of mosques. Numerous leaders from across the ideological aisle have echoed this discourse and have made negative public comments about Muslim Americans in 2016. Republican Oklahoma State Representative John Bennett publicly stated, “American Muslims are a cancer that must be cut out of America,” while the Democratic mayor of Roanoke, Virginia called for the incarceration of Muslim Americans in internment camps.

This rhetoric raises questions about the quality of representation and responsiveness provided to Muslim American constituents by their elected representatives. While the above statements are observable signs of elite discrimination against Muslim Americans, empirical questions remain. In the aggregate, do representatives discriminate against Muslims Americans? Does a representative’s political party play a role in mediating how they treat Muslim American constituents? To what extent does socioeconomic status matter for Muslim Americans’ ability to escape political underrepresentation?

No large-n experimental study to date has examined the responsiveness of America’s public officials to Muslim Americans. This is a critical omission given the powerful role that elected officials play in representing their constituencies by providing basic constituent services to their electorate. Considering the ability of representatives to include – or conversely, exclude – groups from the political system, the rate and manner in which Muslim Americans are responded to by their legislators has important consequences for their status in American democracy and could be a marker of the widespread discrimination Muslim Americans face.

Similar to previous field experiments in political science, I undertook two studies on state legislators with putative constituent service requests using identifiably white and Muslim names in February 2015 and in August 2015. The first experiment was conducted

on all state legislators and reveals elected officials across the country are significantly less likely to respond to Muslim Americans compared to their white counterparts, regardless of party identification. The second experiment teases out a more nuanced finding: in states with large numbers of Muslims, Democratic representatives are, in fact, equally responsive to their Muslim constituents. I believe these studies contribute substantively important findings and offer several advantages over previous studies.

First, they assess the representation of Muslim Americans; a group previously understudied group in the literature. Second, they introduce a novel, qualitative, and non-randomized dependent variable to the literature: the helpfulness of the legislator's response. I argue that the helpfulness of a legislator's response can affect the ultimate distribution of benefits in subtle but important and underappreciated ways for representation outcomes. Third, they measure responsiveness in new domains of constituent representation, namely access to politics in the form of internships and legislative visits. Finally, they add nuance to previous understandings of responsiveness by verifying findings with varying levels of treatments.

My findings reveal a nuanced story of Muslim American representation in American politics. In the aggregate, the findings point to the existence of Muslim American political discrimination, regardless of their socioeconomic status. Exploring the helpfulness dependent variable, however, is revealing: when Muslim Americans receive helpful assistance from legislators, two things seem to matter: the education level of the Muslim contacting them and the size of the Muslim population in the state. In states with large Muslim populations, the results support a theory of substantive representation from some representatives: Democrats substantively represent Muslim constituents in those states where they compose a large number of the population.

Given the sparse and nearly non-existent literature on Muslim American substantive representation, the study offers both a novel theoretical approach and the first

comprehensive set of empirical findings on the topic.

2.1 A Theory of Strategic Representation

The examination of Muslim American political representation has become increasingly relevant. As anti-Muslim attitudes increase and restrictive politics targeting them have emerged, the examination of their political representation is crucial. Sixteen years after 9/11, the current political climate raises many questions about the prospects of Muslim American inclusion. The potential of ignoring Muslim American voices in the development and passage of the very laws designed to target them can raise questions about the viability of their representation prospects.

Extant research provides a strong foundation from which to derive expectations about responsiveness towards Muslim Americans. I expect that strategic legislators will expend their limited resources on their constituents when doing so has a chance of improving their odds of reelection. While some scholars have argued that race of the legislator matters for the substantive representation of racial minorities (see Griffin and Newman 2008; Butler and Broockman 2011), others argue that the party identification of the legislator can also be an important determinant (Frymer 1999; Grose 2011).

2.1.1 Why Muslim American Representation Should be Conditional on Party and Size

I contend that the representation of Muslim Americans by state legislators will be predominantly mediated by the legislator's party identification and by the size of the state's Muslim population. First, overall public sentiment paints a deteriorating picture of attitudes towards Muslim Americans. Survey evidence substantiates the existence of negative public attitudes towards Muslim Americans. A YouGov poll conducted

between March 24-25, 2016 found that 51% all Americans agreed that there should be a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until the country's representatives can figure out what is going on. Over one-third (38%) of the respondents said Muslims should be subject to more surveillance than people from other religious groups, and almost 6 in 10 respondents (59%) said the Islamic religion is more likely than other faiths to encourage violence among its believers. These negative attitudes were translated into policy with the November 2016 election of President Trump. According to a Gallup poll fielded January 30-31, 2017, 42% of Americans approved of Trump's order implementing a temporary ban on entry into the United States for most people from seven predominantly Muslim countries.¹ When disaggregated by partisanship, 83% of Republicans supported the order.² Given the brewing public sentiment towards Muslim Americans, my first hypothesis is as follows:

Hypothesis 1: All else equal, legislators will be less responsive to Muslims than they are to White constituents.

Second, when Muslim Americans vote in elections today, they overwhelmingly vote for Democratic candidates (Ayers 2007; Jalalzai 2009), although this has not always been the case. The development of a Muslim American political consciousness has undergone a relatively short history. The 2000 presidential election was the first election that saw the emergence of a Muslim American political identity. In that election Muslim Americans closed ranks behind President Bush and the Republican Party (Findley 2001; Barreto and Bozonelos 2009; Dana et al. 2011). This was due to a number of reasons. As Findley (2001) and Barreto and Bozonelos (2009) explain, the foreign policy issue of Jerusalem as the "undivided and undisputed" capital of Israel and their dissatisfaction

¹About Half of Americans Say Trump Moving too Fast. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/203264/half-americans-say-trump-moving-fast.aspx>. Accessed February 5, 2017.

²About Half of Americans Say Trump Moving too Fast. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/203264/half-americans-say-trump-moving-fast.aspx>. Accessed February 5, 2017.

with Joseph Lieberman, an Orthodox Jew, as the Democratic running mate, put the Muslim American vote in the Republican Party's reach.

There is also the undisputed fact that non-Black Muslims mirror, if not exceed Whites on socioeconomic dimensions³ that traditionally result in individuals leaning conservative. They report higher than average college education rates, household incomes above the national median (Barreto and Bozonelos 2009; Bukhari and Nyang 2004). Given these socioeconomic factors that are associated with increase civic participation, they could be expected to be politically useful as high propensity voters. Strategic politicians wishing to court high propensity voters and donors will be incentivized to recruit high socioeconomic status Muslims. This brings me to my second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: All else equal, legislators will be more responsive to Muslims who hail from a higher socioeconomic status than their counterparts.

However, the attacks on 9/11 caused many Muslim Americans to radically shift in their partisan identification from the Republican Party to the Democratic Party. Coupled with the passage of the Patriot Act and the high-profile American "wars on terror" in Iraq and Afghanistan, Muslim American support for President Bush and the Republican Party quickly dwindled (Jalalzai 2009, Table 1). In the last 16 years, studies have consistently found that Muslim Americans, no matter their socially conservative religiosity, lean Democrat in political contests (Jamal 2005). Over this time, their situation with the Democratic Party has remained consistent (see Barreto and Bozonelos 2009, Table 1). In no other contest was this as visible as in the 2016 Presidential election when Hillary Clinton, the Democratic Presidential nominee, ran on a platform of "standing up to anti-Muslim hatred and bigotry."⁴

³<http://www.people-press.org/2011/08/30/section-1-a-demographic-portrait-of-muslim-americans/>. Accessed March 16, 2016.

⁴<https://www.hillaryclinton.com/briefing/factsheets/2016/09/21/stronger-together-hillary-clintons-vision-for-muslim-americans/>. Accessed February 8, 2017.

This line of scholarship brings me to my third hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: All else equal, Democratic legislators will be more responsive to Muslims than are Republicans.

2.1.2 The State of Knowledge on Muslim American Representation

Research on the representation of Muslim American constituents is limited. For many years, the literature on legislator responsiveness evaluated substantive representation by measuring how aligned a legislator's roll call votes were with his minority constituents' preferred policy outcomes (see e.g. Miller and Stokes 1963; Cameron, Epstein, and O'Halloran 1996; Hero and Tolbert 1995; Kerr and Miller 1997). A nascent, though underdeveloped, body of research on the substantive representation of Muslim Americans provides a basis for theory building. One study to date has followed this line of empirical work and has assessed the substantive representation of Muslim Americans. Martin (2009) compares roll-call votes in the 109th Congress (2005-2006) to Muslims' policy preferences on 3 issue areas significant to Muslim Americans and finds that the percentage of Muslims in a congressional district has a positive and significant effect on the probability that the district's representative will vote in keeping with their preferences on surveillance and domestic counter-terrorism votes (Martin 2009).

Other literature on this topic tends to be theoretical in nature. Abdo (2005), for instance, presents a theory that legislators both proposed and endorsed racial policies such as the USA Patriot Act, the establishment of the Guantanamo Bay prison, and the creation of the Controlled Application Review and Resolution program. Tyler et al. (2010) extend this theory and argue legislators with discriminatory intent implemented these policies with Muslims in mind. However, while this literature is rich in theory, it lacks quantitative tests that measure how legislators actually treat Muslim Americans

relative to the rest of the public.

Three fundamental limitations impede rigorous theory development and hypothesis testing. First, the literature does not cover a long enough time frame to demonstrate that Muslims experience substantive representation outside of this cross-sectional moment in time. This is particularly troublesome due to the worsening of surveillance and counter-terrorism policies in recent times (O'Connor and Jahan 2014). With a study that is able to directly replicate the substantive representation findings over time, substantiating the state of Muslim American representation will be feasible. Second, much of the previous empirical literature is limited in its topical scope. The literature focuses on select issues that potentially mattered to Muslim Americans but ignores those that certainly were at the forefront of the collectives' minds, such as the Iraq War and the War in Afghanistan. Third, prior studies lend support to a theory of substantive representation, but do not include a direct test of legislators' treatment of Muslim Americans.⁵ Roll-call votes are problematic to measure because groups do not necessarily have monolithic preferences and there are often complex policy interests and confounding variables in play (Griffin and Newman 2007; Butler 2014), nor do they describe the actual interactions of legislators and constituents. Experiments, in contrast, make it easy to measure whether representatives are acting in the interest of the specific person contacting them with a question. Emails in audit studies often specifically ask for help. By extension, the specificity of these emails demand a response because the interests of the person contacting a public official are clear and straightforward (Butler 2014).

This article rectifies these challenges. The study includes two experiments conducted on state legislators at two time points. Second, the experiments test issues that are

⁵There is ample evidence in the comparative literature, however, to expect that patterns of substantive representation will occur when a mix, if not all, of the following three conditions are met. First, substantive representation may occur when the representative themselves is an ethnic minority (Bird 2010). Second, legislators' attitudes on ethnic-related issues are strongly related to partisan affiliation (Black and Hicks 2006b).

ordinary to constituents writ large, rather than for Muslim Americans in particular. And third, the two experiments – which test access to political internships and to legislative visits – have a direct and randomized test of substantive representation instead of roll-call voting; the first of its kind in the study of Muslim Americans.

2.2 Study 1: The Case of Access to Political Internships

I designed a test of how legislators' responses to individual constituents who ask for an application for a political internship to evaluate the hypotheses articulated above. I opted for this case over other plausible communications because the opportunity to access a political career is a unique form of participation that is infrequently studied in American politics. Though a sizeable amount of research concerns elites and political participation, little attention has been paid to the appointed public officials that work at the pleasure of congresspersons. The ability to work in one of these offices offers an amount of contact and persuasion that many elites have in American democracy. Access to politics through a political career is often a gateway through which different groups have a forum for participation in democracy. Without it, groups face an additional obstacle in garnering political victories that ensure that their rights are represented and in some cases, secure.

Field experiments testing the availability of access to the political forum are compelling because they demonstrate the extent to which our country has approached levels of equality in integrating groups in the political process. Finally, it is important to note that legislators themselves were not directly treated. Rather, I treat state legislators' email addresses. The responses that I received may have been sent by someone besides the legislator, yet because they received the constituency request message through an official communication channel, the persons responding did so in an official capacity.

Public service internships began during World War II, and are now staples in

political offices and agencies (Hennessey 1970, Gryski et al. 1987). Yet, scholars have largely ignored questions on the scope, structure, and strategies of political internship programs. In fact, there is no central source that manages access to internships at the state, local or national levels and there is thus no systemic way to allocate internships to prospective interns (Hedlund 1973). Rather, interested persons rely mostly on informal channels of communications and prior experiences with internship programs (Hedlund 1973).

Academics and professionals agree that the internship experience should be an essential part of education for public service because early internship programs have shown promising results in terms of developing administrative skills (Chauhan 1978). Interns in legislative offices are known as Stage 1 staffers. While they are the least coveted positions in the field due to the clerical tasks they entail, they are temporary and provide the intern with unprecedented access to the legislator and a political career. Most important, this work can progress to have important policy and career implications (Romzek and Utter 1996). For many, a legislative internship is the stepping-stone to working up the career ladder (Romzek and Utter 1996). The legislative internship is key because it signals their level of competence and that the representative trusts them as a member of their work group. During this period, the intern strives to be impressive enough to then become a Stage 2 or full-fledged assistant (Romzek and Utter 1996).

State legislatures, in particular, are a useful case to example because they are becoming more like the U.S. House of Representatives in terms of their professionalization and the resources they have (Rosenthal 1989, Kousser 2005). State legislators, like their counterparts in Congress, aggressively pursue political self-interest, by advancing their own political careers and the interests of their constituents (Van Horn 1989). To do so, they emulate the U.S. Congress even in their hiring of political interns to conduct their day-to-day business (Van Horn 1989). However, state legislators vary greatly in how they

provide internships. Not being as institutionalized as the U.S. Congress, state legislators make their email contact information public so that constituents can contact them directly. This is an implicit invitation for students to contact them with requests for internship positions. Moreover, at times, they explicitly post bulletins inviting students to apply for internships by emailing them directly.

Finally, with respect to external validity, I contend that emailing legislators directly with requests for political internships is not at all unusual. State legislators differ in the way they select their interns by state and by whether or not they are a Member of the Assembly or the Senate. Many state legislatures go so far as to insist that potential applicants for internships contact their representatives directly and ask for applications by email.⁶ Moreover, it is not unusual for legislators to have Muslim staffers. The U.S. Congress has a number of Muslim staffers, some of whom join the Congressional Muslim Staffer Association (CMSA). The CMSA is an employee association within the U.S. Congress that represents Muslim American interests and concerns. Presuming that Muslim Americans seek political internships and careers and how institutionalized the CMSA is within the U.S. Congress, it is not a long stretch to presume that Muslims would also seek internships in state legislative offices.

2.2.1 Experimental Design

To assess whether Muslims face political discrimination, I conducted an audit study of all state legislators in February 2015. Because prior to 9/11, Muslims in America were generally perceived as model immigrants, with high education levels (the second-highest level of education among the major religious groups) and low crime

⁶See Massachusetts State Assembly page for an example: <https://malegislature.gov/Engage/EducationalOpportunities/Internships>. Accessed June 14, 2015.

Table 2.1: Experimental Design

Fictional Alias	Block 1 Republican Legislators	Block 2 Democratic Legislators
White High Education Alias	945 legislators	718 legislators
White Low Education Alias	939 legislators	723 legislators
Muslim High Education Alias	938 legislators	724 legislators
Muslim Low Education Alias	939 legislators	704 legislators
<i>Total</i>	3761 legislators	2869 legislators

rates⁷ and because on other demographic factors, they mirrored and continue to mirror the American population as a whole,⁸ the audit study varied both the religion/race and education level of a fictional applicant for a legislative internship.

All treatments ask state legislators for an application for an internship in the legislator's office. The treatment groups are as follows: (1) Treatment 1: White name and low education, (2) Treatment 2: Muslim name and low education, (3) Treatment 3: White name and high education, (4) Treatment 4: Muslim name and high education. To test the effect of partisanship, I blocked on the legislator's party identification. I then randomly assigned one of the four treatments to state legislators within each block. Table 1 below displays the experimental design:

I e-mailed state legislators at their publicly available e-mail addresses using an audit study design. Each state legislator received an e-mail on one of three days in the same week during February 2015. I sent 6,630 emails to state legislators. To obtain their email addresses, I compiled a list from each state's Assembly and Senate website. These email addresses are the legislator's direct email address where they have designated to

⁷Muslims are considered affluent relative to other groups in the United States. <http://www.cfr.org/united-states/muslims-united-states/p25927>. Accessed March 16, 2015.

⁸<http://www.people-press.org/2011/08/30/section-1-a-demographic-portrait-of-muslim-americans/>. Accessed March 16, 2015.

be reached. While it is uncertain the state legislator themselves or their staffers (who are appointed public officials) are the ones to receive the emails, the staffers work at the pleasure of the elected official and are required to answer on their behalf. No office received both a control and treatment email. Each office received only one email from one of the four groups.

I used one template and varied the education level and race of the applicant. To vary the race, I used a putatively White alias and a putatively Muslim alias (Butler and Broockman 2011). My White alias was “Jake Thompson” and my Muslim alias was “Abdul Al-Nawad.” Box 1 displays the template I used with variations in bold:

(ABDUL AL-NAWAD/JAKE THOMPSON)

February 2, 2015

(jakethompson001@gmail.com/abdulnawad@gmail.com)

Attn: Hiring Staff
Representative __**(Legislator's Name)**____'s Office

Re: An Internship Position for Summer 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is **(Jake Thompson/Abdul Al-Nawad)** and I am 22 years old and recently **(finished community college/graduated from Harvard University)** studying Political Science. I was born and raised in __**(state legislator is in)**__ and I am very interested in working in your office as an intern to gain more experience in politics; as it is a career I would like to pursue in Washington in the coming years. I believe than an internship in your office would be an invaluable opportunity towards attaining that goal.

Can you please email me an application for an internship position in your local office for summer 2015?

Best regards,

(Jake Thompson/Abdul Al-Nawad)

Figure 2.1: Box 1: Experimental Design

2.2.2 Results and Discussion

In the aggregate, I find that state legislators significantly discriminate against Muslim Americans. Two coders collected the data on responsiveness. Given that their intercoder reliability was high (yielding a Cohen's Kappa score of: 0.8963), the rest of the analysis focuses on the results collected by Coder 1. Table 2 below displays the aggregated results below for my key dependent variable of interest: a response, in the form of an email, from the representative whom I contacted via email.

Table 2.2: Aggregate Responsiveness by Race/Religion Alias

Fictional Alias	Responsiveness
White Alias	10.06% (334/2986)
Muslim Alias	5.36% (117/3127)
Difference	4.7%***

These aggregated shifts in responsiveness are clear. Responsiveness, operationalized as whether the fictional constituent received an email response or not from the legislator or his staff, is the most commonly baseline dependent variable in this literature. In the aggregate, I find that Whites were significantly more likely to receive an email response from a legislative office, compared to their Muslim counterparts. The White treatment was significantly more likely to receive a response back from the state legislator they contacted than was the Muslim treatment. In the aggregate, legislators responded to the White alias at 10.06% and to the Muslim alias at 5.36%, a significant difference at the $p < 0.000$ level.

Next, when I disaggregate the treatments, socioeconomic status – operationalized here as low versus high education – appears to play no mediating effect. The Muslim aliases, no matter whether they signaled high or low education, did not significantly differ from their White alias counterparts.

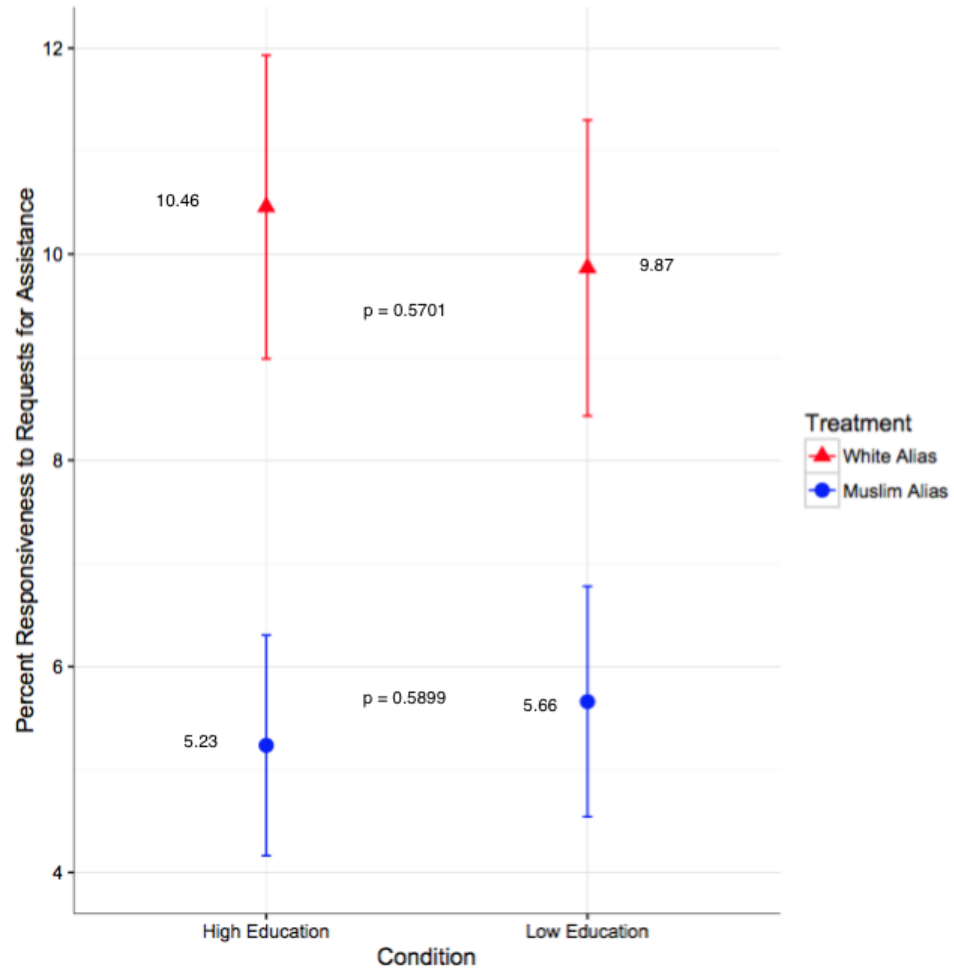


Figure 2.2: Percent Responsiveness to Disaggregated Treatments.

Education also played no role in differentiating responsiveness between the two White treatments and the two Muslim treatments, suggesting therefore that the signal offered to the legislator by the fictional treatment's name was a more powerful indicator of responsiveness. *White, high education* and *White, low education* received 10.46% and 9.87% response rates each, respectively, while the *Muslim, high education* and *Muslim, low education* treatments receive responses at 5.23% and 5.66%. In other words, the *White, low education* treatment does not significantly differ from the *White, high education* treatment, implying that education level is not a hindrance for those Whites seeking an internship, which in theory is the first step towards gaining access to politics. Thus, Hypotheses 1 and 2 are confirmed: in both aggregated and disaggregated tabulations, legislators were less responsive to the Muslim treatments than they were to the White treatments.

