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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE

Tolerance Uncovered:
How Frequency of News Exposure and Contact Affects Tolerance of Groups

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Political Science

by

Anwar Hijaz

December 2019

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Jennifer Merolla, Chairperson
Dr. Shaun Bowler
Dr. Loren Collingwood

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The Dissertation of Anwar Hijaz is approved:

Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Tolerance Uncovered:
How Frequency of News Exposure and Contact Affects Tolerance of Groups

by

Anwar Hijaz

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Political Science
University of California, Riverside, December 2019
Dr. Jennifer Merolla, Chairperson

Tolerance of opposing viewpoints is a critical aspect of a functioning democracy. Past research on tolerance has made substantial progress in recent years, but we are left without a comprehensive understanding of the extent to which more frequent exposure to positively or negatively framed coverage affects tolerance of out-groups, and to what extent these effects may be enhanced or moderated by different types of contact with a member of said out-group. Using a mixed methods approach that relies on both quantitative (laboratory experiments) and qualitative (interviews and content analysis) methods my dissertation research contributes to our understanding of the effects of media and contact on tolerance of groups. Using Muslim-Americans as a case study, I begin with detailed content analysis of 40 news articles related to the 2010 controversy over a proposed Mosque in Temecula, CA. I find the overwhelming majority of these articles framed the proposed Mosque construction in a negative way. Fear of extremist activity, Islam as a domestic threat, and Islamization of America were common themes. I

follow my content analysis with interviews of Temecula residents who were either for or against mosque construction. Among the opposition, I find similar themes to my content analysis related to fear of Islam and Muslims. The majority of supporters argued that media played an important role in creating opposition to the proposed Mosque. My qualitative work provides context for three original experiments that I use to argue and demonstrate that positive media exposure leads to significant increases in tolerance, and that these effects increase with multiple positive media exposure. I also show that exposure to multiple negative news stories leads to reductions in tolerance greater than a single story alone. I further demonstrate that contact is an effective means of increasing tolerant judgements. I first use self-reported measures of contact to illustrate the effects of contact alone and its interaction with different types (positive or negative) and amounts (frequency) of media. I find that high levels of contact moderate the effects of negative media, including exposure to multiple negative frames. I also find that contact enhances the effects of positive media exposure. To better develop the causal relationship between contact and tolerance, I then devise and conduct a novel original experiment where contact is randomly assigned in the context of exposure to two negative or a single positive news article. I find that contact alone leads to significant increases in tolerance and that these effects are enhanced by positive media and washed out by negative media. Together, my dissertation demonstrates that the formation of tolerant judgments is a multi-factorial process, the interactions of these factors are important, and each factor (i.e. media, contact, and frequency) should be considered to operate on a continuum.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

At a December 2015 rally in Charleston, South Carolina, just a few days after the San Bernardino, California shootings, presidential candidate Donald Trump announced to thousands of supporters “Donald J. Trump is calling for a complete and total shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country’s representatives can figure out what the hell is going on” (Healy et al. NYTimes, 2015). In his 2016 election campaign, Trump was by far the best “earner” of free media coverage. Trump estimated \$2 billion in “earned media” over the first nine months of his campaign (Healy et al. NYTimes, 2015). He was prolific with statements in the media that negatively framed immigrants and minorities.

This pervasive negative rhetoric among politicians and political pundits raises many important questions. I utilize Muslim Americans as a case study to understand one of the most salient: How does the media play a role in influencing tolerance of minority groups? Specifically, I investigate the effects of both positively and negatively framed coverage on tolerance, and whether these effects may be moderated by contact with Muslim Americans. Media frames and the effects of contact are well studied, however the effects of frequency (i.e. exposure to multiple news stories) and its interaction with contact represent a significant gap in the existing literature. I argue that as individuals are exposed to an increasing number of negatively framed news articles, tolerance towards Muslims decreases, and as individuals are exposed to an increasing number of positively framed articles, tolerance increases. Further, I argue that contact also plays a significant role in influencing tolerant judgments. Specifically, contact on its own has a

significant effect and this effect interacts with the type and amount of media exposure.