Next, I explore Hypothesis 3, which concerned the effects on a state legislator's partisanship on responsiveness. Because I blocked by the state legislators' party identification, I am able to provide an experimental assessment of whether Republicans or Democrats differed in their responsiveness to each of the four treatments.

Table 2.3: Disaggregated Responsiveness by Party

Fictional Alias	Republican Legislators	Difference (From WH)	Democratic Legislators	Difference (From WH)
White High Education Alias	10.37% (98/945)		10.58% (76/718)	
White Low Education Alias	9.05% (85/939)	1.32%	10.93% (79/723)	0.34%
Muslim High Education Alias	4.79% (45/938)	5.57%***	5.80% (42/724)	4.78%***
Muslim Low Education Alias	5.43% (51/939)	4.93%***	5.97% (42/704)	4.62%**

Contrary to my expectations, I find that both Democrats and Republicans discriminate against the two Muslim treatments. Moreover, Democrats and Republicans were *equally likely* to do so. Republicans responded to the *White High Education* applicant at 10.37%, while they responded to the *White, low education* applicant at 9.05%, a non-statistically significant difference. They responded to the *Muslim, high education* and the *Muslim, low education* treatments at 4.79% and 5.43% respectively, statistically significant differences. Similarly, Democrats responded to the *White High Education* treatment at 10.58% and the *White, low education* treatment at 10.93%, a non-statistically significant difference. Like their Republican counterparts, Democratic state legislators significantly discriminated against the Muslim treatments and replied to the *Muslim, high education* and the *Muslim, low education* treatments at 4.78% and 4.62% each, respectively. In other words, Democrats were no more significantly responsiveness to the Muslim treatments as were Republicans. This finding calls into question whether Muslims in America can expect to receive substantive representation from their Democratic representatives nationwide.

Table 4 below displays the heterogeneous treatment effects for the responsiveness dependent variable. In Models 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 I limit the sample to those legislators in states where the number of Muslims in the state exceeds 100,000 persons. With respect to the key variables of interest, Muslim applicant is an aggregate, binary variable that indicates that a legislator received an email from a Muslim applicant. When it is included in a model, White applicant is the outgroup comparison. Muslim, low education applicant is a binary, disaggregated variable that indicates that a legislator received an email from the Muslim, low education treatment. When it is included in a given model, White, low education applicant is the outgroup comparison. Muslim, high education applicant is a binary, disaggregated variable that indicates that a legislator received an email from the Muslim, high education treatment. When it is included in a given model, White, high

education applicant is the outgroup comparison.

Table 4 demonstrates that state legislators' discrimination rates against Muslims differ in states with small versus large Muslim populations. To understand where discrimination occurs, I divide the samples in Table 4 to legislators in states with large Muslim populations and those in states with small Muslim populations. States with Muslim populations above 100,000 persons⁹ were delineated as "Large Muslim Population" states and include: California, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Texas, and Virginia. All other states are coded as "Small Muslim Population" states.¹⁰

⁹These states include: California (272,814 Muslims), Florida (164,846 Muslims), Illinois (359,264 Muslims), Michigan (120,351 Muslims), New Jersey (160,666 Muslims), New York (392,953 Muslims), Texas (421,972 Muslims), and Virginia (213,032 Muslims). On average, U.S. states have 54,945 Muslims each.

¹⁰States with large Muslim populations had 1,071 legislators and states with small Muslim populations had 5,559 legislators.

Table 2.4: Results for Legislators in States with Large and Small Muslim Populations

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Muslim applicant	-0.315 (0.197)	-0.776*** (0.112)			-0.310 (0.198)	-0.776*** (0.113)			-0.289 (0.185)	-0.772*** (0.115)	-0.185 (0.209)	-0.822*** (0.139)
Muslim, high education applicant			-0.216 (0.204)	-0.831*** (0.135)			-0.204 (0.204)	-0.831*** (0.135)			-0.395 (0.215)	-0.723*** (0.130)
Muslim, low education applicant			-0.416 (0.247)	-0.723*** (0.128)			-0.417 (0.248)	-0.722*** (0.128)			0.479 (0.252)	-0.246 (0.159)
Republican					0.298 (0.247)	-0.339* (0.154)	0.302 (0.247)	-0.339* (0.154)	0.475 (0.254)	-0.246 (0.159)	-0.00582 (0.383)	-0.257 (0.152)
House member									-0.0104 (0.382)	-0.257 (0.152)		
Black percent in state									-0.0554 (0.0832)	0.00805 (0.0141)	-0.0552 (0.0831)	0.00799 (0.0142)
Asian percent in state									-0.0834 (0.119)	-0.00479 (0.0148)	-0.0819 (0.119)	-0.00479 (0.0148)
Hispanic percent in state									0.0147 (0.0261)	0.0321 (0.0255)	0.0141 (0.0264)	0.0321 (0.0255)
Presidential margin of victory (2012)									0.0680 (0.0507)	0.0136 (0.0160)	0.0678 (0.0508)	0.0136 (0.0160)
Constant	-1.938*** (0.227)	-2.267*** (0.139)	-1.938*** (0.227)	-2.267*** (0.139)	-2.107*** (0.306)	-2.085*** (0.158)	-2.109*** (0.306)	-2.085*** (0.158)	-5.103 (3.233)	-2.933*** (0.844)	-5.098 (3.231)	-2.930*** (0.846)
N	1071 LMP	5559 SMP	1071 LMP	5559 SMP	1071 LMP	5559 SMP	1071 LMP	5559 SMP	1071 LMP	5559 SMP	1071 LMP	5559 SMP

Standard errors in parentheses
SMP: indicates that the sample is limited to legislators in states with small Muslim populations (under 100,000)
LMP: indicates that the sample is limited to legislators in states with large Muslim populations (over 100,000)
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

At both the aggregate and disaggregate levels, the results demonstrate that the Muslim treatments do not experience discrimination in states where they compose a larger percent of the population. These results stay consistent throughout as I add control variables in Models 5-12. All else equal, legislators from states with large Muslim populations are more likely to respond to Muslim requests for internship applications than those from small Muslim populations. This implies that in those states where Muslims are numerous, Muslims can expect some substantive representation in terms of responsiveness.

One important contribution of this work is to introduce a novel, qualitative, and non-randomized dependent variable to the literature: the helpfulness of the legislator's response. While responsiveness is an appropriate first cut variable to examine, it lacks information on whether the response affirmatively helped the fictional constituent in achieving their desired goal. The "0" value in the binary responsiveness dependent variable reveals very little about the type of representation that a constituent receives. For example the "0" can pertain to a legislator's strategic choice or it can reveal their malice. In either event, scholars are unable to address what may be underlying the failure to respond.

The literature has previously operationalized several ways to measure whether the legislator and his staff have provided the constituent as "good" response. White, Nathan, and Faller (2015), for instance, focus on the accuracy of the response, whereas Einstein and Glick (2016) assess the tone of the response. In any event, as Costa (2015) notes, the common factor underlying these operationalizations is whether or not a public official's response is at all meaningful to the constituent.

The "accuracy of a response" and the "tone of a response" however do not assess whether the legislator's response meaningfully assisted the constituent. In this vein, I evaluate the helpfulness of a legislator's response. As a result, Coder 1 assessed the

helpfulness of the legislator's response to the constituent's request for an application for a political internship in the legislator's office. The dependent variable measures a different aspect of discrimination, previously underappreciated in the literature. The responsiveness dependent variable does not address the possibility that the differences in responsiveness have tangible consequences for the ability of the constituent to in fact receive a service. The helpfulness dependent variable explored here, on the other hand, provides the opportunity to tease out where malice may or may not have been at play in the non-randomized observations. Table 5 below depicts the heterogeneous treatment effects with the helpfulness of the response for those 521 responses received as a part of this experiment. It is important to note that the results below are based on those legislators who responded to the treatments. As a result, it is a selection of those who are already less likely to discriminate against these constituents. Finally, the dependent variable is binary and the models displayed are linear probability models.

Table 2.5: Results for Legislators in States with Large and Small Muslim Populations

	RH (Agg.)	RH (Agg.)	RH (Agg.)	RH (Agg.)
Muslim Alias	-0.0825 ⁺ (0.0467)	-0.123** (0.0364)		
White Low Education Alias			0.0443 (0.0540)	0.0339 (0.0435)
Muslim High Education Alias			-0.0311 (0.0645)	-0.0930 (0.0555)
Muslim Low Education Alias			-0.0889 (0.0612)	-0.119* (0.0500)
Republican		0.00154 (0.0379)		0.00223 (0.0382)
Black Population Size		-0.00535 (0.00329)		-0.00531 (0.00330)
Asian Population Size		-0.00436 (0.00638)		-0.00397 (0.00631)
Hispanic Population Size		-0.00223 (0.00575)		-0.00220 (0.00570)
Obama Margin of Victory (2012)		0.0113** (0.00358)		0.0111** (0.00356)
State Population Size		2.09e-08** (7.08e-09)		2.09e-08** (7.04e-09)
Constant	0.616*** (0.0415)	-0.0310 (0.164)	0.594*** (0.0548)	-0.0385 (0.164)
<i>N</i>	521	521	521	521
adj. <i>R</i> ²	0.004	0.160	0.003	0.158

Standard errors in parentheses

⁺ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Note: RH is a measure of whether the response was helpful or not.

Table 5 above reveals some important information for those treatments that received a response. In the aggregate, I find that Whites were significantly more likely to receive a helpful response compared to their Muslim counterparts. When I disaggregate these results in Model 4, however, I find that this discriminatory effect is connected to the *Muslim Low Education* treatment only. In other words, the *Muslim High Education* treatment was not significantly less likely than its White counterpart to receive a helpful response. Importantly, then, the socioeconomic background of the Muslim constituent seems to matter for the quality of representation they experience and offset the negative racial/religious signal translated by their name.

2.3 Lingering Concerns

The results from Study 1 point to some important conclusions. First, they suggest that Muslims lack substantive representation by their state legislators across the country. Even when taking account of the party ID of the legislator, Muslims continue to be ignored. The implications are disconcerting. Assuming that the lack of responsiveness with regards to a request for a political internship generalizes to policy, my findings suggest that the lack of attention paid to Muslim constituents and the inattention to integrating them into political careers can easily translate to support for negative policies targeting them. The findings may not be surprising, however, given the amount of discrimination Muslims in American ostensibly experience in American society today and that American social networks are strongly divided along racial and economic lines.

Despite these conclusions, lingering concerns remain. Given the heterogeneous effects observed in Table 4 in those states where Muslims compose a larger number of the population, it could be that the discrimination is only happening in states where they do not reside. This finding raises questions about where Muslims face deep-seated

discrimination. Previous studies have found that geographic patterns of interactions explain why some groups – those that are less likely to interact meaningfully with their neighbors – are often those who face greater levels of religious discrimination (Putnam and Campbell 2010).

One other concern is that the Muslim treatment was not very strong and direct. Study 1 sent an indirect signal of the individual’s racial/religious background because it simply provided the legislator with a name: either Abdul Al-Nawad or Jake Thompson. Given that the fictional applicant’s name was the signal of race/religion, it could be that the discrimination in responsiveness is geared at an ethnic group and not necessarily towards Muslims in America.

2.4 Study 2: The Case of Access to Political Internships

I ran a second audit experiment on state legislators in August 2015 to address two lingering questions on legislator discrimination of Muslim Americans. First, to what extent do Muslims experience representation in states with large Muslim populations? Second, do Muslims experience representation when they send a clear and direct signal of their faith? In Study 2, I address both of these questions. I contact those legislators in states with large Muslim populations and I also send a direct signal of the fictional constituent’s faith.

2.4.1 The Size of the Muslim Population

Study 1 highlighted the powerful relationship between the size of the Muslim population and the responsiveness that fictional Muslim applicants were able to experience. I explore this finding and incorporate it into Study 2’s design for several reasons.

The size of a state’s Muslim American population should matter for their quality

of representation. To date, it appears that the size of the Muslim American population has largely constrained their ability to influence policy as a voting bloc in national politics. This is partially due to the fact that the size of the Muslim population in the United States is quite small.

Nevertheless, it is nearly impossible to accurately generate information on the number of Muslims in America. Because the U.S. Census does not collect data on individuals' religious backgrounds, it is nearly impossible to estimate how many Muslims reside in America. That is one reason the estimates scholars rely on for Muslims range so widely, from 2 million¹¹ to 12 million¹² by some accounts.¹³ Moreover, Muslims are geographically concentrated within 8 states.¹⁴

Given this concentration, most Americans – legislators included – likely have very limited personal contact with Muslims. It could be then that there is ample opportunity for legislators to dismiss their Muslim American constituents and rely instead on the narratives of war, terrorism, and oil to which they are so often connected. Taking these lines of thinking in concert brings me to my fourth hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Legislators in states with large Muslim populations will be more responsive to Muslims than their counterparts in states with small Muslim populations.

¹¹“Muslims in America – A Statistical Portrait.” <https://iraq.usembassy.gov/resources/information/current/american/statistical.html>. Accessed January 30, 2017.

¹²“After Paris and California attacks, U.S. Muslims feel intense backlash.” https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/after-paris-and-california-attacks-us-muslims-feel-intense-backlash/2015/12/03/bcf8e480-9a09-11e5-94f0-9eeaff906ef3_story.html?utm_term=.19f1c60c3b1b. Accessed January 30, 2017.

¹³Most recently, Pew Research Center estimates that the size of the Muslim population totals 3.3 million individuals. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/01/06/a-new-estimate-of-the-u-s-muslim-population/>.

¹⁴The Association of Religious Data Archives estimates that in 2010 there were only 8 states with 100,000 Muslims or more. These states include: California (272,814 Muslims), Florida (164,846 Muslims), Illinois (359,264 Muslims), Michigan (120,351 Muslims), New Jersey (160,666 Muslims), New York (392,953 Muslims), Texas (421,972 Muslims), and Virginia (213,032 Muslims). According to their estimates, U.S. states have 54,945 Muslims on average. http://www.thearda.com/ql2010/QL_S_2010_1_28c.asp. Accessed February 2, 2017.

As previously mentioned, one potential limitation of Study 1 is that the Muslim treatment was not very strong and direct. Study 1 loosely implied that 2 of the 4 fictional applications was Muslim through a name that was ostensibly Middle Eastern, Arab or Muslim sounding. Yet, Muslim American identity is a recently constructed phenomenon. Prior to 9/11, individuals we refer to as “Muslim American” today were much more likely to be identified and grouped by their national origin. Since 9/11 and over the past sixteen years with the increased attention by legislators, the masses, and the media on Muslim Americans, they have become a salient and panethnic outgroup.

I provide a direct and clear signal of the respondent’s faith in Study 2 to address this concern. Prior audit studies on American representatives have failed to incorporate Muslims in their assessment of discrimination. Adida, Laitin, and Valfort (2010) are the first to have incorporated Muslims into their audit study. Their signal of religious identification was through (1) the fictitious resume holder’s name and (2) through volunteer activity at an Islamic foundation. Their study reveals that the Muslim applicant was significantly less likely than her Catholic counterpart to receive a positive response.

Building off of the Adida, Laitin, and Valfort (2010) study, I randomize my requests for a legislative visit from either “Pastor John Rogers” or from “Imam Yassir Siddiqui.” Because I directly situate my request as helping the individuals’ respective “congregations,” I ensure that any response – and any helpful response at that – is provided with the knowledge of their religious backgrounds.

2.4.2 Legislative Visits as a Type of Constituency Service

Audit experiments often ask elected officials for a specific service. The specificity of a request is necessary because the interests of the contacting person are clear and straightforward (Butler 2014). As a result, measuring the legislator’s reaction is much

more precise.

Legislative visits are a valuable form of constituency service that legislators provide to their constituents that benefit both parties. Elected officials gather valuable information about their constituents' opinions and preferences during legislative visits (Butler 2014). Legislative visits have long been sought-out by community leaders, PAC organizers, and by individual constituents (Chin, Bond, and Geva 2000). They are a revealing constituency service request because the legislator and his staff must decide not only to respond to the person asking for the visit but also to determine whether or not they would like to expend a scarce and strategic resource: time. Study 2 then is asking a legislator for their *time* to discuss how to better integrate a Christian or a Muslim congregation into the community, the results of which will highlight a very strategic decision made on behalf of the legislator.

2.4.3 Experimental Design

This second study varies the religious affiliation of the fictional applicant to test whether elected representatives discriminate against the Muslim American community in legislative visits. Legislators were randomly assigned to each of these two treatments in either the Republican block or the Democratic block, displayed in Table 6 below.

Table 2.6: Study 2 Experimental Design

Fictional Alias	Block 1 Republican Legislators	Block 2 Democratic Legislators
Christian Pastor Alias	314 legislators	308 legislators
Muslim Imam Alias	314 legislators	308 legislators
<i>Total</i>	628 legislators	616 legislators

Legislators in Study 2 randomly received an email either from “Pastor John Rogers” or from “Imam Yassir Siddiqui,” as evidenced in Table 7 below. The two treatments send a direct signal of their faith, their representation of congregations in the legislator’s state, and ask for a moment of the legislator’s time – an incredibly valuable resource – to discuss how to empower and integrate their respective congregations.

Table 2.7: Experiment 2 Template

<p>(1) Dear Representative -----,</p> <p>(2) My name is (Pastor John Rogers /Imam Yassir Siddiqui).</p> <p>(3) I am a local (Christian/Muslim) leader, here in __(insert state)___.</p> <p>(4) I am writing you to ask for a moment of your time and to schedule a legislative visit so that I can come discuss ways to better integrate my congregation in the district.</p> <p>(5) Any assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated.</p> <p>(6) Sincerely,</p> <p>(7) (Pastor John Rogers/Imam Yassir Siddiqui)</p> <p>Note: Bolded items were manipulated.</p>

Overall, 35.5% of my requests received responses. Table 8 below displays the aggregated experimental results.

The differences in responsiveness to the Muslim versus Christian treatment are striking and indicate that even in states where Muslims comprise large numbers, they continue to face discrimination. As Table 8 below demonstrates, I find that the Pastor

Table 2.8: Responsiveness by Religion Alias

Fictional Alias	Responsiveness
Christian Pastor Alias	42.12 % (262/622)
Muslim Imam Alias	28.94% (180/622)
Difference	13.18%***

treatment received a response 42.12% of the time while the Imam treatment had a 28.94% response rate.

In other words, the Muslim alias was 13.18% less likely to receive a response as their Christian counterparts.

Nevertheless and unlike Study 1, Study 2 demonstrated important variations in responsiveness by Party. I blocked by the party identification of the legislator, the results of which are displayed in Figure 3 below:

The findings by party present a nuanced and positive story for Muslim Americans. Returning to Hypothesis 3 and the ability of Muslim American communities to attain substantive representation from their Democratic legislators, the story reveals that Muslim communities are receiving substantive representation from Democratic legislators in those states where they compose large numbers of the population. Democrats responded to the Pastor treatment 32.79% of the time and to the Imam treatment 31.36% of the time, a non-statistically significant difference. Republicans were 18.48% less likely to respond to the Imam alias, compared to the Pastor counterpart.¹⁵

¹⁵This raises questions about whether or not a 26.75% response rate to the Imam treatment by Republicans should be viewed in complete negative terms. On the one hand, the 26.75% response rate to the Muslim treatment in Study 2 and in states where Muslims comprise large numbers is significantly higher than the 5.11% response rate exhibited to the Muslim treatments in Study 1. On the other hand, however, Republicans were almost twice as likely to respond to the non-Muslim treatments as to the Muslim treatments. Future studies should exploit this discrepancy and observe whether responsiveness to Muslim treatments is similar to other racialized minorities, such as Hispanics, Asian Americans, and African Americans.

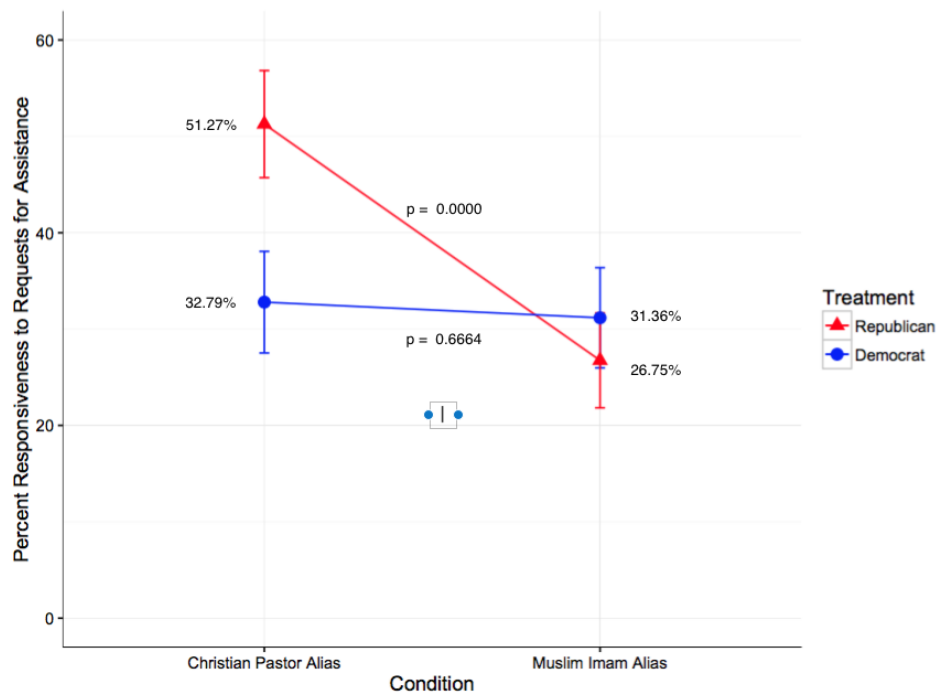


Figure 2.3: Percent Responsiveness to Treatments by Party Blocks.

Next, I evaluate the new helpfulness of the legislator's response dependent variable that I have introduced in this paper. Of the 1244 emails that were sent, the fictional aliases received a total of 442 responses. Coder 1 evaluated the helpfulness of these 442 responses and the conclusions are rather striking. The Imam treatment received 180 responses and of those responses, 148 or 82.22% were helpful. The Pastor treatment received 262 responses and of those, 50% were helpful. Table 9 displays the heterogeneous treatments effects below.

Table 2.9: Study 2 Heterogeneous Treatment Effects

	Response (Agg)	Response (Agg)	RH (Agg)	RH (Agg)
Muslim Leader Treatment	-0.132** (0.0303)	-0.127** (0.0302)	0.324** (0.0741)	0.327** (0.0771)
republican		0.0533 (0.0399)		0.0328 (0.0491)
Black Population Size		0.0204*** (0.000499)		-0.00535 (0.00388)
Asian Population Size		0.0215*** (0.000674)		0.0151** (0.00365)
Hispanic Population Size		-0.00627*** (0.000501)		-0.00523* (0.00154)
Obama Margin of Victory (2012)		-0.00971*** (0.00110)		-0.0119** (0.00270)
State Population Size		5.18e-09*** (4.75e-10)		7.29e-09** (1.74e-09)
Constant	0.421*** (0.0296)	0.567*** (0.0707)	0.492*** (0.0456)	1.116** (0.228)
<i>N</i>	1244	1244	442	442
adj. <i>R</i> ²	0.018	0.039	0.100	0.106

Standard errors in parentheses

+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 9 above introduces an important and nuanced finding about the quality of Muslim American representation in states with large numbers of Muslims. While the Muslim treatment is less likely than the Christian treatment to receive a response (Models 1-2), it is significantly more likely to receive that is helpful when it does in fact receive one (Models 3-4). This is true for responses received by the Muslim treatment from both Republican and Democratic legislators alike.