Using a mixed methods approach, I demonstrate media frames, frequency, and contact all play important roles in shifting tolerant judgments.

Defining Tolerance?

In my research I employ the definition of tolerance developed by Bernard Crick (1973). Tolerance implies willingness and ability to put up with opinions and/or behaviors that one opposes or rejects (Sullivan et al. 1981). It is important to think of a tolerant individual as someone who reflects a specific style of cognitive operation (Sullivan et al. 1981). When we say that one tolerates an individual, we certainly do not mean that one likes or approves of them, but merely that, in spite of their dislike, and opposition, one shall endure them and/or their action (Allport, 1979). Marcus et al. (1995, 3) states, “political tolerance requires that democratic citizens and leaders secure the full political rights of expression and political participation of groups they find objectionable.” Tolerating someone implies the willingness to permit the expression of other people’s ideas or interests. Tolerant individuals do not restrict ideas that challenge their own opinions. To tolerate something or someone is a negative act of acceptance and endurance. Specifically, political tolerance is when one allows those with whom they disagree the freedom to practice their constitutional rights in the promotion of their views (Marie Ann Eisenstein argues, 2008).

In this dissertation, I examine tolerance towards members of an outgroup. I further distinguish between democratic norms and tolerant beliefs. One may hold democratic values while simultaneously expressing intolerance by failing to apply those

values. Importantly, intolerance is not disagreement in attitudes and/or opinions, but rather actions resulting from those disagreements. Marie Ann Eisenstein argues “political tolerance is about actions, not attitudes” (15, 2008). For example, arguments against a woman’s right to an abortion are not necessarily intolerant provided no action is taken.

The concept of tolerance has been frequently confused with notions of democracy, freedom from prejudice, and open-mindedness. It is often construed that individuals who are without prejudice are tolerant and that those who hold prejudiced beliefs are intolerant. The two notions do not necessarily go hand-in-hand. A prejudiced individual may be tolerant “if he understands his prejudices and proceeds to permit the expression of those things toward which he is prejudiced” (Sullivan, Marcus, and Pierson 1979: 4). Conversely, a tolerant individual does not necessarily imply an absence of prejudiced beliefs (Sullivan et al. 1981).

Why Study Tolerance?

Tolerance is a fundamental principle of democracy that requires opposing views to be represented (Prothro and Grigg, 1960; McClosky, 1964). Tolerant beliefs include, but are not limited to, the willingness to permit expression of ideas and/or interests that one opposes. Political tolerance is crucial and any deviation in society from promoting tolerance is undesirable and threatens the very existence of democracy (Prothro-Grigg 1960, McClosky 1964; Lawrence 1976, Davis 1975).

A key factor distinguishing democracies from alternative forms of government is the degree to which opposition is permitted. Although democratic regimes both allow and encourage opposition, they sometimes face the challenge of balancing between opposing

viewpoints and tolerance (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus 1989). Citizens within democracies should not restrict the participation of their fellow citizens in the political system, even if their ideas challenge the view of the majority (Gibson 2010).

The importance of tolerance is apparent when divisions arise. In democracies, conflicting parties must have the right to engage in politics within the bounds of what is legal and civil (Sullivan et al. 1982). When the public makes decisions, opposing individual(s) must have the right to engage in politics and continue legal opposition without the fear of reprisal, even if unpopular opinions are expressed. Tolerance within a democratic system helps to keep the opposition within the limits of legitimate political procedures, and ensures access to participation is available to all citizens. Tolerance is essential because it protects citizens' rights to political opposition and expression, thereby protecting them from the danger that members of a majority may violate the rights of the minority.

Tolerance also encourages the autonomy of the individual, which is a central aspect of democratic governance. Individual autonomy is the capacity to be one's own person, and to live a life according to reasons and motives that are one's own and not the product of distorting and manipulative external forces (Mill, 1956). This is critical to the development of human capacities. Tolerance aids in the fulfillment of individual autonomy because it allows expression, as long as no harm is done to others. It does so by encouraging the creation of a society that encourages political and religious heterogeneity.