Of the responses received by the Muslim treatment, 82.14% of those sent by Republicans and 82.29% of those sent by Democrats were helpful, a non-significant difference. The Christian treatment reveals a different pattern, however. Republicans

were significantly more likely to provide the Christian treatment with a helpful response as were Democrats; 54.03% of Republican responses were helpful, compared to only 43.56% of the Democratic responses.

Together, these findings demonstrate that Muslim communities may very well be experiencing substantive representation in states where they compose large numbers. Study 2 reveals that they receive non-discriminatory and particularized attention from their Democratic legislators. However, when they do experience responses from Republican legislators, they are equally helpful in their responses as are Democrats. All of this reveals important patterns about the patterns and quality of Muslim American substantive representation.

2.5 Implications and Conclusion

Muslim Americans are an increasingly salient group worthy of study for those concerned about the quality of representation in American democracy. Since 9/11, they have become demonized and are now situated at the bottom of America's racial hierarchy (Lajevardi 2017). The increasing amount of attention on them in the national discourse may have had stark implications for their ability to access representation by elected officials.

In this article, I introduce two audit studies that assess the factors that matter for Muslim American substantive representation. In the aggregate and across the country, Study 1 reveals that Muslims in America face considerable discrimination by state legislators, regardless of party identification. However, the size of the Muslim population in a given state matters for whether the fictional constituent receives a response. Study 1 also reveals that when legislators do in fact assist Muslim Americans, the socioeconomic level of the contacting Muslim appears to offset discrimination as to whether or not the

response received is helpful.

Study 2 builds on Study 1 and assesses responsiveness to Muslim versus Christian leaders in states where Muslims constitute large numbers of the population. Study 2 reveals a nuanced story of substantive representation: Democrats provide Muslims and their Christian counterparts equal levels of substantive representation. In these states, the party identification of the legislator plays an important role in determining whether the Muslim alias received a response. Moreover, when they are responded to, Muslims are significantly more likely than their Christian counterparts to receive helpful responses from both Democrats and Republicans.

These studies are the first to provide an empirical basis for measuring Muslim American representation across a multitude of observations. They suggest that while Muslims face rampant discrimination across the country, they can expect representation from Democratic legislators in states where they constitute large numbers.

Chapter 2 is currently being prepared for submission for publication. Lajevardi, Nazita. "Access to Politics: Discrimination in Muslim American Representation." The dissertation author is the primary researcher and sole author of this paper.

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Chapter 3

Can Ahmed Win? Examining American Attitudes Towards Muslim Candidates

3.1 Abstract

How do race and religion interact in candidate evaluation? Few would argue that the race of a political candidate has not mattered for voter evaluation throughout American history. Early studies were quick to find that white voters were reluctant to support Black candidates and more recent studies have found that Latino candidates also suffer a penalty at the hands of white voters. While studies have explored whether this is a race or party effect, the underrepresentation of racial minorities in institutions has important consequences for their positioning in American democracy. The election of Barack Obama, the questioning of his religious identity, and the purchase of the birther movement, moreover, raise important questions about the evaluation of a previously unexplored group: Muslim Americans. Yet, little information exists on how the public assesses and treats Muslim candidates for political office. To fill this gap, I employ two candidate evaluation survey experiments varying the party, race, and religion of fictional candidates in a primary election to answer the question: “Do individual Americans demonstrate discriminatory behavior against Muslim American candidates relative to

Whites?” In Democratic primaries, I find that respondents are significantly less likely to vote for the Muslim American as opposed to the White candidate. In Republican primaries, however, Muslim American candidates were not statistically disadvantaged compared to their White counterparts. In a robustness study, I tease out the race and religion signal and find that it is the signal of a candidate’s religion and not their race that is responsible for this discrimination. All of this supports the theory that no matter their racial background, Democratic Muslim candidates for political office fare worse than their non-Muslim counterparts. Finally, given that they may be the more disadvantaged than other minority candidates running for political office when they are Democrats, this study also raises concerns for Muslim American candidates’ prospects in American democracy.

3.2 Introduction

In the aftermath of the 2016 presidential election, it is abundantly clear that Muslim Americans not only experience widespread discrimination and persecution in American politics, but may also be situated at the bottom of America’s racial hierarchy. They are regularly depicted as potential threats to American culture and national security, and in the wake of President Trump’s election, face increasing political scrutiny and discrimination.

One way Muslim Americans can enhance their position in American politics, however, is to elect representatives who descriptively represent them. For other racial minorities, the race and ethnic politics literature has demonstrated that descriptive representation enhances their substantive representation (Mansbridge 1999; Griffin and Newman 2008; Hajnal 2009a; Preuhs 2005, 2007; Rouse 2013). This is easier said than done, however. What remains true is that while the United States is a diverse society, this

variation is not reflected in its democratic institutions. Existing scholarship demonstrates that political representatives continue to descriptively and substantively underrepresent minorities across state and federal legislature. Much of the literature moreover, has found that racial bias is the key variable explaining discrimination in voting behavior (Tesler and Sears 2010; Kam and Kinder 2012; Kinder and Dale-Riddle 2012; Layman, Kalkan and Green 2014).

Candidate evaluation experiments are one critical approach to experimentally isolate the causal link between vote choice and underrepresentation. These results from these experimental studies have echoed findings from previous observational studies about minority candidates. Though these experiments are scarce, they consistently find that Whites evaluate African American, Latino, and Asian American candidates – especially when they are Democrats – more negatively than Whites (Terkildsen 1993; Sigelman et al. 1995; Reeves 1997; Kam 2007; Philpot and Walton 2007; Iyengar et al. 2010; McConaughy et al. 2010; Weaver 2012; Stephens 2013; Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014; Hainmueller et al. 2014; Lerman et al. 2015 and Visalvanich 2016; Abrajano et al. in progress).

Less clear is how voters evaluate Muslim American candidates because very little information exists on the public's attitudes towards Muslim American candidates seeking public office. What is clear, however, is that Muslim American candidates may face old-fashioned racism. Surveys have shown that Americans view Muslim Americans unfavorably. Despite being one of the most socioeconomically integrated groups, Americans negative attitudes toward Muslims have only intensified and worsened over time. And given President Obama's significant drop in approval ratings in the last two years of his presidency and his ever-present association with Islam and the birther movement, there may be little chance that Americans will vote for Muslims.

Given this climate, three questions remain. First, do ordinary Americans discrim-

inate against Muslim American candidates relative to Whites? Second, does a Muslim candidate's race – i.e. whether they are a White Muslim, Arab Muslim, and Black Muslim – matter for this evaluation? And finally, does the Muslim candidate's party identification affect their prospects for governance?

To answer these questions, I conducted two candidate evaluation survey experiments varying the party, race, and religion of fictional candidates in a hypothetical primary election for congressional office.

In the aggregate, my findings demonstrate that ordinary Americans discriminate against Muslim American candidates compared to Whites, all else equal. A Muslim candidate's race, moreover, plays no role in mediating this discrimination in Democratic primaries. White Muslim, Arab Muslim, and Black Muslim candidates all suffered a penalty in vote choice and likelihood of winning in Democratic elections.

There is nuance in how Muslim candidates perform based on partisanship. My findings causally indicate that Muslim candidates fare better in Republican primaries. There is no statistically significant difference in votes and likelihood of winning between the White candidate and the White Muslim, Arab Muslim, and Black Muslim candidates. These results reiterate and extend an important finding in the race and ethnic politics literature – that minority Republican candidates for office fare better than their Democratic counterparts (Barreto 2007) – to Muslim Republican candidates.

Finally and in a robustness experiment to tease out the effect of a candidate's Muslim identity (communicated through their name) and their racial identity (communicated through their picture), I run a replication experiment on a national sample of Americans. Respondents are randomly assigned to the same fictional Democratic primaries as in the previous experiment, but are also randomized into treatments where the three "Muslim" candidates only send a race signal and do not send a religion signal. In other words, these three treatments present the same photos as the previous three "Muslim candidate"

treatments but instead of signaling religion through the candidate's name, each candidate has an Americanized name instead. While I am unable to replicate the finding that respondents discriminate in vote choice between white and Muslim candidates, I replicate the finding that Muslim candidates – no matter their race – are viewed as faring worse than their White counterparts in likelihood of winning evaluations. My findings also causally demonstrate that it is the religion and not the race effect that is driving this discrimination: Muslims – no matter their race – were significantly less likely to be viewed as likely to win. When the religion signal was removed, this significance was eliminated across the board.

These results provide evidence for the disadvantaged position of Muslim Americans in American democracy. I find that Muslim American candidates for political office – no matter their race – experience actual deep-seated discrimination by the masses who are unwilling to vote for them and find them unlikely to win elections. The only mediating effect for Muslim American candidates is their partisanship. The totality of these results suggests that variations in mass preferences for Muslim American candidates is largely driven by their party and religion and not by their racial background.

3.3 Background

September 11, 2001, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the rise of ISIS, the election of Donald Trump, and the implementation of executive orders targeting Muslim Americans since his inauguration have raised concerns about Muslim American representation. Anecdotal accounts demonstrate that they are largely marginalized by political representatives and the American public alike and could have very easily lost more status than has any other group in modern times.

With the nomination and election of Donald Trump, resentment towards Muslim

Americans has arguably translated into concrete policies affecting them. On Friday, January 27th, President Trump signed Executive Order 13769, which was entitled “Protecting the Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into the United States.” The order was widely cited as a de facto Muslim ban as it barred the entry of individuals from seven predominantly Muslim countries into the United States. Some outlets estimated that before the order was ruled unconstitutional by the 9th Circuit on February 9, 2017, it had directly and indirectly affected 100,000 individuals.¹

But these recent attitudes towards Muslim Americans did not develop in a vacuum. Americans have long questioned President Obama’s ties to Islam. In 2012, a staggering number and 43% of Republicans in a Gallup poll stated that they are certain President Obama is a Muslim.² These doubts about the President’s religion clouded the discourse throughout the 2016 election. By 2015, this segment of the Republican Party appeared largely responsible for gathering around Trump’s candidacy for the Presidency. A 2015 Public Policy Polling Poll found that Trump was benefiting from a part of the GOP that believed that Barack Obama was a Muslim, with 66% of Trump voters believing he is a Muslim and 61% thinking Obama was not born in the US.³ This same poll hinted at these individuals’ support for strong policy backlash as well; 63% of Trump supporters at the time reported wanting to amend to Constitution to eliminate birthright citizenship.

Today, these voices are deafening. They reveal an overemphasis on Muslims and by extension, the Muslim American population, which the American public and news media is discussing more than any other racialized group in America today.

¹“Justice Dept. lawyer says 100,000 visas revoked under travel ban; State Dept. says about 60,000.” https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/government-reveals-over-100000-visas-revoked-due-to-travel-ban/2017/02/03/7d529eec-ea2c-11e6-b82f-687d6e6a3e7c_story.html?utm_term=.a90e6c669b0d. Accessed February 20, 2017

²http://www.salon.com/2015/09/01/new_poll_indicates_exactly_whos_supporting_donald_trump_and_the_gop_should_be_worried/. Accessed February 14, 2017.

³“Trump Supporters Think Obama is A Muslim Born in Another Country.” <http://www.publicpolicypolling.com/main/2015/08/trump-supporters-think-obama-is-a-muslim-born-in-another-country.html>. Accessed February 14, 2017.

Moreover, these attitudes and policies are arguably being shaped and enacted quickly, affecting millions of Muslims across America and around the world. Given all of this, I expect deep-seated that the American public exhibits deep-seated discrimination to Muslim Americans. To ensure that the current tide of anti-Muslim rhetoric and policies do not escalate even more, Muslims in America require representation among elites.

3.4 Muslim American Representation

Nevertheless, empirical research on Muslim American representation is limited. Currently, there are two Muslim American Members of Congress: Keith Ellison (D, MN-5) and Andre Carson (D, IN-7). But it remains unclear how many Muslim state legislators there are in America. On its face, we know these legislators make a difference through symbolic representation by frequently discussing and defending the rights of Muslim American on their websites, twitter feeds, and in interviews. But scholars still do not know whether having a Muslim American in office yields better representation for this marginalized group. Martin's (2009) study is the only article to date that has examined Muslim American substantive representation. Martin (2009) compares roll-call votes in the 109th Congress (2005-2006) to Muslims' policy preferences on three issue areas significant to Muslim-Americans. Martin (2009) finds that the percentage of Muslims in a congressional district has a positive and significant effect on the probability that the district's representative will vote in keeping with their preferences on surveillance and domestic counter-terrorism votes.

However, recent statements by Democratic elites throughout the course of the recent presidential election campaign raise concerns about whether Democrats continue to be a source of representation for Muslim Americans. Democratic political leaders made negative public comments about Muslim Americans during the 2016 electoral

cycle, with the Democratic mayor of Roanoke, Virginia calling for the incarceration of Muslim Americans in internment camps⁴ and even Hillary Clinton, the Democratic presidential nominee, continuously framed Muslims solely in terms of national security with her comments indicating that American Muslims need to be a part of “our eyes and ears on our front lines.”⁵

Given that American Muslims do not appear to be receiving unwavering support and given that they are the overwhelming target of racialized policies in American politics today, it could be that the only way for this group to have a chance at representation is to be able to have a voice in shaping the policies that are affecting them as political representatives themselves. With the election of American Muslims, both the interests and protection of this small but increasingly important group can be achieved.

I expect Muslim American candidates to face discrimination on several dimensions, however. Some of these dimensions will be on the candidate-side of the evaluation equation and others will be on the voter-side of the equation.

3.4.1 Candidate-Level Characteristics

Beginning with candidate characteristics, I first expect that the candidate’s Muslim identity will likely affect voters evaluation of them. The electoral importance of political candidates’ racial and social characteristics is particularly striking in contemporary American politics. Like their racial background and partisanship, a candidate’s religion may also matter to voters who rely on information shortcuts about candidates to make political decisions (Brady and Sniderman, 1985; Popkin, 1994). Voters who consider the

⁴“Roanoke Mayor David Bowers: Reject refugees like U.S. interned Japanese.” https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/virginia-politics/roanoke-mayor-david-bowers-reject-refugees-like-us-interned-japanese/2015/11/18/9714681a-8e34-11e5-acff-673ae92ddd2b_story.html?utm_term=.3a79225457fb. Accessed July 31, 2016.

⁵“Hillary Clinton has an unfortunate way of talking about American Muslims.” <https://qz.com/814438/presidential-debate-hillary-clinton-contributes-to-anti-muslim-bias-in-the-way-she-talks-about-american-muslims/>. Accessed February 14, 2017.

social characteristics of candidates as they make these decisions can use a candidate's ties to Islam as an electoral shortcut in their evaluations. I expect that the situation of Muslims at the bottom of America's racial hierarchy and their position outside of the country's cultural mainstream will render a candidate's Muslim background a powerful and negative electoral cue.

Hypothesis 1: Muslim American candidates will perform worse than their white counterparts in terms of vote choice and likelihood of winning, all else equal.

Second, the partisanship of the Muslim American candidate is likely to have a mediating effect on their electoral success. Scholars have documented bleak outcomes for minorities who run in majority White districts. By and large, minority Democratic candidates do not win in majority-white constituencies (Lublin 1999; Epstein and O'Halloran 1999; Canon et al. 1996; Bowler and Segura 2012). Despite modest dissent amongst scholars (Thernstrom and Thernstrom 2009; Highton 2004; Swain 1993), the evidence overwhelmingly demonstrates that minority-preferred Black and Latino candidates often struggle to win White support (Lublin 1999; Segura and Fraga 2008). But evidence of successful minority candidates can point to important lessons. Minority Republicans can be uniquely advantaged, in that they can count on substantial support from Whites in a nearly all-White party that is actively trying to attract substantial crossover voting from traditionally Democratic communities of color (Barreto 2007, 2010). For example, the two Black Republican Members of Congress – Mia Love and Will Hurd – were elected in overwhelmingly White districts and without meaningful Black support. It does remain overwhelmingly true, however, that when non-White candidates run as Democrats in majority White districts, they do not fare well (Bowler and Segura 2012). This brings me to my second and third hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2: Muslim American Republican candidates will fare equally well as their white Republican counterparts.

Hypothesis 3: Muslim American Republican candidates will fare better than their Muslim American Democratic counterparts.

Importantly, the race of the candidate is also likely to going to affect and complicate voters' evaluations of Muslim American candidates. It must be first acknowledged that it is nearly impossible to estimate how many Muslims reside in America and what the racial backgrounds of these individuals are because the US Census does not collect data on religious background. That is one reason the estimates scholars have on the number of Muslims ranges so widely, from 2 million⁶ - 12 million⁷ by some accounts. With respect to race, it seems obvious to explore how voters evaluate Arab / Middle Eastern candidates because Arabs and Middle Easterners are the group that most readily comes to mind when most Americans think of Muslims. However, Americans are much more likely to encounter a Black candidate at the ballot box. Black Muslims constitute 28% of all Muslims in America⁸ and are more politically engaged than other Muslims (Djupe and Green 2007). It is therefore necessary to explore how the Islamic religion and Black race interact to affect voter's evaluation of Black Muslim candidates. Finally, and as a control, I also deem it necessary to understand how voters evaluate white Muslim candidates for political office. Many Muslims identify as "white" (Tehrani 2007) and are plentiful across Eastern Europe, from countries such as Bosnia and Albania. Given

⁶<https://iraq.usembassy.gov/resources/information/current/american/statistical.html>. Accessed February 14, 2017.

⁷https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/after-paris-and-california-attacks-us-muslims-feel-intense-backlash/2015/12/03/bcf8e480-9a09-11e5-94f0-9eeaff906ef3_story.html?utm_term=.2c8e0e866d0a. Accessed February 14, 2017.

⁸"America's Changing Religious Landscape." Pew Research. <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/>. Accessed February 15, 2017.

these differences in Muslim racial identity, I have the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4: Black Muslim candidates will fare better than their White Muslim and Arab Muslim counterparts.

Hypothesis 5: All Muslim candidates, regardless of their race, will fare worse than the white control treatment.

3.4.2 Voter-Level Characteristics

Voters' decision-making processes in the ballot box take place within a social context and variations in that context may affect voting patterns in important ways. The literature has demonstrated that party identification is one such context to explore when evaluating voters' decision-making processes (Campbell et al. 1960). In this vein, party identification supplies cues to voters who may then use this information to evaluate elements of politics, such as candidates for political office. In line with the rhetoric spewed by Republicans throughout the course of the presidential campaign, the association of Democratic President Obama and the 2016 Democratic Presidential nominee Hillary Clinton's alignment with Muslim Americans, and the movement of Muslim Americans into the Democratic Party's fold (Barreto and Bozonelos 2009; Dana et al., forthcoming), a voter's Republican partisanship should result in opposition to Muslim candidates, especially when the candidate is a Democrat.

Hypothesis 6: Republican voters will discriminate against Muslim American candidates for office compared to their white counterparts in Democratic elections.

Hypothesis 7: Republican voters will not discriminate against Muslim American candidates compared to their white counterparts in Republican elections.

3.5 Candidate Evaluation Study Design

My study builds on previous candidate evaluation survey experiments (Terkildsen 1993; Sigelman et al. 1995; Reeves 1997; Kam 2007; Philpot and Walton 2007; Iyengar et al. 2010; McConnaughy et al. 2010; Weaver 2012; Stephens 2013; Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014; Hainmueller et al. 2014; Lerman et al. 2015 and Visalvanich 2016; Abrajano et al. in progress) to test how Muslim American candidates fare in American democracy. Survey respondents are randomized into one of 8 hypothetical elections, where the second candidate's race and party identification are manipulated to explore their prospects for electoral success in fictional primary elections for congressional office. To cultivate a baseline comparison measure, respondents were randomized into two control treatments: a Democratic or Republican primary election between two white fictional candidates: Stephen Johnson and Eric Miller. Many other candidate evaluation experiments simply present information on one candidate to respondents. However, to mimic the settings of a true election, I include information on two candidates on a pamphlet that served as a true primary election election campaign material. To measure voters' evaluations of the race and religion of Muslim American candidates for political office, respondents were also randomized into Democratic and Republican primary elections between Stephen Johnson and Dean Abdul-Qadir, a white Muslim; Stephen Johnson and Ahmed Al-Akbar, an Arab Muslim; and Stephen Johnson and Louis Muhammad, a Black Muslim.

3.5.1 Representing Muslim identity: name labels

To signal Muslim identity, I varied the names of the Muslim treatments to have Muslim-sounding names. The white Muslim candidate was named Dean Abdul-Qadir. I chose an ambiguous first name because many Muslims who also identify as white go by Dean. The candidate's last name, however, has a direct Muslim signal of the candidate's faith. However, Ahmed Al-Akbar, the Arab candidate, had both a foreign first and last name. I intentionally selected the foreign first and last name for this candidate for external validity purposes. Most Muslim Americans are foreign born – about 65% – and more than half of those individuals have come from Iran or from neighboring Arab countries (Jamal 2010). Finally, the Black candidate had a name that was reminiscent of other Black Muslims in America. African Americans increasingly adopted Muslim names with the rise of the Nation of Islam movement and conversions to Islam beginning in the 1930s. In line with this history and to highlight Black Muslim identity, I named the third candidate treatment Louis Muhammad.

3.5.2 Representing racial identity: photographs

This study also explores how the various racial identities of Muslim American candidates for office affect voters' evaluations of them. To signal racial identity, I varied the photographs associated in the Republican and Democratic treatments for the white Muslim, Arab Muslim, and Black Muslim treatments. For purposes of external validity, I used photographs of actual legislators from non-US countries. There are of course problems with using photographs that must be addressed. While they are useful in communicating racial information, they also translate physical and non-physical non-racial information, such as the subject's age, attractiveness, wealth, size, friendliness, and competence (Olivola and Todorov 2010; and Abrajano et al. in progress). To ensure that

my interpretations from information conveyed by photographs are carefully construed, I utilize the same photographs for my Democratic *and* Republican treatments to maintain a useful and informative comparative baseline.