The concept of tolerance has a long history in theory and philosophy, particularly as it relates to social life of religious practices (Marie Ann Eisenstein, 2008,16). In sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe, many philosophers wrote on religious toleration. In “A Letter Concerning Toleration” John Locke argued that the political authority should not interfere with an individual’s religious belief. Locke argued that governmental authority and individual autonomy were two-distinct spheres of knowledge and action, and that religious belief is a private matter. For Locke, allowing individuals to decide their own religious beliefs is a principal means of protecting government legitimacy. He emphasized that if government tries to enforce religious homogeneity through violence or the use of force, this in turn would “negate the justification for government and replace legitimate government with illegitimate government” (Marie Ann Eisenstein, 17, 2008).

Thomas Jefferson and James Madison emphasized their lifelong commitment to tolerance in their proclamation for separation of church and state, which we today attribute modern interpretations of First Amendment religious clauses and twenty-first-century notions of appropriate church-state relations. In “A Memorial and Remonstrance,” Madison argued his most important contribution to the notion of church-state separation. This petition was written in opposition to the proposed Virginia bill establishing a provision for a “Teacher of the Christian Religion”. This petition was an important factor in the ultimate defeat of the proposed bill and enactment of Jefferson’s bill establishing religious freedom. (Timothy Hall, 1997).

Many theorists have argued that considerable tolerance of unpopular opinion is required for a functioning democracy. Thomas Jefferson argued that tolerance is valued in a democracy because it recognizes equal rights for all citizens. Jefferson believed a free market of ideas is the best means to discover “truth” (Notes on the State of Virginia, 1781). Tolerance allows individuals to express a wide variety of ideas and beliefs, even if the majority disagrees. In a democracy, it is expected that differences are resolved through a fair process, in which people are treated as equals. In turn, tolerance promotes individual and social goods that are linked to the pursuit of equality. An absence or reduction in tolerance creates a risk of minority suppression, or in the extreme, a situation where the majority tyrannizes the minority. Madison similarly argued that the constitutional order dividing government into “distinct and separate departments” (Federalist 51) protects against oppression. Specifically, he argued that ordinary politics moderate mass sentiments of intolerance as long as targets of intolerance are diverse, and in turn the federal constitutional order protects civil liberties of all.

Although Americans overwhelmingly express democratic principles of respecting and ensuring the rights of unpopular political minorities, in practice this turns out to be far more difficult, and in many cases, not necessarily the outcome. The U.S generally does not have laws prohibiting ostensible religious symbols such as the headscarf in France. However, social forms of intolerance are emerging and increasing in the U.S. For example, in May 2010 an announcement was made for a proposed Islamic cultural center and mosque near ground zero (known as Park 51). This event sparked national media attention in which politicians and commentators worked themselves and viewers

into a frenzy. Republicans intensified efforts to stop the construction of the center calling it a threat to American values (Altman, TIME, Aug 2010). Some argued that the mosque might be funded by radicals (McManus, LA Times, Aug, 2010), Newt Gingrich weighed in by stating: “there should be no mosque near Ground Zero in New York so long as there are no churches or synagogues in Saudi Arabia...It is simply grotesque to erect a mosque at the site of the most visible and powerful symbol of the horrible consequences of radical Islamist ideology” (Hertzberg, New Yorker, Aug 2010). Democrats did not shy from objecting to construction of the Center. For example, Senator Harry Reid said through a spokesman, that those who plan to erect the Islamic center should look elsewhere. The high-profile coverage of Park 51 fueled a surge in hate crimes against Muslim individuals, mosques, and Muslim-owned business around the country (Abdelkader, 2016). Anti-Muslim protests surged, including opposition to new Islamic centers from California to Georgia (McGreal, The Guardian, Aug 2010). Construction of this Islamic Center and Mosque reflects one of the many salient and controversial incidents in the last decade, in which a clear fundamental democratic principle has been placed in question.