3.6 Experimental Design

To evaluate electoral support for Muslim American candidates by the American public, I conducted a survey experiment in January 2016 on 985 adults on Amazon Mechanical Turk. Respondents were randomly assigned them to 1 of 8 primary elections, where I experimentally altered the race and party identification of the fictional candidate. Respondents were assigned to materials about a Republican or Democratic primary election, where they read materials about a contest was between a White v. White Candidate, White v. White Muslim candidate, White v. Arab Muslim candidate or White v. Black Muslim candidate. As iterated above, the religious background of the candidate was signaled through the candidate's name and the race of the candidate was signaled through the picture accompanying the candidate's blurb. The experimental design is depicted in Table 1 below:

Table 3.1: Experimental Design

Primary Race:	Democratic	Primary Race:	Republican
White v. White Candidate		White v. White Candidate	
Stephen Johnson v. Eric Miller	n = 124	Stephen Johnson v. Eric Miller	n = 119
White v. Muslim American Candidates		White v. Muslim American Candidates	
Stephen Johnson v. Dean Abdul-Qadir	n = 120	Stephen Johnson v. Dean Abdul-Qadir	n = 126
Stephen Johnson v. Ahmed Al-Akbar	n = 122	Stephen Johnson v. Ahmed Al-Akbar	n = 123
Stephen Johnson v. Louis Muhammad	n = 128	Stephen Johnson v. Louis Muhammad	n = 123

These hypothetical candidates were also given blurbs that remained consistent in each type of election and treatment. These blurbs were slightly altered in Democratic and Republican primaries to indicate shifts in partisan leanings. The actual election materials for the 8 elections that respondents were randomized into are located in the Appendix for Study 1.⁹ Table 2 below depicts the candidate blurbs that were randomly assigned for each election.

⁹I developed these election materials by building off of a real Primary Election voter guide. Information in the candidate blurbs was generated after having read through biographies of current Members of Congress to understand the sorts of things that they discussed on their websites. I finalized the development of these blurbs with the assistance of participants in the UCSD American Politics workshop in May 2015.

Table 3.2: Candidate Blurbs

	Democratic Primary	Republican Primary
Candidate A's Blurb: (Stephen Johnson)	<p>Stephen Johnson's roots in this community run deep. He attended elementary school locally and during his college days, he resided next door to the house he grew up in. As a lifelong member of his community, he supports a number of causes and organizations including the Rotary Club, the American Legion, and businesses that promote sustainability and efficiency. Johnson is a strong advocate for American families. His mission is to protect social welfare programs and expand affordable healthcare for all. In Congress, he will seek to break down barriers, work tirelessly for his constituents, and ensure that everyone will get a chance at success under the American Dream.</p>	<p>Stephen Johnson's roots in this community run deep. He attended elementary school locally and during his college days, he resided next door to the house he grew up in. As a lifelong member of his community, he supports a number of causes and organizations including the Rotary Club, the American Legion, and businesses that promote sustainability and efficiency. Johnson is a strong advocate for American families. His mission is to protect social welfare programs and expand affordable healthcare for all. In Congress, he will seek to break down barriers, work tirelessly for his constituents, and ensure that everyone will get a chance at success under the American Dream.</p>
Candidate B's Blurb: (Eric Miller / Dean Abdul-Qaadir / Ahmed Al-Akbar / Louis Muhammad)	<p>Eric Miller / Dean Abdul Qaadir / Ahmed Al-Akbar / Louis Muhammad has been a leader in his local community, championing a myriad of issues including by no limited to passion legislation that protects the environment and creating a more progressive tax system that increases taxes on high earners. (Miller / Abdul-Qaadir / Al-Akbar / Muhammad)'s philosophy is one of "generosity and inclusiveness." Having won awards from his local chamber of commerce, his roots as a community activist and his message of inclusivity through democratic participation resonates with his community. His priorities in Congress include supporting traditional American values, revitalizing our economy, and promoting peace and prosperity for all Americans.</p>	<p>Eric Miller / Dean Abdul Qaadir / Ahmed Al-Akbar / Louis Muhammad) has been a leader in his local community, championing a myriad of issues including by no limited to passion legislation that protects the environment and creating a more progressive tax system that increases taxes on high earners. (Miller / Abdul-Qaadir / Al-Akbar / Muhammad)'s philosophy is one of "generosity and inclusiveness." Having won awards from his local chamber of commerce, his roots as a community activist and his message of commerce, limiting democratic fraud and protecting the vote resonates with his community. His priorities in Congress include supporting traditional American values, revitalizing our economy, and promoting peace and prosperity for all Americans.</p>

3.6.1 Choice task: vote choice

After having been presented with the election materials and being instructed to read the materials carefully, respondents answered a question on vote choice. Vote choice is an important dependent variable of study because voting is the bedrock of American democracy. Through the vote, Americans choose leaders and influence policy. Therefore, the key dependent variable in this study asked respondents “If you had to chose between Stephen Johnson OR (Eric Miller/Dean Abdul-Qaadir/Ahmed Al-Akbar/Louis Muhammad) who would you vote for?” The variable is a dichotomous variable with 1 indicating a vote choice for the second and experimentally altered candidate and a 0 indicating support for Stephen Johnson. I operationalize discrimination as occurring when those who hold stereotypical and negative beliefs about candidates from other racial and ethnic groups are hard pressed to vote for such a candidate, even if the candidate was very similar to the voter on most issues.

3.6.2 Choice task: likelihood of winning

Next, I explore a given candidate’s likelihood of winning to assess how the respondent feels about the Muslim candidate’s chances at participating in American democracy. I ask “After having been presented with this information, who do you think is more likely to win the election: Stephen Johnson OR (Eric Miller/Dean Abdul-Qaadir/Ahmed Al-Akbar/Louis Muhammad)?” This variable is also a dichotomous variable with 1 indicating that the second and experimentally altered candidate is more likely to win compared to Stephen Johnson and a 0 indicating vice versa.

3.7 Findings

I first begin with an exploration of how candidate-level characteristics affect

respondent's evaluations of vote choice and likelihood of winning. In the aggregate, I expected to find that the candidate's Muslim identity would serve as a powerful and negative electoral cue that would affect voters' evaluation of them. Table 3 below depicts the aggregate findings between those respondents randomized into either the control Republican or Democratic primaries between two white candidates and those randomized into either Republican or Democratic primaries involving a white candidate and a Muslim candidate.

Table 3.3: Aggregate Experimental Findings

Aggregated Treatments	Vote Choice Candidate B	Diff. with White treatment	Candidate B Likely to Win	Diff. with White treatment
White v. White	54.78%		50.00%	
White v. Muslim	44.53%	10.24%**	17.85%	32.14%***

In the very aggregate, Muslim American candidates faced discrimination in voting and in likelihood of winning, confirming my first hypothesis. I find that voters voted for Candidate B – Eric Miller – in the control treatments over Stephen Johnson 54.78% of the time. They voted for the Muslim candidate – Eric Miller, Dean Abdul-Qaadir, Ahmed Al-Akbar or Louis Muhammad – 44.53% percent of the time, a 10.24% difference that is statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

With respect to likelihood to win, Muslims running for office suffer an even greater penalty in voters' evaluations of how they think Muslim candidates will fare in American democracy. While 50% of voters indicated that they thought Eric Miller was more likely to win relative to Stephen Johnson in the control treatments, only 17.85% thought the Muslim candidate in the treatment conditions could win, a 32.14% and significant difference at the $p < 0.000$ level.

Table 3.4: Aggregate Findings for Study 1 by Party

Aggregated Treatments	Vote Choice Candidate B	Diff. with White treatment	Candidate B Likely to Win	Diff. with White treatment
White v. White (Democrat)	50.00%		46.61%	
White v. Muslim (Democrat)	37.07%	12.93%**	16.99%	24.41%***
White v. White (Republican)	59.64%		53.44%	
White v. Muslim (Republican)	51.82%	7.82%	18.68%	27.08%***

Taking into account the party identification of the candidate, important differences begin to emerge. The partisanship of the Muslim American candidate has a far-reaching and mediating effect on the individuals' electoral success. Table 4 above displays the aggregate findings for Democratic and Republican primaries.

I find that Muslim American Democrats for office suffer an electoral penalty when they run for office compared to their white counterparts. In these fictional elections, white Democrats received 50% of the vote and Muslim American Democrats received 37.07% of the vote compared to Stephen Johnson, a significant difference at the $p < 0.05$ level. Also, the white Democrat treatment was likely to win 46.61% of the time, compared to the Muslim treatments, which were speculated to win only 16.99% of the time, a significant difference at the $p < 0.000$ level.

Republican Muslim candidates, however, were uniquely advantaged and could count on substantial support from respondents, confirming my second hypothesis. Muslim candidates were no less significantly likely to beat Stephen Johnson in Republican primaries than were their white counterparts. These results hold even when I disaggregate the findings by treatment in Table 5 below.

Table 3.5: Disaggregated Treatments in Study 1

Disaggregated Treatments	Vote Choice Candidate B	Diff. with White treatment	Candidate B Likely to Win	Diff. with White treatment
White v. White (Democrat)	50.00%		46.61%	
White v. White Muslim (Democrat)	39.13%	10.86%*	10.34%	28.63%***
White v. Arab Muslim (Democrat)	34.21%	15.78%**	17.39%	29.21%***
White v. Black Muslim (Democrat)	37.81%	12.18%*	22.95%	23.66%***
White v. White (Republican)	59.64%		53.44%	
White v. White Muslim (Republican)	50.00%	9.64%	17.6%	35.84%***
White v. Arab Muslim (Republican)	51.69%	7.95%	13.55%	39.88%***
White v. Black Muslim (Republican)	53.84%	5.8%	24.79%	28.65%***

Muslim candidates in each treatment in Republican primaries were no less significantly likely as their white counterparts to beat Stephen Johnson in this hypothetical election. As Table 5 above demonstrates, the white candidate, Eric Miller, won 59.64% of elections in the control treatment. But Dean Abdul-Qadir, Ahmed Al-Akbar, and Louis Muhammad each beat Stephen Johnson 50%, 51.69%, and 53.84% of the time, respectively. None of these differences were statistically significant. Republican Muslim candidates did suffer a penalty, however, when voters gauged whether they were likely to win. Voters deemed Muslim candidates less likely to beat Stephen Johnson than their white counterparts in each treatment.

Next, I evaluate my third hypothesis by gauging how the Muslim American candidates in Republican and Democratic candidates performed relative to each other. This is important exercise for several reasons. First, it gets around the confounding problems that the selected photographs pose. As discussed earlier, photographs communicate racial information, but they also communicate physical and non-physical non-racial information, such as the subject's age, attractiveness, wealth, size, friendliness, and competence. Because I utilize the same photographs for the white Muslim, Arab Muslim, and Black Muslim treatments in both Democratic and Republican primaries, I can assess whether the party effect observed above is a function of party cue or a function of attractiveness. Table 6 below displays these comparisons.

Table 3.6: Disaggregated Comparisons of Treatment Types in Democratic and Republican Primaries

Disaggregated Treatments	Vote Choice Candidate B	Diff. with White treatment	Candidate B Likely to Win	Diff. with White treatment
White v. White (Democrat)	50.00%		46.61%	
White v. White (Republican)	59.64%	9.64%	53.44%	6.83%
White v. White Muslim (Democrat)	39.13%		10.34%	
White v. White Muslim (Republican)	50.00%	10.86%*	17.6%	7.25%
White v. Arab Muslim (Democrat)	34.21%		17.39%	
White v. Arab Muslim (Republican)	51.69%	17.48%**	13.55%	-3.83%
White v. Black Muslim (Democrat)	37.81%		22.95%	
White v. Black Muslim (Republican)	53.84%	16.03%**	24.79%	1.84%

Table 6 above indicates that there were no significant differences for the Eric Miller baseline treatment between Democratic and Republican primaries. Yet, white Muslim, Arab Muslim, and Black Muslim Republican candidates fared significantly better than Stephen Johnson compared to their Democratic counterparts in every instance. Thus, my third hypothesis that Muslim American Republican candidates will fare better than their Muslim American Democratic counterparts is confirmed.

Next, I evaluate how the race of the candidate affected respondents' evaluations of Muslim American candidates. Because Muslims in America hail from a multitude of races, I explored how white, Arab, and Black Muslims fared to assess whether certain racial groups of Muslims were rated more favorably than others. As is evident in Tables 5 and 6 above, I find no support for Hypothesis 4 that Black Muslim candidates will fare better than their White Muslim and Arab Muslim counterparts. Rather the race of the Muslim candidate appears to have no effect on respondents' evaluations of Muslim candidates. I find support for Hypothesis 5 that all Muslim candidates, regardless of their race, will fare worse than the white control treatment.

Turning to the voter-level characteristics side of the equation, I first explore how partisanship affects respondents' evaluations of Muslim versus white candidates for office. Below, Table 7 displays the bivariate relations between vote choice and the Muslim candidate treatments.

Table 3.7: Study 2 Heterogeneous Treatment Effects

	(1) Vote for Candidate B (Rep. Subjects)	(2) Vote for Candidate B (Dem. Subjects)	(3) Vote for Candidate B (Ind. Subjects)
Candidate B: Muslim	-0.164* (0.0679)	-0.0595 (0.0527)	-0.115 (0.0796)
Constant	0.424** (0.0591)	0.600** (0.0454)	0.569** (0.0699)
<i>N</i>	244	466	223
adj. R^2	0.020	0.001	0.005

Standard errors in parentheses

+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

As Model 1 in the Table above denotes, Republican respondents significantly discriminated against Candidate B when the candidate was Muslim than when the candidate was the white control treatment, confirming Hypothesis 7. Importantly, Democrats (Model 2) and Independents (Model 3) did not discriminate against the Muslim candidate treatments. This potentially suggests that Muslim candidates running for office can look to coalitions with Democrats and Independents in pursuit of electoral victories.

3.8 Lingering Concerns

The results from Study 1 point to some important conclusions. First, when Muslim candidates run as Republicans, they are able to defeat Stephen Johnson just as easily as the Eric Miller control. Also, upon evaluating voters' characteristics by party identification, it is noteworthy that it is solely Republicans who discriminate by being significantly less likely to vote for Muslim candidates compared to their Democratic and Independent counterparts. Finally, the results suggest in the aggregate that Muslims running for office fare worse than their White counterparts. This is true no matter their race. But this finding raises lingering concerns. Because the race of the Muslim American candidate (signaled through the picture), did not statistically matter for the purposes of their success in any election, I am left wondering whether without the signal of religion, race would have mattered for voters' evaluation of the candidates. The signal of religion (through the candidate's last name) overpowered respondent's evaluation of the candidates. While Experiment 1 is novel in its approach to test how the racial identities of different Muslim candidates affects the respondents' perceptions of the candidates' likelihood of winning and vote choice, there is one additional limitation that remains unaddressed. Experiment 1 does not sufficiently disentangle whether the discriminatory effects observed in Experiment 1 are a result of the religious signal or the picture (race)

of Candidate B.

As a result, I ran Study 2, a robustness experiment to tease out the effect of a candidate's Muslim identity (communicated through their name) and their racial identity (communicated through their picture). Study 2 was conducted on a national sample of Americans, balanced on race, through Survey Sampling International in December 2016. Respondents were randomly assigned respondents to the one of the same four hypothetical Democratic primary election treatments as in Study 2. But to disentangle the effect of race and religion, I added an additional three treatments.

The three additional treatments were situated in Democratic primaries where the race (picture) of the candidate was signaled, but where there is no religious signal. In other words, fictional Candidate B has the same pictures attributed that were observed in the white Muslim, Arab Muslim, and Black Muslim treatments, but the candidates are given "Americanized" names. The former Black Muslim and now solely Black treatment is "Joe Buckner." The then Arab Muslim and now Arab treatment is "Neil Richardson." And the former white Muslim and now white treatment is "Richard Porter." By adding these three additional treatments, I am able to assess whether discrimination is as a result of the racial or religious signals. The new experimental design is located in Table 8 below:

Table 3.8: Study 2 Experimental Design

Primary Race:	Democratic
White v. White Candidate	
Stephen Johnson v. Eric Miller	n = 99
White v. Muslim American Candidates	
Stephen Johnson v. Dean Abdul-Qadir	n = 101
Stephen Johnson v. Ahmed Al-Akbar	n = 101
Stephen Johnson v. Louis Muhammad	n = 102
White v. American Candidates (Race Signal Only)	
Stephen Johnson v. Richard Porter	n = 99
Stephen Johnson v. Neil Richardson	n = 102
Stephen Johnson v. Joe Buckner	n = 102

In this robustness experiment, I also explore how respondents' resentment towards Muslim Americans affects how they rate a Muslim American candidate for office, no matter their partisanship. While Layman, Kalkan, and Green (2014) explore ethnocentrism, I develop a scale of Muslim American resentment to assess how respondents rate Muslim candidates for office.

Finally, a voters' Muslim American resentment will have profound effects in determining how they rate a Muslim American candidate for office, no matter their partisanship. Research on Muslim American resentment is limited. What little we know about Muslim American attitudes is that they are negative and hardening over time (Kalkan et al. 2009; Sides and Gross 2013; Lajevardi, in progress). Layman, Kalkan, and Green (2014) have also indicated that ethnocentrism should be a strong predictor of attitudes towards Muslims in America and individuals' willingness to support Muslim candidates. Given the overdiscussion of Muslims in the news media and by elites, a climate of resentment towards Muslim Americans is pervasive today. I expect these

negative attitudes translate into significantly less electoral support for Muslim American candidates.

Hypothesis 8: Respondents with high resentment will be significantly less likely to vote for Muslim American candidates no matter the candidate's race or religion compared to their middle and low resentment counterparts.

3.8.1 Results from Study 2

Vote Choice and Likelihood of Winning

Table 9 below displays the experimental effects on vote choice and likelihood of winning as the two key dependent variables explored in this analysis.

Table 3.9: Experimental Effects on Vote Choice and Likelihood of Winning in Study 2

Disaggregated Treatments	Vote Choice Candidate B	Diff. with White treatment	Candidate B Likely to Win	Diff. with White treatment
Stephen Johnson v. Eric Miller	40.81%		45.92%	
Stephen Johnson v. Dean Abdul-Qaadir (White Muslim)	35.00%	5.82%	20.00%	25.91%***
Stephen Johnson v. Richard Porter	36.08%	4.73%	40.21%	5.71%
Stephen Johnson v. Ahmed Al-Akbar (Arab Muslim)	43.87%	-3.06%	18.37%	27.55%***
Stephen Johnson v. Neil Richardson	37.62%	3.19%	38.61%	7.30%
Stephen Johnson v. Louis Muhammad (Black Muslim)	51.00%	-10.18%	22.00%	23.91%**
Stephen Johnson v. Joe Buckner	47.50%	-6.71%	42.57%	3.34%

While I am unable to replicate the finding that respondents discriminate in vote choice between white and Muslim candidates, I find that it is the signal of *religion* and not race that affects respondents' perceptions of a candidate's ability to successfully participate in an electoral contest in American politics. These results above replicate the finding that Muslim candidates – no matter their race – are viewed as faring worse than their White counterparts in likelihood of winning evaluations.

In treatments where the candidate's name – and therefore signal of religious identity – is changed from "Muslim"-sounding names to "American"-sounding names, the discriminatory effects go away. This significance is eliminated across the board.

Muslim American Resentment

The Muslim American Resentment items were run on a 1-100 scales in the robustness check of this experiment. I subsetted the sample into those with low levels of resentment (those who fell in to the bottom 25th percentile of the resentment sample), middle levels of resentment (those individuals who feel between the 25th percentile of resentment to the 75th percentile of resentment), and high levels of resentment (those who were in the 75th percentile of resentment or above).

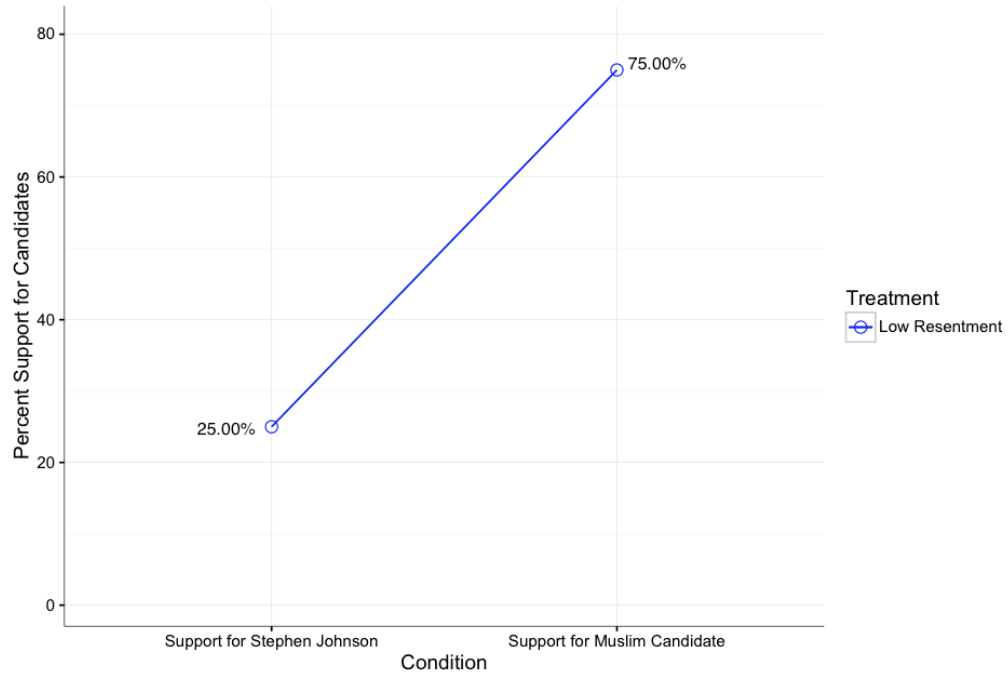


Figure 3.1: Percent Support for Candidates Among Low Resentment Respondents

Figure 3.1 above provides evidence of low resentment individuals and their average vote choice for either Stephen Johnson, Candidate A, or the Muslim Candidate, when they were pictured as Candidate B.

What I find is that 75% of low resentment individuals voted for the Muslim Candidate over Stephen Johnson, while Stephen Johnson won merely 25% of the elections that low resentment individuals were randomized into.

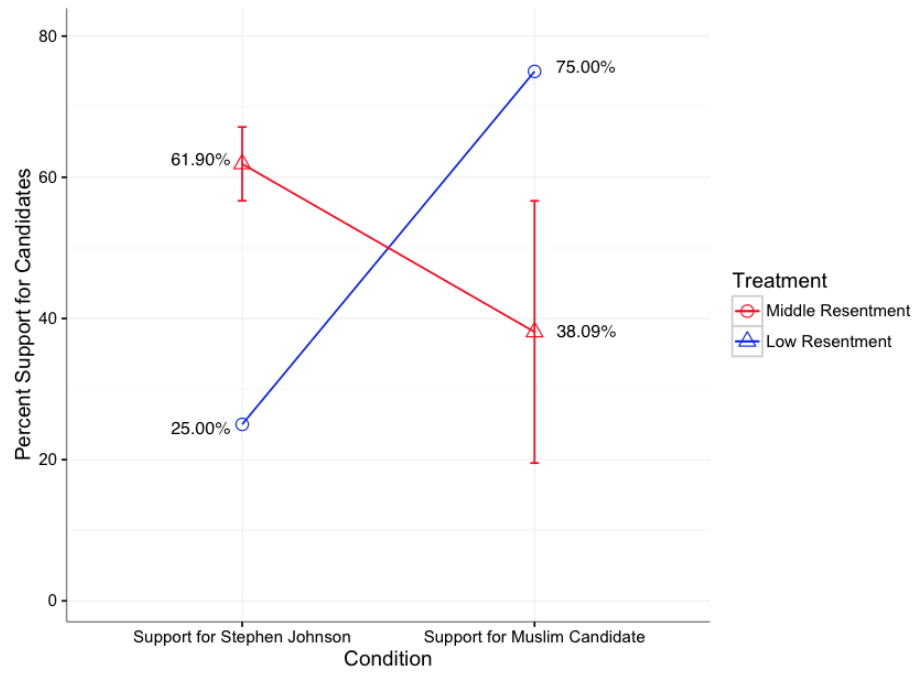


Figure 3.2: Percent Support for Candidates Among Low and Middle Resentment Respondents

Next and turning to Middle Resentment individuals, I find that the overwhelming support for the Muslim candidate erodes very quickly. These individuals were significantly more likely to vote for Stephen Johnson in the races that they were randomized into and voted for him in 61.9% of these races. They voted for the Muslim candidate in only 38.09% of the races that they were randomized into.

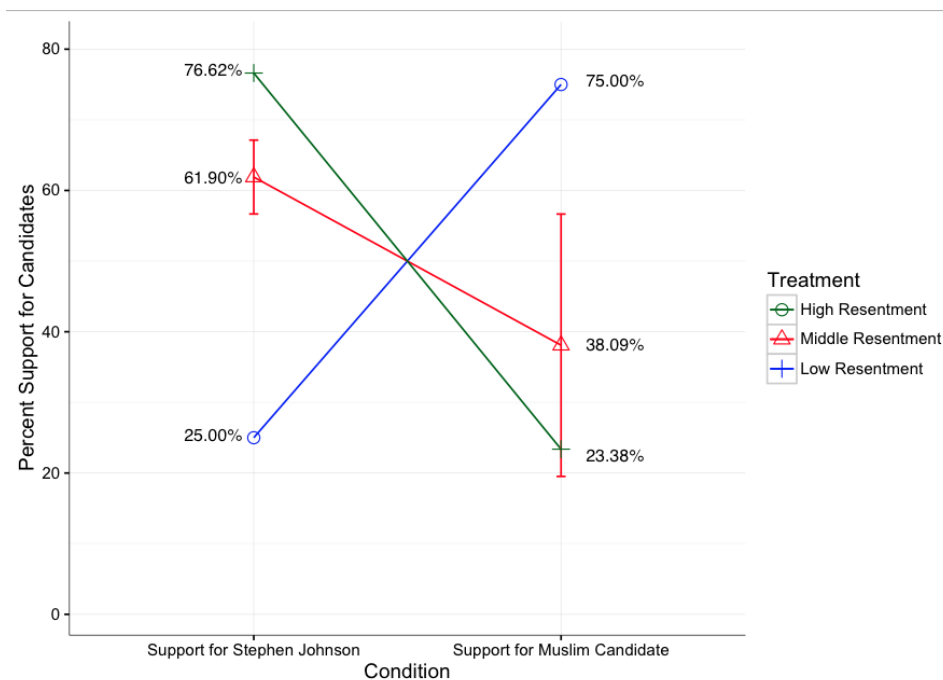


Figure 3.3: Percent Support for Candidates Among Low, Middle, and High Resentment Respondents

Finally, when I add in high resentment individuals, I find even greater amounts of discrimination. High resentment individuals voted for Stephen Johnson over the Muslim candidate in 76.62% of elections that they were randomized into. They voted for the Muslim candidate in 23.38% of these elections.

3.9 Implications

On the whole, the race and ethnic politics literature has determined mixed findings on whether candidate race negatively affects white perceptions. Prominent experimental studies, such as Terkildsen (1993) and Reeves (1997) have determined that Black candidates fare worse when paired against whites. These results have been further supported with further work that has explored other aspects of candidate evaluation examining competence and qualifications.

Newer studies have incorporated other racialized groups in American politics (see Adida et al. 2016; Visalvanich 2016; and Abrajano et al., in progress). All of these pieces add to our nuanced understanding of how racial minorities fare in American politics.

In this study, I move beyond the current state of the literature and incorporate Muslim Americans – a religious group that has become increasingly racialized in American society – to understand their positioning in politics and their ability to attain descriptive representation.

My results provide evidence for their disadvantaged position in American democracy. I find that Muslim American candidates for political office – no matter their race – experience actual deep-seated discrimination by the masses who are unwilling to vote for them and find them unlikely to win elections. The only mediating effect for Muslim American candidates is their partisanship. The totality of these results suggests that variations in mass preferences for Muslim American candidates is largely driven by their party and religion and not by their racial background.

Chapter 3 is currently being prepared for submission for publication. Lajevardi, Nazita. “Can Ahmed Win? Examining American Attitudes Towards Muslim Candidates.” The dissertation author is the primary researcher and sole author of this paper.

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3.11 Appendix Election Materials

Primary Voter Guide This is a primary election to select the Democratic candidate for Congress in 2016.

It's time to cast your votes



DEMOCRAT
Voter's Guide

Stephen Johnson versus Eric Miller



Stephen Johnson's roots in this community run deep. He attended elementary school locally and during his college days, he resided next door to the house he grew up in. As a lifelong member of his community, he supports a number of causes and organizations including the Rotary Club, the American Legion, and businesses that promote sustainability and efficiency. Johnson is a strong advocate for American families. His mission is to protect social welfare programs and expand affordable healthcare for all. In Congress, he will seek to break down barriers, work tirelessly for his constituents, and ensure that everyone will get a chance at success under the American Dream.



Eric Miller has been a leader in his local community, championing a myriad of issues including but not limited to passing legislation that protects the environment and creating a more progressive tax system that increases taxes on high earners. Miller's philosophy is one of "generosity and inclusiveness." Having won awards from his local chamber of commerce, his roots as a community activist and his message of inclusivity through democratic participation resonates with his community. His priorities in Congress include supporting traditional American values, revitalizing our economy, and promoting peace and prosperity for all Americans.

Figure 3.4: Election 1: White – Stephen Johnson (D) v. White – Eric Miller (D)

It's time to cast your votes

DEMOCRAT

Voter's Guide

Stephen Johnson versus Dean Abdul-Qaadir



Stephen Johnson's roots in this community run deep. He attended elementary school locally and during his college days, he resided next door to the house he grew up in. As a lifelong member of his community, he supports a number of causes and organizations including the Rotary Club, the American Legion, and businesses that promote sustainability and efficiency. Johnson is a strong advocate for American families. His mission is to protect social welfare programs and expand affordable healthcare for all. In Congress, he will seek to break down barriers, work tirelessly for his constituents, and ensure that everyone will get a chance at success under the American Dream.



Dean Abdul-Qaadir has been a leader in his local community, championing a myriad of issues including but not limited to passing legislation that protects the environment and creating a more progressive tax system that increases taxes on high earners. Abdul-Qaadir's philosophy is one of "generosity and inclusiveness." Having won awards from his local chamber of commerce, his roots as a community activist and his message of inclusivity through democratic participation resonates with his community. His priorities in Congress include supporting traditional American values, revitalizing our economy, and promoting peace and prosperity for all Americans.

Figure 3.5: Election 2: White – Stephen Johnson (D) v. White Muslim – Dean Abdul Qaadir (D)

It's time to cast your votes

DEMOCRAT

Voter's Guide

Stephen Johnson versus Ahmed Al-Akbar



Stephen Johnson's roots in this community run deep. He attended elementary school locally and during his college days, he resided next door to the house he grew up in. As a lifelong member of his community, he supports a number of causes and organizations including the Rotary Club, the American Legion, and businesses that promote sustainability and efficiency. Johnson is a strong advocate for American families. His mission is to protect social welfare programs and expand affordable healthcare for all. In Congress, he will seek to break down barriers, work tirelessly for his constituents, and ensure that everyone will get a chance at success under the American Dream.



Ahmed Al-Akbar has been a leader in his local community, championing a myriad of issues including but not limited to passing legislation that protects the environment and creating a more progressive tax system that increases taxes on high earners. Al-Akbar's philosophy is one of "generosity and inclusiveness." Having won awards from his local chamber of commerce, his roots as a community activist and his message of inclusivity through democratic participation resonates with his community. His priorities in Congress include supporting traditional American values, revitalizing our economy, and promoting peace and prosperity for all Americans.

Figure 3.6: Election 3: White – Stephen Johnson (D) v. Arab Muslim – Ahmed Al-Akbar (D)

It's time to cast your votes

DEMOCRAT

Voter's Guide

Stephen Johnson versus Louis Muhammad



Stephen Johnson's roots in this community run deep. He attended elementary school locally and during his college days, he resided next door to the house he grew up in. As a lifelong member of his community, he supports a number of causes and organizations including the Rotary Club, the American Legion, and businesses that promote sustainability and efficiency. Johnson is a strong advocate for American families. His mission is to protect social welfare programs and expand affordable healthcare for all. In Congress, he will seek to break down barriers, work tirelessly for his constituents, and ensure that everyone will get a chance at success under the American Dream.



Louis Muhammad has been a leader in his local community, championing a myriad of issues including but not limited to passing legislation that protects the environment and creating a more progressive tax system that increases taxes on high earners. Muhammad's philosophy is one of "generosity and inclusiveness." Having won awards from his local chamber of commerce, his roots as a community activist and his message of inclusivity through democratic participation resonates with his community. His priorities in Congress include supporting traditional American values, revitalizing our economy, and promoting peace and prosperity for all Americans.

Figure 3.7: Election 4: White – Stephen Johnson (D) v. Black Muslim – Louis Muhammad (D)

It's time to cast your votes

REPUBLICAN
Voter's Guide

Stephen Johnson versus Eric Miller



Stephen Johnson's roots in this community run deep. He attended elementary school locally and during his college days, he resided next door to the house he grew up in. As a lifelong member of his community, he supports a number of causes and organizations including the Rotary Club, the American Legion, and businesses that promote sustainability and efficiency. Johnson is a strong advocate for American families. His mission is to limit the expansion of social welfare programs that drain the economy and to repeal Obamacare. In Congress, he will seek to break down barriers, work tirelessly for his constituents, and ensure that everyone will get a chance at success under the American Dream.



Eric Miller has been a leader in his local community, championing a myriad of issues including but not limited to repealing tax increases implemented in the last 8 years to foster economic growth and ensuring America's energy independence by tapping into its vast natural resources. Miller's philosophy is one of "generosity and inclusiveness." Having won awards from his local chamber of commerce, his roots as a community activist and his message of commerce limiting democratic fraud and protecting the vote resonates with his community. His priorities in Congress include supporting traditional American values, revitalizing our economy, and promoting peace and prosperity for all Americans.

Figure 3.8: Election 5: White – Stephen Johnson (R) v. White – Eric Miller (R)

It's time to cast your votes

REPUBLICAN
Voter's Guide

Stephen Johnson versus Dean Abdul-Qaadir



Stephen Johnson's roots in this community run deep. He attended elementary school locally and during his college days, he resided next door to the house he grew up in. As a lifelong member of his community, he supports a number of causes and organizations including the Rotary Club, the American Legion, and businesses that promote sustainability and efficiency. Johnson is a strong advocate for American families. His mission is to limit the expansion of social welfare programs that drain the economy and to repeal Obamacare. In Congress, he will seek to break down barriers, work tirelessly for his constituents, and ensure that everyone will get a chance at success under the American Dream.



Dean Abdul-Qaadir has been a leader in his local community, championing a myriad of issues including but not limited to repealing tax increases implemented in the last 8 years to foster economic growth and ensuring America's energy independence by tapping into its vast natural resources. Abdul-Qaadir's philosophy is one of "generosity and inclusiveness." Having won awards from his local chamber of commerce, his roots as a community activist and his message of commerce limiting democratic fraud and protecting the vote resonates with his community. His priorities in Congress include supporting traditional American values, revitalizing our economy, and promoting peace and prosperity for all Americans.

Figure 3.9: Election 6: White – Stephen Johnson (R) v. White Muslim – Dean Abdul Qaadir (R)

It's time to cast your votes

REPUBLICAN
Voter's Guide

Stephen Johnson versus Ahmed Al-Akbar



Stephen Johnson's roots in this community run deep. He attended elementary school locally and during his college days, he resided next door to the house he grew up in. As a lifelong member of his community, he supports a number of causes and organizations including the Rotary Club, the American Legion, and businesses that promote sustainability and efficiency. Johnson is a strong advocate for American families. His mission is to limit the expansion of social welfare programs that drain the economy and to repeal Obamacare. In Congress, he will seek to break down barriers, work tirelessly for his constituents, and ensure that everyone will get a chance at success under the American Dream.



Ahmed Al-Akbar has been a leader in his local community, championing a myriad of issues including but not limited to repealing tax increases implemented in the last 8 years to foster economic growth and ensuring America's energy independence by tapping into its vast natural resources. Al-Akbar's philosophy is one of "generosity and inclusiveness." Having won awards from his local chamber of commerce, his roots as a community activist and his message of commerce limiting democratic fraud and protecting the vote resonates with his community. His priorities in Congress include supporting traditional American values, revitalizing our economy, and promoting peace and prosperity for all Americans.

Figure 3.10: Election 7: White – Stephen Johnson (R) v. Arab Muslim – Ahmed Al-Akbar (R)

It's time to cast your votes
 REPUBLICAN
Voter's Guide

Stephen Johnson versus Louis Muhammad



Stephen Johnson's roots in this community run deep. He attended elementary school locally and during his college days, he resided next door to the house he grew up in. As a lifelong member of his community, he supports a number of causes and organizations including the Rotary Club, the American Legion, and businesses that promote sustainability and efficiency. Johnson is a strong advocate for American families. His mission is to limit the expansion of social welfare programs that drain the economy and to repeal Obamacare. In Congress, he will seek to break down barriers, work tirelessly for his constituents, and ensure that everyone will get a chance at success under the American Dream.



Louis Muhammad has been a leader in his local community, championing a myriad of issues including but not limited to repealing tax increases implemented in the last 8 years to foster economic growth and ensuring America's energy independence by tapping into its vast natural resources. Muhammad's philosophy is one of "generosity and inclusiveness." Having won awards from his local chamber of commerce, his roots as a community activist and his message of commerce limiting democratic fraud and protecting the vote resonates with his community. His priorities in Congress include supporting traditional American values, revitalizing our economy, and promoting peace and prosperity for all Americans.

Figure 3.11: Election 8: White – Stephen Johnson (R) v. Black Muslim – Louis Muhammad (R)

It's time to cast your votes

DEMOCRAT

Voter's Guide

Stephen Johnson versus Richard Porter



Stephen Johnson's roots in this community run deep. He attended elementary school locally and during his college days, he resided next door to the house he grew up in. As a lifelong member of his community, he supports a number of causes and organizations including the Rotary Club, the American Legion, and businesses that promote sustainability and efficiency. Johnson is a strong advocate for American families. His mission is to protect social welfare programs and expand affordable healthcare for all. In Congress, he will seek to break down barriers, work tirelessly for his constituents, and ensure that everyone will get a chance at success under the American Dream.



Richard Porter has been a leader in his local community, championing a myriad of issues including but not limited to passing legislation that protects the environment and creating a more progressive tax system that increases taxes on high earners. Porter's philosophy is one of "generosity and inclusiveness." Having won awards from his local chamber of commerce, his roots as a community activist and his message of inclusivity through democratic participation resonates with his community. His priorities in Congress include supporting traditional American values, revitalizing our economy, and promoting peace and prosperity for all Americans.

Figure 3.12: Additional Election 1: White – Stephen Johnson (D) v. White – Richard Porter (D)

It's time to cast your votes
DEMOCRAT
Voter's Guide
Stephen Johnson versus **Neil Richardson**


Stephen Johnson's roots in this community run deep. He attended elementary school locally and during his college days, he resided next door to the house he grew up in. As a lifelong member of his community, he supports a number of causes and organizations including the Rotary Club, the American Legion, and businesses that promote sustainability and efficiency. Johnson is a strong advocate for American families. His mission is to protect social welfare programs and expand affordable healthcare for all. In Congress, he will seek to break down barriers, work tirelessly for his constituents, and ensure that everyone will get a chance at success under the American Dream.



Neil Richardson has been a leader in his local community, championing a myriad of issues including but not limited to passing legislation that protects the environment and creating a more progressive tax system that increases taxes on high earners. Richardson's philosophy is one of "generosity and inclusiveness." Having won awards from his local chamber of commerce, his roots as a community activist and his message of inclusivity through democratic participation resonates with his community. His priorities in Congress include supporting traditional American values, revitalizing our economy, and promoting peace and prosperity for all Americans.

Figure 3.13: Additional Election 2: White – Stephen Johnson (D) v. Arab – Neil Richardson (D)

It's time to cast your votes

DEMOCRAT

Voter's Guide

Stephen Johnson versus Joe Buckner



Stephen Johnson's roots in this community run deep. He attended elementary school locally and during his college days, he resided next door to the house he grew up in. As a lifelong member of his community, he supports a number of causes and organizations including the Rotary Club, the American Legion, and businesses that promote sustainability and efficiency. Johnson is a strong advocate for American families. His mission is to protect social welfare programs and expand affordable healthcare for all. In Congress, he will seek to break down barriers, work tirelessly for his constituents, and ensure that everyone will get a chance at success under the American Dream.



Joe Buckner has been a leader in his local community, championing a myriad of issues including but not limited to passing legislation that protects the environment and creating a more progressive tax system that increases taxes on high earners. Buckner's philosophy is one of "generosity and inclusiveness." Having won awards from his local chamber of commerce, his roots as a community activist and his message of inclusivity through democratic participation resonates with his community. His priorities in Congress include supporting traditional American values, revitalizing our economy, and promoting peace and prosperity for all Americans.

Figure 3.14: Additional Election 3: White – Stephen Johnson (R) v. Black – Joe Buckner (D)

Chapter 4

The Media Matters: Muslim American Portrayals and the Effects on Mass Attitudes

4.1 Abstract

In the post 9/11 world, Muslim Americans are an increasingly racialized group that may be experiencing a backlash in the American news media and consequently by the American public. No study to date, however, empirically assesses the sentiment of the news coverage of Muslim Americans and evaluates its effects on mass attitudes. In this paper, I conduct a comprehensive investigation of U.S. broadcast media coverage of American Muslims to address the following questions: How does the U.S. news media portray Muslim Americans in its coverage? And to what extent, do media portrayals impact American public opinion?

The paper first examines the volume and sentiment of all available CNN, FOX, and MSNBC news broadcast transcripts from 1992-2015. I demonstrate that the media coverage of Muslim Americans is negative and increases over time. I compare this coverage to that of Blacks and Latinos – two groups considered to hold low positions in the American racial hierarchy – and find that Muslim American coverage is more

negative. These findings provide evidence for a shifting and nuanced racial hierarchy.

In the second part of the paper, I employ a series of survey experiments to examine the impact that observed negative coverage has on the attitudes and policy preferences of the American public. Negative news portrayals of Muslims and Muslim Americans increase resentment towards Muslim Americans, while positive portrayals have no effect on public opinion. Negative news portrayals also increase support for stringent policies targeting Muslims and Muslim Americans, whereas positive coverage once again does not move opinion on policy.

4.2 Introduction

The attacks on September 11, 2001 situated Muslim Americans at the forefront of the national discourse. During this time, Muslim Americans seemingly became highly racialized, moving from a nonsalient religious group to a salient and racialized outgroup. Fifteen years later, Muslim Americans appear to be receiving more and more attention in the political sphere and in the news.

Anecdotally, this attention appears to be quite negative. The national focus on Muslim Americans peaked this past year due in part to targeted attacks by Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump (Abdelkader 2016). During this time, Trump has demonized Muslim Americans, calling for a ban on Muslims from entering the country, a national database of all Muslims in the United States, and the wholesale surveillance of mosques. Numerous other political leaders from across the ideological aisle have also made negative public comments about Muslim Americans during the current electoral cycle. Republican Oklahoma State Representative John Bennett publicly stated, “American Muslims are a ‘cancer’ that must be cut out of America”¹ while the Democratic mayor

¹http://www.sequoyahcountytimes.com/news/local_news/article.9382c002-3e6c-11e4-b820-001a4bcf6878.html. Accessed July 31, 2016.

of Roanoke, Virginia called for the incarceration of Muslim Americans in internment camps, for example.²

This increasingly negative discussion of Muslim Americans arguably has a very real and tangible impact on the public's attitudes towards them. According to a 2016 report from the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), recent years have seen Islamophobia institutionalized in a number of states: between 2013-2015, 10 states approved "anti-Islam" laws, two states revised their textbooks in response to anti-Islam campaigns, and attacks on mosques and anti-Islam demonstrations are increasingly frequent (CAIR 2016). Corey Saylor, Director of CAIR's Department to Monitor and Combat Islamophobia, noted when releasing the report that "The 2016 presidential election has mainstreamed Islamophobia and resulted in a number of unconstitutional proposals targeting Muslims."³

At the same time, the number of anti-Muslim incidents has recently risen to the highest level ever recorded by the Council on American-Islamic Relations. A report published in May 2016 by the Georgetown University Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding documents 180 reported incidents of anti-Muslim violence during the period between March 2015 and March 2016, spiking in response to anti-Muslim rhetoric on the campaign trail (Abdelkader 2016).

Survey evidence also finds the existence negative public attitudes towards Muslim Americans. A YouGov poll conducted March 24-25, 2016 found that 51% all Americans agreed that there should be "a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country's representatives can figure out what is going on."⁴ About

²https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/virginia-politics/roanoke-mayor-david-bowers-reject-refugees-like-us-interned-japanese/2015/11/18/9714681a-8e34-11e5-acff-673ae92ddd2b_story.html. Accessed July 31, 2016.

³<http://www.islamophobia.org/15-reports/179-confronting-fear-islamophobia-and-its-impact-in-the-u-s-2013-2015.html>. Accessed July 31, 2016.

⁴YouGov Poll March 24-25, 2016.
https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/aipb1h7oe9/tabs

a third (35%) of respondents said they think Muslim Americans are more sympathetic to terrorists than to other Americans. And almost half (45%) said they agreed with then-Republican presidential contender Ted Cruz that “we need to empower law enforcement to patrol and secure Muslim neighborhoods before they become radicalized.” Almost 4 in 10 respondents (38%) said Muslims should be subject to more surveillance than people from other religious groups, and almost 6 in 10 respondents (59%) said the Islamic religion is more likely than other faiths to encourage violence among its believers.

The news media, moreover, may be mistreating Muslim Americans as well. Much, if not all, of the information that the majority of the American public receives about them is disseminated by the news media and that coverage, at least anecdotally, appears to be quite negative. Scholars have also argued that media coverage of Muslims, Islam, and Muslim Americans may have produced greater distaste towards Muslims in America (Kalkan et al., 2009).

Nevertheless, the evidence outlined above is largely conjecture and Muslim Americans remain woefully understudied. To date, no empirical research⁵ has examined the sentiment of media coverage nor has evaluated its effects on public attitudes.⁶ While the above examples above are observable signs of a backlash against Muslim Americans

[_Religious_Discrimination_20160325.pdf](#)

⁵There is some empirical work that assesses media coverage in the foreign press. However, little empirical work has examined Muslim Americans in the US media. With respect to media coverage of Muslims in foreign contexts, Lewis et al. (2009) conduct a study of the frequency of stories about British Muslims from 2000-2008 in English media outlets, and evaluate the changes in topics related to British Muslims. In the US case, Nacos and Torres-Reyna (2002) analyze the news media’s effect on the public’s frame of Muslim Americans by assessing the frequency of coverage of Muslims on the front page of the three largest New York daily newspapers during the 12 months before and 6 months after 9/11. Bail (2012) conducts a more expansive analysis of media coverage by assessing 1,084 press releases about Muslims and 50,407 newspaper articles and television transcripts from 2001-2008 and finds that angry and fearful fringe organizations not only exerted powerful influence on the media discourse about Muslims in the aftermath of 9/11, but also ultimately became some of the most influential mainstream groups in the field (Bail 2012).

⁶Many contend that Muslims and Muslim Americans fare poorly in the news media. Their repeated negative presence in the news media coupled with the high profile American “wars on terror” in Iraq and Afghanistan led to the existence of negative political and social climate for Muslim Americans (Kalkan et al., 2009; Sides and Gross, 2013). However, these studies do not systematically assess Muslim American coverage nor do they investigate causal effects on mass attitudes.

in the public sphere, empirical questions remain. Is the media as negative as it seems? How does the U.S. news media portray Muslims and Muslim Americans in its coverage? And what impact do these media portrayals have on American public opinion? While the literature has long tracked how the media has covered Blacks and Latinos (e.g. Valentino 1999; Gilliam et al. 2002), and how that coverage shifts White attitudes, there has been no assessment of the effect of media coverage on attitudes toward Muslim Americans, let alone any systematic attempt to measure those attitudes. And, there has been no test of the effect of media coverage on policy preferences targeting Muslim Americans.

This is a critical omission given the powerful role that the news media can play in shaping attitudes and policy preferences, and given the increasingly central role Muslim Americans appear to be playing in America's racial hierarchy. The news media is America's principal window in viewing events across the country and in the world. It is a powerful actor in conveying messages to the public and in influencing its opinions. Considering the ability of the media to frame, portray, and disseminate information to the public, the manner in which Muslim Americans and Muslims more generally are portrayed is critical to their position in American society. Not only could this be a signal of the beginning of widespread discrimination and persecution of Muslim Americans, it could also indicate the beginning of a radical new shift in America's racial hierarchy and American race relations.

To fill this gap, I investigate the contours of Muslim and Muslim American media coverage in the U.S. news broadcast media and address two unanswered questions: (1) How does the U.S. news media portray Muslims and Muslim Americans in its coverage? And (2) what impact do these media portrayals have on American public opinion? Specifically, I evaluate the sentiment of Muslim American news coverage and assess how it compares to other racialized groups that scholars have regularly demonstrated are framed negatively. I also examine how the volume of coverage of Muslim Americans –

compared to other racialized groups – has changed over time.

I demonstrate that the media coverage of Muslim Americans is extremely negative and has become worse over time through sentiment analysis on all available CNN, FOX, and MSNBC news broadcast transcripts from 1992-2015. Whereas the coverage of Muslim Americans prior to 2001 closely mirrors the coverage of Asian Americans, Blacks, and Latinos, the sentiment of their coverage subsequently moved below the rest after 9/11.

This downward trend and current situation at the bottom of the American racial hierarchy points to two important findings. First, Muslim Americans arguably face deep-seated discrimination. Second, there arguably exists a nuanced, fluid, and ever-changing racial hierarchy.⁷

I then show that the sentiment of media coverage matters for public opinion. In two survey experiments on a nationally representative sample of White adults, I test how the media coverage affects Americans' resentment towards Muslim Americans.

My findings causally demonstrate that exposure to negative media coverage of Muslims and Muslim Americans increases resentment towards Muslim Americans and results in greater support for discriminatory policies against Muslim Americans. Positive coverage of Muslims and Muslim Americans, however, does not work in the same way. Positive coverage does not reduce resentment against Muslim Americans nor does it result in markedly different support for policy positions targeting Muslim Americans' rights.

These results provide evidence for some of the causes of anti-Muslim American sentiment among the public. Not only does the U.S. news broadcast media portray American Muslims negatively, the negative sentiment of broadcasts on American Muslims exceeds that of other racialized groups. The totality of these results suggests that

⁷This is at odds with the more fixed account of the racial hierarchies described by Kim (1999), Espiritu (1992), and Dawson (1994).

variations in attitudes and policy preferences are at least in part driven by negative media coverage.

4.3 Theory: News Coverage of Muslims and Muslim Americans Matters for Tangible Political Outcomes

Previous theories have argued that the news media is an important conduit for information by conveying messages to the public (Maslog, 1971; Chomsky, 1997). In doing so, it shapes attitudes, influences the national discourse, and generates stereotypes. (Brummett 1994). As a result, the media is the most important forum in which civil society organizations compete to create cultural impacts (Ferree et al. 2002; Hilgartner and Bosk 1988; Jacobs and Townsley 2011; Koopmans and Olzak 2004; Bail 2012).

Yet, the news media is neither neutral nor value-free. Scholars have long examined how media sources frame and prime minority racial groups to the general public and have found that, on average, the news media frames minorities as troublesome constituents (Iyengar 1982; Entman 1990, 1992; Gilliam et al. 1996; Gilliam and Iyengar 1997; Worthy, Hagan, and MacMillan 1997; Gilliam and Iyengar 2000; Kellstadt 2003; Branton and Dunaway 2006, Baum 2003; Prior 2005). These studies have largely demonstrated that the media coverage of marginalized demographics has embraced a set of binary oppositions situated in “us” versus “them” terms, which have subsequently compromised their status in society (van Dijk 1995; Cushion 1994; Gilliam and Iyengar 2000).

4.3.1 Why Should the Media Matter for Attitudes towards Muslim Americans?

I contend that media coverage should have a similar effect on public attitudes towards Muslim Americans for two reasons.

First, ordinary Americans are likely to have only limited personal experiences with Muslim Americans, since they compose only 1% of the population. As a result, the media serves as the public's principal source of information. According to a Pew 2014 survey, only 38% of Americans report knowing a Muslim personally.⁸ The same survey found that when asked to rate Muslim Americans on a feeling thermometer from 0 to 100, with 100 being the warmest, the average rating among people who knew a Muslim personally was 49, whereas the average score for those who did not was 35.⁹ Moreover, Muslims in America are concentrated in select few states. On average, U.S. states have 54,945 Muslims, with only eight states having Muslims who compose more than 100,000 residents.¹⁰ Thus, due to the limited amount of first-hand information most Americans have about Muslim Americans, there is ample room for the media to fill the void. The negative and increasing images they observe in the news media could thus serve an essentializing function (Shah and Thornton, 1994; Powell, 2011).

Second, media portrayals connected with events such as 9/11, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the civil conflict in Syria have produced compelling images and narratives that paint Muslims – and by extension Muslim Americans – as violent. With Islam, Muslims, and Muslim Americans entering the contemporary U.S. news cycle because of connections to oil, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Syria, terrorism, and ISIS, all of

⁸“How Americans Feel About Religious Groups.” <http://www.pewforum.org/2014/07/16/how-americans-feel-about-religious-groups/>. *Pew Research Survey*. July 16, 2014.

⁹Id.

¹⁰These states include: California (272,814 Muslims), Florida (164,846 Muslims), Illinois (359,264 Muslims), Michigan (120,351 Muslims), New Jersey (160,666 Muslims), New York (392,953 Muslims), Texas (421,972 Muslims), and Virginia (213,032 Muslims).

the major stories and, consequently much of what the American audience knows about Muslim Americans is connected to issues, such as war, terrorism, and oil. Given the media's preference for sensationalist and reductionist coverage, these portraits have given rise to moral panics. Narratives about Muslims and Muslim Americans facilitates the public's comprehension by distilling experience and knowledge (Gilliam and Iyengar, 2000).(Gilliam and Iyengar, 2000).

If proven true, the above theory can inform our understanding of the role of the media in shaping attitudes and actions toward Muslim Americans. It can also provide insight on tracing how exogenous events can move nonsalient groups into panethnic and salient outgroups.

4.3.2 The State of Knowledge on Muslim and Muslim American Coverage

Research on the depiction of Muslim Americans in the media is limited. A nascent body of research on the framing of Muslims and Muslim Americans in the U.S. news media provides a basis for theory building. For example, Nacos and Torres-Reyna (2002, 2007) show that the coverage of Muslim Americans increased in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. Bail (2012) used plagiarism detection software to demonstrate that the media discourse about Muslims in the aftermath of 9/11 was controlled by powerful and negative fringe organizations (Bail, 2012). And Bowe et al. (2013) examined media coverage and public perceptions over the course of a month and found a correlation between media coverage at one time point and public perceptions of Islam at another. However, this literature has neither engaged in an extensive analysis of the sentiment of Muslim and Muslim American coverage, nor has evaluated the effect of this coverage on public attitudes.

Three fundamental limitations impede rigorous theory development and hypoth-

esis testing. First, the literature does not cover a long enough pre- and post-9/11 time period to demonstrate how and in what way the media characterizes Muslims and Muslim Americans. With a dataset covering a larger timespan, it is possible to ascertain the manner in which Muslims and Muslim Americans transition from being a non-salient, under-discussed group, to one that is increasingly discussed more negatively. Second, much of the previous literature relies on individual coders to assess the news media's sentiment and topics. A more objective and methodical approach, such as sentiment analysis, would produce a more consistent narrative and reduce coding errors. Third, prior studies consider Muslim and Muslim American media portrayals without providing a point of reference. The inclusion of Black, Latino, and Asian American coverage as comparison groups provides a broader landscape of how Muslims and Muslim Americans fit in the narrative of American race relations.

Moreover, very little available information on aggregate attitudes towards Muslims and Muslim Americans exists for scholarly examination. A search on the Roper Center's iPoll database of all available surveys yielded two publicly available surveys prior to September 11, 2001. Since then, only 12 available surveys ask questions on favorability attitudes towards Muslims, Islam, and Muslim Americans.

These studies are all helpful but fail to provide the broader picture. None offer a systematic test of the tone of media coverage over a prolonged period of time to assess if coverage is increasing and if coverage is increasingly negative. Nor do any of these studies provide any real attempt to measure attitudes towards Muslim Americans in a systematic way. Moreover, the literature lacks an analysis of whether negative coverage has any effect on policy preferences targeting Muslim Americans. Thus, how Muslim Americans are portrayed, how that coverage affects public opinion, and how both have changed over time remains almost completely unexplored.

This paper rectifies each of these limitations. First, it covers an extensive time

period from 1992-2015 to provide a comprehensive assessment of Muslim and Muslim American coverage pre- and post-9/11. Second, it takes advantage of a standardized dictionary approach to sentiment analysis to reduce coding errors. Third, it not only provides an assessment of news media coverage of Muslims and Muslim Americans, but it also compares their coverage to Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans to situate them within America's racial hierarchy. Finally, it directly links their coverage to public attitudes through a framing experiment measuring how their media coverage affects the public's attitudes towards them.

4.4 Analyzing Muslim American Sentiment in the Media

To assess the news media coverage of Muslims and Muslim Americans, it is essential to consider the volume and sentiment of the discourse. To achieve this, I first collected all available broadcast news transcripts from CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC from 1992-2015 through Lexis Nexis Academic. I began my search in 1992 to provide a baseline pre-September 11, 2001 measure of sentiment and volume. By collecting data for a number of years prior to September 11, 2001, I obtain a baseline measure of sentiment and volume.¹¹

Lexis Nexis search results yielded 843,906 transcripts: 718,388 of which came from CNN, 101,871 from Fox News, and 23,647 from MSNBC.¹² The data was downloaded into txt files. To transform the data into a workable format, I cleaned the txt files,

¹¹However, only CNN broadcasts are available from 1992-1997. In 1998, Fox News broadcasts become available, and in 1999, MSNBC becomes available as well. Thus, a complete dataset of all coverage truly begins in 1998. I downloaded 500 news articles at a time (the maximum allowed by Lexis) and categorized them by year.

¹²Overall, 85.12% of the dataset came from CNN, 12.07% came from Fox News, and 2.8% came from MSNBC.

transformed them into csv files, and appended them using Python. Once I compiled an initial dataset, I conducted sentiment analysis of transcripts in R using the Hu and Liu dictionary (2004).¹³ Sentiment analysis empirically determines the author's feelings by examining incidence of positive and negative words in a corpus of documents (Bhonde et al. 2015). This standard dictionary approach computes a sentiment score for each individual broadcast transcript based on the number of positive words subtracted by the number of negative words that it contains (Hu and Liu dictionary; Barberà 2015). Using a dictionary approach to compile the sentiment of words in a given text observation is a basic technique to understand how positive, negative or neutral a given text observation is relative to the other text observations in the corpus. Despite the simplicity of this method, this dictionary approach is considered to achieve a high degree of accuracy (See Bailón and Paltoglou, 2015; Barberà, 2015, Figure 2). As a robustness check, I conducted the same analysis using the AFINN dictionary and attained nearly identical results.¹⁴

Since I am interested in (1) the volume of coverage of Muslims and Muslim Americans and (2) the sentiment of coverage of Muslims and Muslim Americans compared to other racialized minority groups, I subsetted the data into separate corpuses for each group of interest: Muslims, Muslim Americans, Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans.¹⁵

¹³Basic Sentiment Analysis in R. <https://sites.google.com/site/miningtwitter/questions/sentiment/analysis>. Accessed March 7, 2016.

¹⁴As a robustness check, I also used the AFINN dictionary, which was correlated with the Hu and Liu dictionary at 0.92.

¹⁵A definitional list of the search terms I used to subset the full dataset and to create each of the corpuses is located in the Appendix.

4.5 Sentiment and Volume of Muslim and Muslim American News Coverage

In the aggregate and from 1992-2015, I find that the coverage sentiment of Muslims and Muslim Americans was significantly below that of Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans. Figure 1 below displays coefficient plots of the sentiment groups have experienced in the news from 1992-2015, with the Hu and Liu sentiment on the vertical axis. The dashed line on the x-axis illustrates the coefficient and confidence intervals for the sentiment of Muslim Americans. Any crossover onto the dashed line for a group indicates that the sentiment of that group is not statistically distinguishable from that of Muslim Americans during this time. The points on the figure depict mean coverage sentiment of Muslims, mean coverage sentiment of Blacks, mean coverage sentiment of Latinos, and mean coverage sentiment of Asian Americans. The figure paints a clear hierarchical picture with Latinos at the top, followed by Blacks, Asian Americans, and Muslim Americans, and Muslims towards the bottom.

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Muslim Americans, and Muslims towards the bottom.

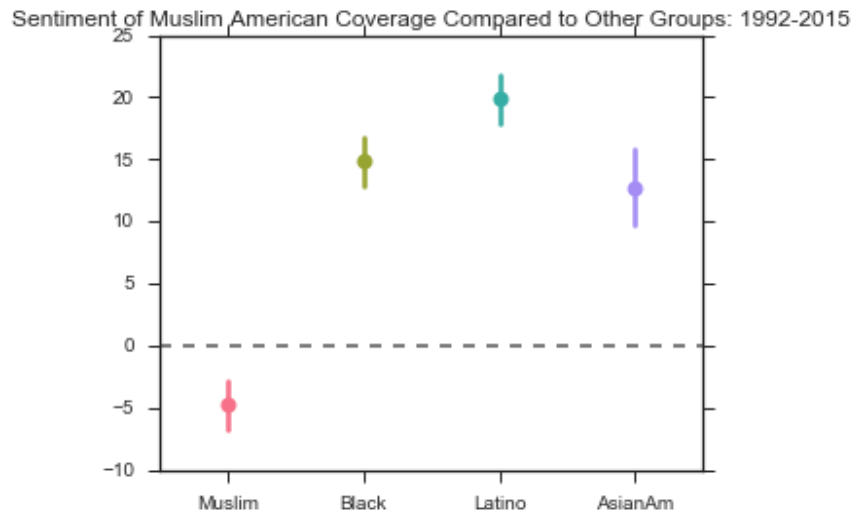


Figure 4.1: Sentiment of Muslim American Coverage

Over this time period and in the aggregate, Muslim Americans receive significantly less positive coverage compared to Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans. It is important to underline this point. When comparing the news media coverage of Muslim Americans to those of Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans – three racialized groups that are portrayed negatively by the media – Muslim Americans come out well below them. While it is difficult to talk about the magnitude of the effect using these kinds of data dictionaries and coding schemes, it is very clear from the figure that the media has portrayed Muslim Americans much more negatively during this time.

Three other patterns are also worthy of note. First, Muslim and Muslim American coverage are distinguishable from one another throughout the time period studied, with Muslims experiencing the most negative coverage among all examined groups. Second, despite some concern about an immigrant backlash and the media's negative portrayals of Latinos, my analysis of broadcast news transcripts suggests that the media's sentiment towards Latinos is at least marginally better than the coverage of Blacks. Finally, although there are far fewer stories on Asian Americans making it harder to definitively identify

placement of this group on the U.S. racial hierarchy, Asian Americans appear to be treated as poorly as Blacks by the media.

Another important question relates to how coverage has changed over time. Is sentiment toward Muslim Americans getting more negative and how does the placement of Muslim Americans relative to other minority groups change over time? To explore this question, I disaggregate the coverage by racial group over time. With this method, a much more fluid story explains the variation in the sentiment of coverage. Figure 2 provides an initial illustration of time trends with disaggregated sentiment scores by year. While there is substantial variation from year to year, an increasingly large gap between the coverage of Muslim Americans and the coverage of other racialized groups develops over time.

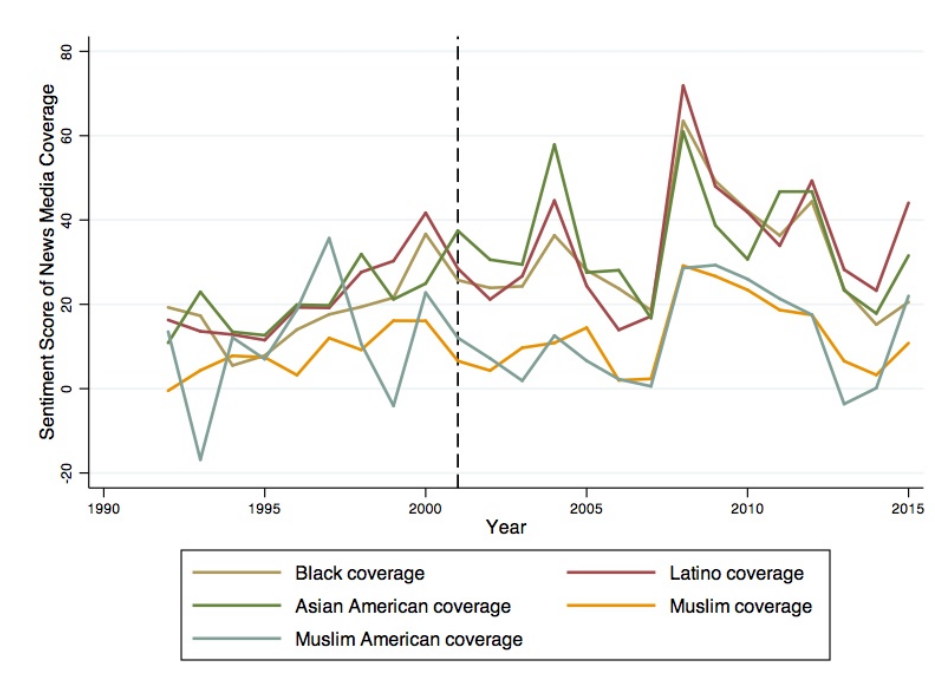


Figure 4.2: Media Coverage Sentiment from 1992-2015

I test the differences in sentiment between groups and over years more directly in Figure 3. By comparing coverage and sentiment scores prior to 9/11 with those after 9/11,

I observe differences in trends in these two time periods.¹⁶ Figure 3 shows that prior to 9/11, the sentiment of coverage on Muslims and Muslim Americans closely mirrored the sentiment of Black, Latino, and Asian American coverage.

¹⁶The pre-9/11 measure only includes observations from 1/1/1996-September 11, 2001 because there are only 33 Muslim American observations from 1992-1995.

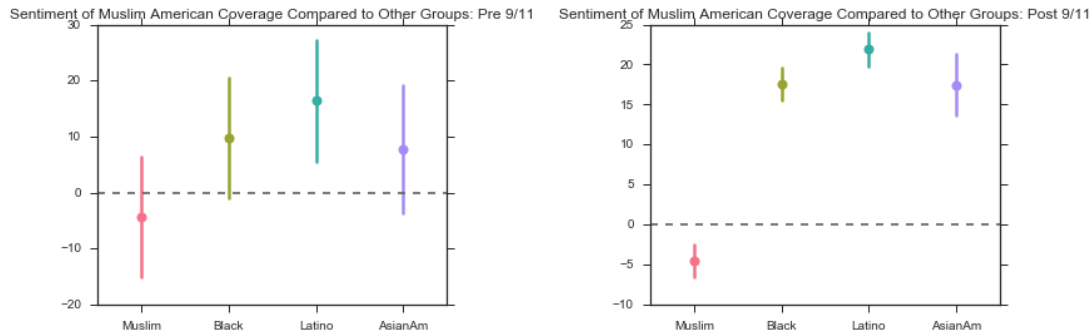


Figure 4.3: Sentiment of Coverage Pre- and Post-9/11

The coverage of Muslims and Muslim Americans was statistically indistinguishable from the coverage of Blacks and Latinos in the five and a half years prior to the attacks on September 11, 2001.¹⁷ This finding is telling of the racial hierarchy that existed prior to the events on September 11, 2001. During this time, the news media's coverage sentiment of Muslims, Muslim Americans, Blacks, and Asian Americans were similar. In other words, prior to 9/11, the coverage of Muslim Americans was not significantly more negative than the coverage of most other racialized groups. Muslim Americans were near the bottom of America's racial hierarchy, but they were not at the very bottom. However, Figure 3 demonstrates that the coverage of Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans became more positive than the coverage of Muslim Americans and Muslims after 9/11.¹⁸ Given this movement towards the very bottom of the racial hierarchy, Muslim and Muslim Americans have arguably since experienced more discrimination than any other racialized groups.

To demonstrate the dynamic shifts in media coverage of groups over time, I display the coefficient plots in Figure 4 below to address the second question and assess whether there has been a shift in how the media discusses each of these groups more recently. Figure 4 provides the coefficient plots for the coverage sentiment of groups in

¹⁷While the coverage of Latinos was statistically more positive than the coverage of Muslim Americans, it was not distinguishable from the coverage of Blacks, Muslims, and Asian Americans during this time.

¹⁸It is also worth noting that, Muslim coverage became significantly more negative than Muslim American coverage during this time.

2015 compared to Muslim Americans, as the outgroup.

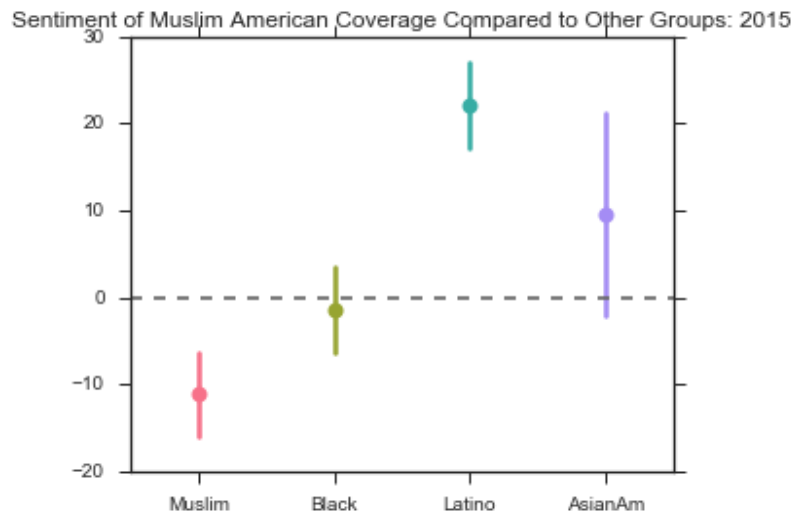


Figure 4.4: 2015 Media Coverage Sentiment

In 2015 – the year of debates on police brutality against African Americans, the rise of ISIS, the Syrian refugee crisis, the entrance of Donald Trump as a presidential candidate – I find great shifts in how the media portrayed different groups. During this time, the coverage sentiment of Blacks and Asian Americans is statistically non-distinguishable from the coverage sentiment of Muslim Americans. The coverage of Asian Americans is also not statistically distinguishable from the coverage of Muslim Americans in 2015, indicating similar positioning in the racial hierarchy.¹⁹ The gap between the coverage sentiment of Blacks and Latinos also widened greatly. The status of Blacks in the racial hierarchy arguably shifted in this year given that the coverage of Blacks seemingly lowered below Latinos and to similar levels as Muslim Americans during this time period, suggesting the existence of a nuanced and ever-changing racial hierarchy.

Before moving on to an analysis of the effects of media coverage on individual American attitudes and policy preferences, it is important to note one other pattern in

¹⁹This may also be due to the small volume of coverage on Asian American coverage during this time frame (167 transcripts)

the volume of media coverage. The volume of coverage of Muslim Americans, and even more so Muslims, is increasing markedly over time. Figure 5 shows the volume of coverage each year for each racial group and demonstrates a significant increase in the aggregate coverage of Muslim Americans by year and over time from 1992 and 2016. Even more impressive is the increase in coverage of Muslims. I find that the volume of Muslim and Muslim American news media coverage was minimal prior to 9/11. But in the aftermath of 9/11, the group has increasingly dominated American news broadcasts. Figure A2 in the Appendix also demonstrates this trend in a smooth plot of volume over time.

Crucially, I find that Muslims have experienced the greatest increases in coverage relative to Blacks and Latinos. In 2000, the year prior to 9/11, Muslims, Blacks, and Latinos appear in 1.87%, 4.95%, and 3.5% of all available news media broadcasts, respectively. However, these figures changed drastically fifteen years later. In 2015, I find that Muslims turn up in 14.2% of all available broadcasts, compared to 9.86% and 7.1% for mentions of Latinos and Blacks, respectively.²⁰ That year, the media covered Muslims nearly 1.5 times more than Blacks and twice as much as Latinos, its two largest racial groups. Given the increase in media focus on Muslims, in the experiments that follow I examine the coverage of both Muslims and Muslims Americans.

²⁰There were 38,882 available news broadcasts in 2015. Of those, 5,527 mentioned Muslims and were thus part of the *Muslim* corpus, 3,835 mentioned African Americans and were thus part of the *Black* corpus, and 2773 mentioned Latinos and were part of the *Latino* corpus. The definition breakdown of how I subsetting these groups is located in the Appendix.

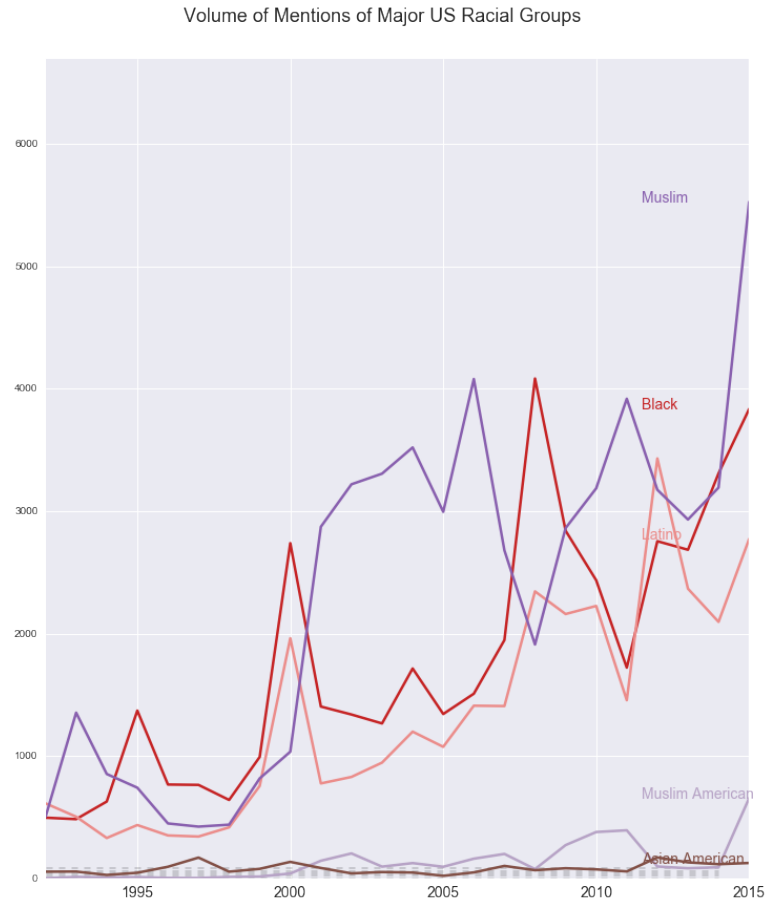


Figure 4.5: Volume of Media Coverage

All of this evidence points to several important conclusions. Muslims and Muslim Americans did not always share a salient outgroup status with Blacks and Latinos. However, after 9/11, not only did the mentions of Muslims and Muslim Americans in the news increase sharply, it became substantially more negative. Most importantly, the movement of different groups relative to each other over time suggests a new racial hierarchy, with Muslims and Muslim Americans not only increasingly prominent but also more demonized.

Overall, these findings inform and help resolve wide perspectives in the race and ethnic politics literature on the status of racialized groups in the racial hierarchy. They also suggest how exogenous events, such as 9/11, coupled with increasing sensationalist

and negative coverage can move nonsalient groups, such as Muslim Americans prior to 9/11, into salient outgroups.

4.6 Exploring the Effects of Media Coverage on Muslim American Resentment

I conducted two survey experiments to assess whether the sentiment of news media coverage found in broadcast transcripts about Muslims and Muslim Americans impacts the public's attitudes about Muslim Americans. Fielded by Survey Sampling International in June 2015, the survey experiments are nationally representative of American White adults. The findings presented are based on the results of 736 respondents drawn from an opt-in panel.²¹

Respondents were randomly selected to participate in one of two experiments. In Experiment 1, respondents were assigned to read 1 of 4 real broadcast news media transcripts. The transcripts respondents read were drawn from my observational dataset and include the most positive or the most negative broadcast transcripts on Muslims and Muslim American from 2015. I chose to use real broadcasts to attain a high degree of construct validity. In Experiment 1, respondents read transcripts from real coverage that the media is producing and disseminating. The drawback of this approach is that because the content of transcripts differ in a number of ways beyond just sentiment, it is difficult to know exactly which factors drive shifts in sentiment.²²

²¹Descriptive statistics of the sample are located in Table 1 of the Appendix.

²²Overall, I tried to select the most positive and the most negative news media broadcasts among transcripts that contained 10,000 words or less. Some media transcripts in 2015 exceeded 10,000 words but generally they were transcripts of many hours of presidential debates, which was not typical of a news media transcript. For the *Real Muslim American Negative Treatment*, I selected the third most negative transcript because the first and second most negative broadcasts were not substantially about Muslim Americans. For the *Real Muslim Positive Treatment*, I selected the sixth most positive transcript because the first five either did not discuss Muslims as a group or were not in fact very positive in tone. Next, for the *Real Muslim Negative Treatment*, I selected the most negative treatment from 2014, which late December

To supplement this work and resolve the problem of internal validity, I conducted Experiment 2. In Experiment 2, respondents were again randomly assigned to 1 of 4 groups, but read *manipulated* transcripts as opposed to *real* broadcast news media transcripts.²³ Experiment 2 provides improvements on internal validity because it varies on just two dimensions: sentiment of the transcript (positive and negative) and the group being discussed (Muslims versus Muslim Americans). It is a useful way of investigating whether my findings from the first experiment can be replicated in a more controlled design. The randomization design of the two experiments is depicted in Table 1 below.

27, 2014 because the most negative Muslim treatments from 2015 were too tied in subject matter to the presidential election.

²³The text of the manipulated frames is located in Box 1 of the Appendix.

Table 4.1: Experimental Design

Experiment 1: Real Frames		Experiment 2: Manipulated Frames	
Treatments	Observations	Treatments	Observations
Positive Treatments			
T1. Muslim American Positive	n = 93	T1. Muslim American Positive	n = 94
T2. Muslim Positive	n = 91	T2. Muslim Positive	n = 91
	Total = 184		Total = 185
Negative Treatments			
T3. Muslim American Negative	n = 91	T3. Muslim American Negative	n = 92
T4. Muslim Negative	n = 93	T4. Muslim Negative	n = 91
	Total = 184		Total = 183

First, respondents answered demographic questions and a series of questions on Muslim American Resentment before randomized exposure to a given treatment. Next, respondents were randomly exposed to one of the four treatments in Experiment 1 or one of the four treatments in Experiment 2. This randomization is depicted in Table 1. At this stage, respondents read the broadcast transcripts they were assigned. Finally, respondents answered post-test questions. In the post-test, respondents were asked about their support for policies targeting Muslims and Muslim Americans and were once again asked to answer the Muslim American Resentment questions to attain a measure of within-subject differences of attitudes towards Muslim Americans.

A Scale of Muslim American Resentment

One important contribution of this research is to develop a useable measure of attitudes toward Muslim Americans. There are rich literatures and compelling tests of racial resentment in the case of African Americans (See Bobo, 1983; Entman 1990; Kinder and Sanders, 1996), Latinos (Abrajano and Hajnal, 2015), and even Asian Americans (Lee, 2000). Yet, the American politics literature lacks a scale to assess attitudes toward Muslims.²⁴

To develop a scale, I relied heavily on items adapted from a rich European literature measuring attitudes held by teachers towards their Muslim students (See Agirdag et al. 2012²⁵; Bevelander and Otterbeck 2010; Heitmeyer and Zick 2004). Specifically, as can be seen in Table 2 below, nine items were employed to try to characterize the extent

²⁴There is exciting new research on attitudes toward Muslims in Europe (E.g. Modood, 2006; Franz, 2007; Simpson and Yinger, 2013).

²⁵These items were: (1) Muslim students reject jihad and violence, (2) The Flemish Muslim students will integrate successfully into Flemish society, (3) Besides lessons in Catholicism, Catholic schools with Muslim students should also organize lessons in Islam, (4) Flanders should increase Muslim immigrant community to satisfy the labor shortage, (5) The majority of Muslim students have behavioral problems (reverse coded), (6) Muslim immigrant students lack basic Dutch language skills (reverse coded), (7) Many Muslim students look favorably on jihad (reverse coded), and (8) Wearing headscarves should be banned in all schools (reverse coded).

to which respondents held resentful attitudes toward Muslim Americans.

These statements were: (1) Most Muslim Americans integrate successfully into American culture, (2) Muslim Americans sometimes do not have the best interests of Americans at heart, (3) Muslims living in the US should be subject to more surveillance than others, (4) Muslim Americans, in general, tend to be more violent than other people, (5) Most Muslim Americans reject jihad and violence (reverse coded), (6) Most Muslim Americans lack basic English language skills, (7) Most Muslim Americans are not terrorists (reverse coded), (8) Wearing headscarves should be banned in all public places, and (9) Muslim Americans do a good job of speaking out against Islamic terrorism. I chose these items because they are closely related to a scale that has already proven to successfully measure attitudes towards Muslims in the western world and are similar to contemporary stereotypes of Muslim Americans.

Table 2 below details each of the nine statements. Respondent attitudes towards these statements were measured using a 7-item Likert scale (see Table 2). Answer categories and their scores were as follows: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) somewhat agree, (4) neither agree nor disagree, (5) somewhat agree, (6) agree, and (7) strongly agree. Items 1, 7, and 9 were reverse coded so that increasing values also indicated greater resentment.

Several findings about the scale are important to highlight. First, the items appear to cohere well together. When administered in the pre-test, the correlation between items 3 and 4, items 2 and 3, and items 4 and 8 is 0.76, 0.63 and 0.62, respectively. In the post-test, the correlation between items 2 and 3, items 3 and 7, and items 4 and 6 is 0.77, 0.63, and 0.64, respectively. The scale yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.8425 when it was administered in the pre-test before exposure to the randomized treatment and 0.8456 when administered in the post-test.

Table 4.2: Descriptive statistics for individual scale items measuring Muslim American resentment for respondents randomly exposed to real and manipulated treatments

Item	Mean Pre- treat.	Mean Post- treat.	SD Pre- treat.	SD Post- treat.
Most Muslim Americans integrate successfully into American culture.	3.4	3.84	1.6	1.58
Muslim Americans sometimes do not have the best interests of Americans at heart.	4.0	4.24	1.62	1.62
Muslims living in the US should be subject to more surveillance than others.	3.9	3.82	1.73	1.76
Muslim Americans, in general, tend to be more violent than other people.	3.41	3.43	1.75	1.69
Most Muslim Americans reject jihad and violence.	3.31	3.36	1.63	1.6
Most Muslim Americans lack basic English language skills.	3.6	3.62	1.63	1.64
Most Muslim Americans are not terrorists.	2.63	2.77	1.49	1.49
Wearing headscarves should be banned in all public places.	3.23	3.21	1.92	1.94
Muslim Americans do a good job of speaking out against Islamic terrorism.	4.11	4.2	1.69	1.62

Note: Higher values on the scale indicate greater resentment on a 7 point Likert scale.

The mean scores displayed in the table above also provide important information. Overall, the average score for all nine items when administered in the pre-test was 3.56. When administered in the post-test, however, the mean was 3.63 and significantly differed from the pre-test mean at the $p < 0.000$ level. The difference in these scores indicates that, on average, exposure to any of the treatments in both Experiments 1 and 2 – irrespective of sentiment – increases resentment. Moreover, the fact that basic demographic factors such as education, gender, and income are significantly related to the scale aids to increase confidence in the validity of the scales.

Assessing the Effects of Negative Media Coverage on Muslim American Resentment

Does media coverage matter? Do negative stories shift individual Americans' attitudes towards Muslim Americans? In the next section, I answer these unexplored core questions by examining shifts in resentment towards Muslim Americans after exposure to one of four treatments in Experiment 1 and Experiment 2.

To begin, Table 3 below demonstrates mean Muslim American Resentment by exposure to a negative treatment in Experiment 1 and in Experiment 2. To attain average within-subject pre- and post-treatment Muslim American resentment scores, I generated a "Pre-Test Muslim American Resentment" variable that was equal to the sum of each of the nine resentment items administered prior to randomized exposure to a treatment, divided by 9. I also generated a "Post-Test Muslim American Resentment" variable that was equal to the sum of each of the nine resentment items administered after randomized exposure to a treatment, divided by 9.

Table 4.3: Mean Muslim American Resentment by Aggregated Negative Treatments

Experiment 1: Real Frames				Experiment 2: Manipulated Frames			
Negative Treatments	Pre-Muslim American Resentment Mean	Post-Muslim American Resentment Mean	Significance	Negative Treatments	Pre-Muslim American Resentment Mean	Post-Muslim American Resentment Mean	Significance
Muslim American	3.57	3.70	p = 0.03	Muslim American	3.63	3.78	p = 0.001
Muslim	3.61	3.75	p = 0.01	Muslim	3.61	3.72	p = 0.031
(Aggregate)	3.59	3.72	p = 0.001	(Aggregate)	3.63	3.76	p = 0.000

Note: The “Pre-Muslim American resentment” and “Post-Muslim American Resentment” measures calculate the mean resentment on a Likert scale from 1-7.

Higher values for these two measures indicate greater resentment.

The “Significance” columns indicate whether the within subject differences between “Pre-Muslim American Resentment” and “Post-Muslim American Resentment” are significant.

Table 3 above displays the within-subject experimental results by treatment group. The differences in Muslim American resentment before and after exposure to treatments are striking and indicate that negative coverage increases Muslim American resentment, while positive coverage has little effect. As Table 3 above demonstrates, I find that exposure to negative frames about Muslim Americans and Muslims significantly increases a respondent's Muslim American Resentment in both Experiment 1 and in Experiment 2. On a Likert scale from 1-7, and in the aggregate, respondents exposed to negative coverage in either Experiment 1 or in Experiment 2 increased their resentment towards Muslim Americans. Exposure to the treatment portraying negative Muslim American coverage increased Muslim American Resentment in Experiment 1 by 0.13 points and in Experiment 2 by 0.15 points. Exposure to the treatment portraying negative Muslim coverage increased Muslim American Resentment by 0.14 points and 0.11 points in Experiments 1 and 2, respectively.

While the effect size appears to be relatively small, it is significant. It is important to note though that the observed increase in resentment is based on exposure to a single broadcast transcript. Regular news viewers are likely to see broadcasts of this nature multiple times a week, if not a day. When the media repeats the same narrative, this resentment may add up and have a cumulative effect. Moreover, I find similar effects for Muslim and Muslim American coverage. This finding indicates that the discussion of *Muslims* affects the American public's views of *Muslim Americans*. This is noteworthy in light of the volume and incredibly negative nature of news coverage about Muslims.

However, it is important to determine if positive coverage decreases resentment against Muslim Americans. As Table 4 below shows, in the aggregate, neither exposure to positive coverage in Experiment 1 nor in Experiment 2 significantly moves respondents in either direction on the Muslim American Resentment scale.

Table 4.4: Mean Muslim American Resentment by Aggregated Positive Treatments

Experiment 1: Real Frames				Experiment 2: Manipulated Frames			
Positive Treatments	Pre-Muslim American Resentment Mean	Post-Muslim American Resentment Mean	Significance	Positive Treatments	Pre-Muslim American Resentment Mean	Post-Muslim American Resentment Mean	Significance
Muslim American	3.47	3.50	$p = 0.86$	Muslim American	3.57	3.55	$p = 0.68$
Muslim	3.55	3.61	$p = 0.05$	Muslim Positive	3.40	3.42	$p = 0.62$
(Aggregate)	3.50	3.55	$p = 0.52$	(Aggregate)	3.49	3.49	$p = 0.29$

Unlike negative coverage, I find that exposure to positive coverage generally does not significantly move resentment in any direction. Only one positive treatment in both Experiments increased resentment: Muslim Positive in Experiment 1. While this is a perplexing result, it is important to note that the effect size is small. Exposure to the Muslim Positive treatment in Experiment 1 only moved respondents by 0.06 points on a 7 point Likert scale. This result could also be due to several factors. First, it could be that any coverage of Muslims in 2015, no matter how positive, would be viewed negatively with the heightened discussion of Syria, refugees, ISIS, and terrorism in the media. Second, it could be an artifact of the particular broadcast transcript that was chosen. Nevertheless, given that there is consistency throughout the two experiments, I am confident that exposure to the positive coverage generally does not move respondents on the Muslim American Resentment scale.

How Media Coverage Affects Support for Restrictive Policy Domains

The results so far demonstrate that the negative sentiment of the news coverage significantly impacts respondents' resentment towards Muslim Americans. In this section, I examine how randomized exposure to negative versus positive coverage in Experiments 1 and 2 affects respondents' support for policies targeting Muslims and Muslim Americans. I also assess how these treatments impact support for statements made in 2015 by political leaders discussing Muslim Americans.

Media Coverage and Support for Immigration Policies

Table 5 displays the aggregate mean values for support towards three policy statements surrounding immigration. Table 1A in the Appendix displays the disaggregated mean values for each policy statement by treatment. These statements were administered only after respondents were randomly exposed to their treatment. Because I did not

collect a pre- and post- measure, I compare the effect of the positive treatment with the effect of the negative treatment.

The first dependent variable of interest is *Limit All Immigration*, which measures support for the following policy statement: “Limiting all immigration from all countries of origin until the nation’s representatives can figure out what is going on.” This statement broadly ascertains a respondent’s support for limiting immigration without respect to the identity of the immigrant. Respondents rated their support on a scale of 1-7 (with higher numbers indicating more support).

The second dependent variable subjects evaluated was *Limit All Muslim Immigration*, which asked respondents to rate their support for the following policy statement: “Limiting immigration from Muslim countries of origin until the nation’s representatives can figure out what is going on.” This statement evaluates the extent to which respondents feel that Muslims, rather than all immigrants, should be restricted from immigrating to the United States.

Finally, the third dependent variable was *Limit Muslim Americans From Reentering*, which was a policy statement stating: “Limiting Muslim Americans from re-entering the US if they have for any reason (i.e. vacation, work, longer visits) until the nation’s representatives can figure out what is going on” and was also evaluated on a 1-7 scale with higher values indicating greater support for the policy statement. The third dependent variable was the most stringent immigration policy statement evaluated, since it asked respondents to consider depriving American citizens their fundamental right of returning to their country after having left for any reason.

Table 4.5: T-Tests for Immigration Policy Positions by Aggregated Treatments

	Limit all Immigration (Mean)	Significance	Limit Muslim Immigration (Mean)	Significance	Limit Muslim Americans From Reentering (Mean)	Significance
Experiment 1: Real Frames						
Positive Treatments (Aggregate)	3.91		4.20		3.53	
Negative Treatments (Aggregate)	4.18	p = 0.176	4.29	p = 0.6509	3.82	p = 0.1513
Experiment 2: Manipulated Frames						
Positive Treatments (Aggregate)	3.74		3.96		3.42	
Negative Treatments (Aggregate)	4.35	p = 0.0014	4.60	p = 0.0008	4.17	p = 0.0000

The results of these tests once again display a clear pattern. As Table 5 demonstrates, respondents in Experiment 2 who were exposed to a negative treatment held significantly more negative views on policies targeting Muslim and Muslim American policies, compared to those exposed to a positive story. Across the board, respondents exposed to the negative treatment in Experiment 2 were significantly more likely than those exposed to the positive treatment to support the three policy positions. On a Likert scale from 1-7, those respondents exposed to the negative treatment were 0.61 points more likely to support the *Limit all Immigration* policy statement, 0.64 points more likely to support the *Limit all Muslim Immigration* policy statement, and, alarmingly, 0.75 points more likely to support the *Limit Muslim Americans From Reentering* policy statement.

Most convincingly, these results hold when I disaggregate the treatments in Experiment 2 (Table A1). When I compare the means of those respondents exposed to the Muslim American Positive versus the Muslim American Negative treatments on the 7-point Likert scales, I find that respondents were significantly more likely to support the *Limit all Immigration*, *Limit all Muslim Immigration*, and *Limit Muslim Americans From Reentering* policy statements by 0.51 points, 0.54 points, and 0.81 points, respectively (Table A1). Meanwhile, those respondents exposed to the Muslim Positive versus the Muslim Negative treatments on the 7 point Likert scale were significantly more likely to support the *Limit all Immigration*, *Limit all Muslim Immigration*, and *Limit Muslim Americans From Reentering* policy statements by 0.72 points, 0.74 points, and 0.74 points, respectively (Table A1).

The results, however, are not significant in Experiment 1. The difference between those respondents exposed to negative compared to positive treatments approaches significance, however, for only two of the three policy statements. Those respondents in Experiment 1 who were exposed to the negative treatment were 0.27 points more

likely to support the *Limit all Immigration* policy statement and 0.29 points more likely to support the *Limit Muslim Americans From Reentering* policy statement. While the results are not significant when I disaggregate the treatments, the means all point in the right direction. Those respondents in Experiment 1 who were exposed to the negative Muslim or negative Muslim American treatments were more likely to support each of the three policy domains.

The results point to a couple of conclusions. First, negative coverage has consequential effects on attitudes towards policies affecting Muslims and Muslim Americans. As demonstrated above, randomized exposure to negative coverage in Experiment 2 significantly moves attitudes towards supporting more restrictive immigration policies limiting Muslim and Muslim Americans. In Experiment 1, the movement is in the same direction and approaches significance. Second, the coverage of Muslims affects policy preferences towards Muslim Americans. This finding indicates that the discussion of Muslims in the news media has important consequences for the American public's views of policies targeting Muslim Americans. Again, this is noteworthy in light of the massive and incredibly negative coverage of Muslims. It indicates that much of this negative coverage may be moving Americans towards supporting policies limiting the freedoms of Muslims in America.

Media Coverage and Support for Elite Policy Positions

Next, I turn to statements on Muslim Americans made by political leaders in 2015. Although I did not identify the author of the statements, respondents were asked to evaluate each of the unattributed statements on a Likert scale from 1-7, with higher values indicating more support. Table 6 displays the mean values for support towards two elite statements after randomized exposure to one of the eight treatments in Experiment 1 or Experiment 1 and Table 2A displays the disaggregated mean values of support for

these policy statements.

The results once again point to the importance of the news media in influencing respondents to adopt more policy positions. Again, these statements were administered only after randomized exposure to one of eight treatments in either Experiment 1 or Experiment 2. Also, because I did not collect a pre- and post- measure and because I did not run a control group, I can only compare the effect of the positive treatment with the effect of the negative treatment.

The first dependent variable is *Media Distort*, which states: “Most of the media coverage of Muslims in America is distorted because of media portrayals in TV or film.” It was administered on a 1-7 Likert scale, with increasing values indicating more support for the statement. I reverse coded the statement so that an increase in support in Table 6 indicates less support for this statement.

The second dependent variable is *Police Patrol*, which states: “We need to empower law enforcement to patrol and secure Muslim neighborhoods before they become radicalized.” This statement was also administered on a 1-7 Likert scale. Greater values indicate more support for this statement.

Table 4.6: T-Tests for Elite Statements on Policy Positions by Aggregated Treatments

	Media Distort (Mean)	Sig.	Police Patrol (Mean)	Sig.
Experiment 1: Real Frames				
Positive Treatments (Aggregate)	3.39		3.85	
Negative Treatments (Aggregate)	3.85	p = 0.0038	4.12	p = 0.1278
Experiment 2: Manipulated Frames				
Positive Treatments (Aggregate)	3.25		3.83	
Negative Treatments (Aggregate)	3.58	p = 0.0411	4.29	p = 0.0106

In both Experiments 1 and 2, I find significant differences in aggregate attitudes towards the *Media Distort* variable when respondents were exposed to a negative versus a positive treatment. Respondents in Experiment 1 and Experiment 2 who received the negative treatment were 0.46 points and 0.33 points more likely to support the *Media Distort* statement compared to their positive treatment counterparts.

These results largely hold when I disaggregate the treatments in both experiments, as can be seen in Table A2. In Experiment 1, those respondents exposed to the negative Muslim American treatment were significantly less likely than those exposed to the positive Muslim American treatment to support the *Media Distort* statement by 0.52 points. Respondents who received the negative Muslim treatment were significantly less likely than those exposed to the positive Muslim treatment to support the statement by 0.4 points. In Experiment 2, the same patterns hold, though the differences only approach significance. Respondents exposed to the negative versus positive Muslim American treatments differed in their support by 0.3 points, while those exposed to the negative versus positive Muslim treatments differed by 0.36 points.

With respect to the *Police Patrol* dependent variable, I find significant differences in the aggregate between those respondents who were exposed to negative treatments

compared to those exposed to the positive treatments in Experiment 2 and almost significant differences in Experiment 1. On a Likert scale of 1-7, respondents in Experiment 1 were 0.27 points more likely to support the *Police Patrol* statement, whereas the difference for respondents in Experiment 2 was 0.46 points.

The results stay consistent when I disaggregate the treatments for two of the four treatments in Experiment 1 and for all four treatments in Experiment 2 (Table A2). In Experiment 1, respondents exposed to the negative Muslim American treatment were significantly more likely than those exposed to the positive Muslim American treatment to support the *Police Patrol* statement, by 0.5 points. In Experiment 1, I find insignificant results for the negative versus positive Muslim treatments. In Experiment 2, the patterns are consistent throughout. Respondents who received the negative Muslim American and negative Muslim treatments were significantly more likely than their positive counterparts to support the *Police Patrol* statement by 0.41 points and 0.53 points, respectively.

Together, these findings demonstrate that negative coverage matters for increasing support for more resentful policy positions. I find that randomized exposure to the negative coverage treatments significantly increased support for restrictive immigration policies targeting Muslims and Muslim Americans. In addition, I find that exposure to the negative coverage treatments significantly increased support for statements calling for a need to patrol Muslim American neighborhoods and decreased support for a statement indicating that the coverage of Muslim Americans is distorted because of media portrayals.

Importantly, these results move beyond the descriptive literature describing the stereotypes of Muslims and Muslim Americans in American news media coverage and present two new innovations. First, they causally demonstrate that negative media coverage of Muslims and Muslim Americans increases negativity and resentment towards Muslim Americans, thereby proliferating negative mass attitudes. Second, the results also

demonstrate that negative media coverage has tangible effects on ordinary Americans' support for policies that directly and negatively harm Muslims and Muslim Americans.

4.7 Implications

September 11, 2001 and other recent events have raised concerns about how Muslim Americans are portrayed in the media. Anecdotal accounts demonstrate that their media coverage embraces a set of binary oppositions in the context of “us” versus “them” categories and compromises their status in society. Many conclude, without empirical evidence, that the little coverage there is of Muslim Americans rarely depicts them in a positive light.

In this paper, I find that the news media plays an important role in shaping attitudes, discourse, and stereotypes about Muslim Americans. Much, if not all, of the information the public receives about Muslim Americans is disseminated by the news media. And, these portrayals have serious consequences for shaping and informing the public's attitudes.

My results show that the coverage of Muslim Americans has changed over time. Exposure to negative media coverage increases resentment towards Muslim Americans and increases support for restrictive policies targeting them. Positive coverage, moreover, does not appear to be working in the same way. Viewers exposed to positive coverage of Muslim Americans did not increase their favorability of Muslim Americans nor did they significantly reduce their support for restrictive policies aimed at limiting the rights of Muslim Americans.

Especially detrimental to the status of Muslim Americans in America's racial hierarchy is the coverage of *Muslims*; a foreign group whose coverage has increased exponentially since 2001 and has become more negative than any other racialized group.

I find that negatively slanted news coverage of Muslims systemically biases viewers to become more resentful towards *Muslim Americans*. It also leads respondents to support policies aimed at limiting the rights of Muslim Americans. Again, positive coverage of *Muslims* does not increase respondents' favorability of Muslim Americans nor does it significantly reduce support for restrictive policies. These results suggest that as long as Islamic terrorism is a major component of America's news cycle, life for Muslims in America will be made exceedingly difficult.

My results also indicate that media coverage has the ability to demonstrate shifts in where racialized minorities are situated in America's racial hierarchy. The movement of groups relative to one another demonstrates that our racial hierarchy is much more complex than scholars have typically understood. Whereas my research demonstrates that Muslim Americans were not portrayed more negatively than other racialized groups prior to 9/11, it also clearly shows that their status changed with the occurrence of 9/11 and other events.

In the post 9/11 era, Muslim Americans have become increasingly racialized. Not only has their coverage increased, it has also become increasingly more negative. Since 9/11, Muslim Americans have become portrayed significantly more negatively than any other racialized group in America. Today, Muslim Americans are the group at the bottom of America's racial hierarchy. Arguably, then, the racial hierarchy is much more variable than typically understood. Not only does it include more groups than previously thought, but groups also experience variable treatment relative to one other over time.

Together, these results also confirm that the news media matters for shaping public opinion. It is an institution that is actively processing information about Muslim Americans along racialized lines and is perpetuating their framing as troublesome constituents to the masses. In its coverage, the news media has prioritized the sensational over the mundane. Consequently, this coverage has important consequences for how the

public evaluates, processes, and contextualizes Muslim Americans as the “other.”

Chapter 4 is currently being prepared for submission for publication. Lajevardi, Nazita. “The Media Matters: Muslim American Portrayals and the Effects on Mass Attitudes.” The dissertation author is the primary researcher and sole author of this paper.

4.8 Bibliography

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4.9 Appendix

Box 2: Experiment 2 Template

Sullivan, host: Good evening to our viewers across the country and across the world. This is (Sullivan), and tonight we are examining the content of Facebook posts by (Muslim Americans / Muslims) around the world. Here with me is (Scuitto), our chief technology analyst. (Scuitto), welcome.

Scuitto, chief technology analyst: Thank you for having me.

Sullivan, host: So tell us – what did your research find?

Scuitto, chief technology analyst: Well as you know (Sullivan), (Muslim Americans/ Muslims) are all over the news today. It seems you can't watch a regular broadcast segment without them popping up. But we know very little about them in general. So our team decided that one way to understand what is going on with them was to investigate what Muslims around the world are writing about on Facebook. Strikingly, one of the most active Facebook accounts we came across belonged to a man who is a (Muslim American of Jordanian background / recent immigrant from Jordan), who has graduated from college, and who is now living on the east coast. Just an average guy. (But he has also been repeatedly and publicly denouncing ISIS and all forms of jihadi extremism in solidarity with the US and our allies in the War on Terror / But he has also been repeatedly publicly supporting ISIS and all forms of jihadi extremism against the US and our allies). These posts really made us think that we need to reevaluate how we perceive Muslims around the world and that we need to understand their beliefs more carefully to make sure America knows what they think and who they are.

Note: Bolded items were experimentally manipulated.

Table A1: T-Tests for Immigration Policy Positions by Disaggregated Treatments

	Limit all Imm. (Mean)	Sig.	Limit Muslim Imm. (Mean)	Sig.	Limit Musl. Am. From Reentering (Mean)	Sig.
Experiment 1: Real Frames						
Positive Treatments						
T1. Muslim American Positive	3.99		4.19		3.45	
T2. Muslim Positive	3.84		4.20		3.62	
(Aggregate)	3.91		4.20		3.53	
Negative Treatments						
T3. Muslim American Negative	4.18	p = 0.201	4.36	p = 0.576	4	p = 0.0572
T4. Muslim Negative	4.19	p = 0.519	4.23	p = 0.951	3.64	p = 0.9155
(Aggregate)	4.18	p = 0.176	4.29	p = 0.6509	3.82	p = 0.1513
Experiment 2: Manipulated Frames						
Positive Treatments						
T1. Muslim American Positive	3.76		3.97		3.49	
T2. Muslim Positive	3.71		3.95		3.34	
(Aggregate)	3.74		3.96		3.42	
Negative Treatments						
T3. Muslim American Negative	4.27	p = 0.0692	4.51	p = 0.0521	4.30	p = 0.0028
T4. Muslim Negative	4.43	p = 0.0069	4.69	p = 0.0053	4.08	p = 0.0039
(Aggregate)	4.35	p = 0.0014	4.60	p = 0.0008	4.17	p = 0.0000

Table A2: T-Tests for Elite Statements on Policy Positions by Disaggregated Treatment

	Media Distort (Mean)	Sig.	Police Patrol (Mean)	Sig.
Experiment 1: Real Frames				
Positive Treatments				
T1. Muslim American Positive	3.29		3.80	
T2. Muslim Positive (Aggregate)	3.48 3.39		3.90 3.85	
Negative Treatments				
T3. Muslim American Negative	3.81	p = 0.0171	4.30	p = 0.0564
T4. Muslim Negative (Aggregate)	3.88 3.85	p = 0.0870 p = 0.0038	3.95 4.12	p = 0.8523 p = 0.1278
Experiment 2: Manipulated Frames				
Positive Treatments				
T1. Muslim American Positive	3.28		3.85	
T2. Muslim Positive (Aggregate)	3.22 3.25		3.80 3.83	
Negative Treatments				
T3. Muslim American Negative	3.58	p = 0.1880	4.26	p = 0.1323
T4. Muslim Negative (Aggregate)	3.58 3.58	p = 0.1171 p = 0.0411	4.33 4.29	p = 0.0334 p = 0.0106

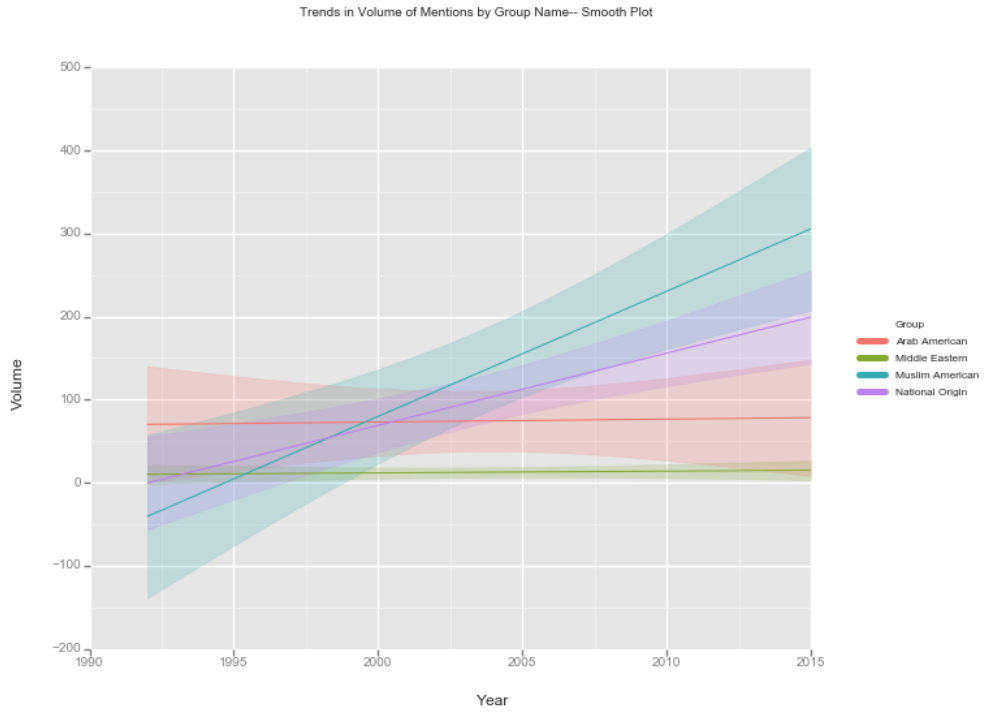


Figure 4.6: Figure A1

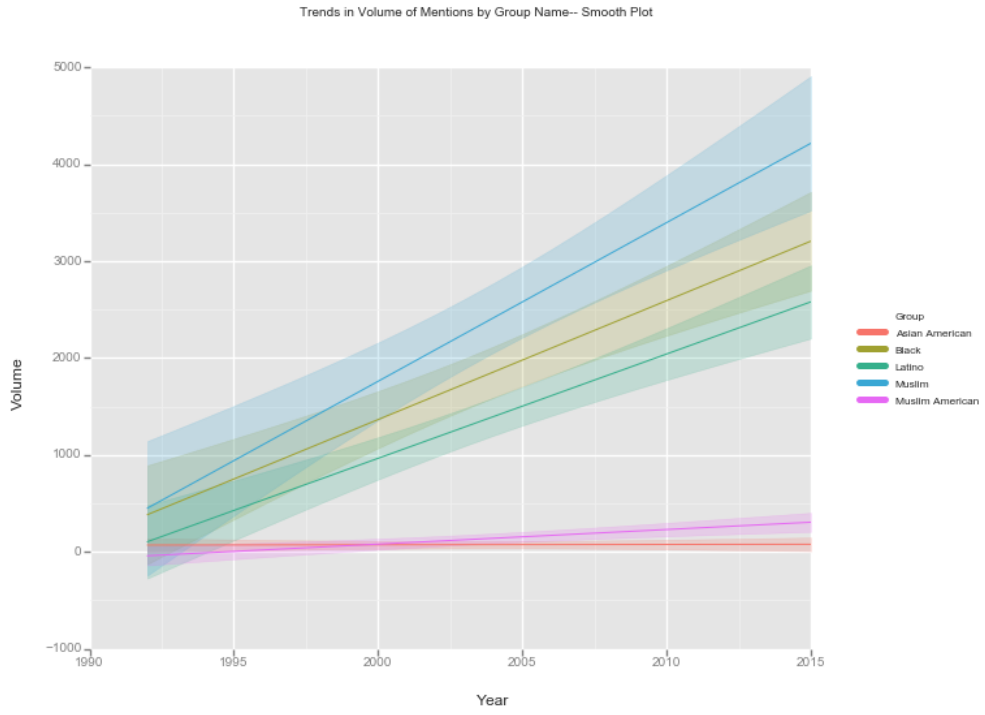


Figure 4.7: Figure A2

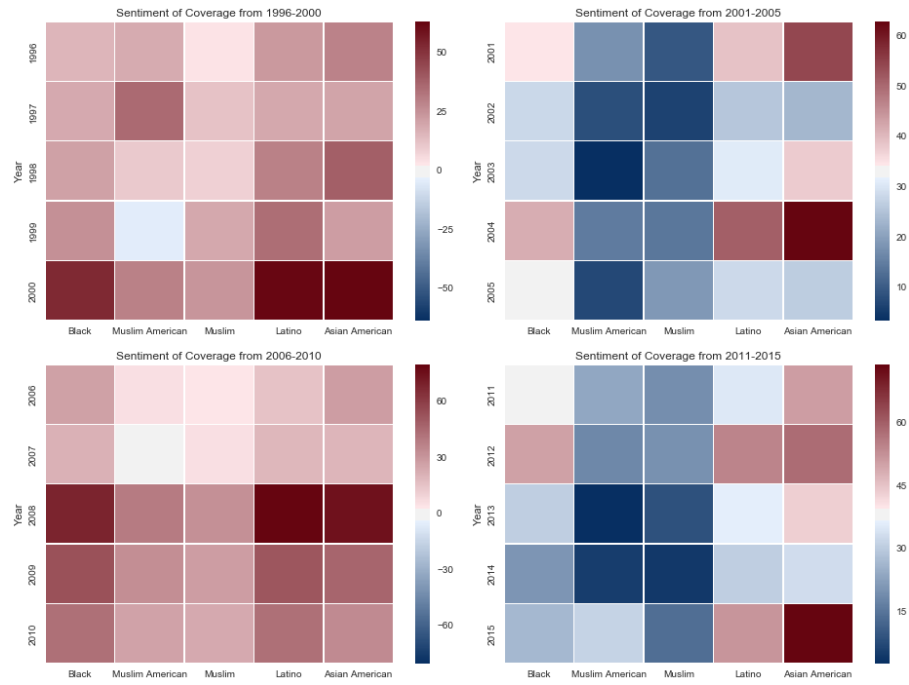


Figure 4.8: Figure A3: Heat Maps Depicting Sentiment of Coverage from 1996-2015

Box 1: Subsetting Terms to Create Corporuses

1. **Muslim American:** muslim american, muslim-american, american muslim, american-muslim, amer muslim, amer. muslim, muslims in america, muslim in america
2. **Arab American:** arab american, arab americans, arab-american, arab-americans, american arab, american arabs, american-arabs, amer arab, amer. Arab
3. **Muslim:** Muslim: muslim, moslem
4. **National Origin American:** libyan-american, libyan american, american libyan, kuwaiti-american, kuwaiti american, american kuwaiti, tunisian-american, tunisian american, american tunisian, bahraini-american, bahraini american, american bahraini, egyptian-american, egyptian american, american egyptian, iraqi-american, iraqi american, american iraqi, yemeni-american, yemeni american, american yemeni, turkish-american, turkish american, american turk, moroccan-american, moroccan american, american moroccan, jordanian-american, jordanian american, american jordanian, iranian-american, iranian american, american iranian, lebanese-american, lebanese american, american lebanese, armenian-american, armenian american, american armenian, omani-american, omani american, american omani, saudi arabian-american, saudi arabian american, american saudi arabian, syrian-american, syrian american, american syrian, algerian-american, algerian american, american algerian, palestinian-american, palestinian american, american palestinian
5. **Middle Eastern:** middle easterner, middle-easterner, middle eastern american, middle-eastern american, middle easterners, middle-easterners, middle eastern americans, middle-eastern americans
6. **African American:** african american, african americans, african-american, african-americans
7. **Hispanic:** latino, latina, latinos, latinas, hispanic
8. **Asian American:** asian american, asian-american, american asian, american asian, amer asian, amer. asian

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and increasingly since the 2016 presidential campaign, media and public attention on Muslim Americans has increased. Much of this disproportionate attention has translated into tangible forms of discrimination that may be hindering the ability of Muslim Americans to seek representation and partners for coalition building in American politics.

This dissertation has painted a comprehensive assessment of Muslim American discrimination American politics. It fills an important and unexplored gap in the literature despite anecdotal signs that Islamophobia is increasing in each of these domains. I used quantitative methods, including survey experiments, field experiments, and text analysis of media transcripts, to systematically develop a nuanced theory of America's racial hierarchy that (a) takes into account a new group (Muslim Americans) and (b) demonstrates that racial groups exhibit malleable status relative to other groups over time. My bleak findings have stark implications for the quality of Muslim American participation and representation in American democracy.