Factors that Influence Tolerance

Among the most important of many factors that influence tolerance judgments was first identified by Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus (1982) in their work developing a theory of pluralistic intolerance. The authors argued that if and when a society lacks consensus on who the enemy is, widespread intolerance may decrease and neutralize. Specifically, if society picks a variety of “least-liked” groups, it is difficult to mobilize

against these groups because there is insufficient agreement regarding who to dislike. Other important works identified predictors of intolerance as well. Sniderman (1975) looked at both self-esteem and social learning as factors. Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus (1982) argue that threat perceptions, democratic values, and psychological insecurities each play a role. Stenner (2005) examined the effects of authoritarian personality traits. These studies have a common theme that “closed-mindedness’ or psychological rigidity contribute to intolerance, even if the precise label attached to the concept varies across researchers.

Threat, and/or the perception of threat is another important factor contributing to intolerance. Individuals who are or feel threatened are less likely to be tolerant of those whom they are threatened by (Gibson and Gouws 2003; Davis and Silver, 2004; Marcus et al. 1995; Feldman and Stenner, 1997; Merolla and Zechmeister, 2009). Scholars agree that higher threat perceptions lead to a greater likelihood that tolerance will decrease. For example, Merolla and Zechmeister (2009) find that some individuals react to terrorist threats by expressing increased distrust of others in society and are more likely to express intolerant and punitive attitudes.

While there is extensive literature looking at the factors that influence tolerant judgments, few studies have looked at the role of the media in influencing tolerance towards Muslim Americans. My research explores the effects of both positively and negatively framed media on tolerance of Muslims. In this dissertation, I argue and demonstrate that exposure to negative media coverage of Muslim salient issues causes

tolerance towards Muslims to decrease. Conversely, I argue and demonstrate that positive media coverage increases tolerance towards Muslims.

Media and Framing Matter

There is considerable scholarship and widespread agreement that the media plays a significant role in affecting public opinion by framing issues in distinct ways (Gamson et al. 1992, Iyengar 1991, Zaller, 1992; Nelson and Kinder 1996, Nelson et al., 1997; Druckman, 2001, Chong and Druckman, 2007; Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007). My research supports this idea and further details how media affects tolerance of groups. Framing refers to “subtle alterations in the statement or presentation of judgment and choice problems” (Iyengar, 1991, p.11). Research on framing consistently argues that characterization of issues in the media has a profound influence on how these issues are understood by viewers (Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Kahneman and Tversky 1979, 1984; Kahneman, 2003, Goffman 1974). Through text and other presentations, media frames can define social and political issues and situations, set the terms of a debates (Reese, Oscar, Grant 2001), declare underlying causes and likely consequences of a problem, and establish criteria for evaluating potential remedies (Iyengar, 1991).

Frames include both visual and verbal material, which may have significant consequences on viewers perceptions and understanding of an issue, and in turn directs formation of individual opinions about a controversy (Iyengar 1991, Nelson and Kinder 1996). Specifically, frames may shape individual opinion by stressing a specific element or feature of a broader controversy (Nelson, Oxley, and Clawson, 1997). For example, Sniderman and Theriault (2004) find that individuals overwhelmingly support increased

government spending on social programs for the poor when the issue is framed as improving economic outcomes. Conversely, when the same programs are framed as resulting in higher taxes, individuals tend to oppose increased spending.

One prominent study that connects tolerance and media is Nelson, Clawson and Oxley (1997) study of framing effects. The authors conduct an experiment examining effects of news frames on tolerance of the Ku Klux Klan. Participants were presented with one of two local news stories about a Klan rally. One story framed the rally as a disruption to public order. The second framed the rally as a free speech issue. Participants who were exposed to the free speech frame were more tolerant of the Klan than participants who were exposed to the public order frame. The authors conclude that media framing affects tolerance of groups. Specifically, they argue that frames affect opinions simply by making certain considerations and values seem more important than others, which in turn carry greater weight in developing the final attitude. While there is some literature testing whether or not media frames affect tolerance (Nelson, Clawson and Oxley, 1997; Nelson & Oxley, 1999; Ramírez et al. 2011), we are still not clear to what extent *frequency* of exposure to the media affects tolerance, and whether or not *interactions with individuals targeted by the coverage* may mitigate the effects of news exposure. Therefore, my project asks the following questions:

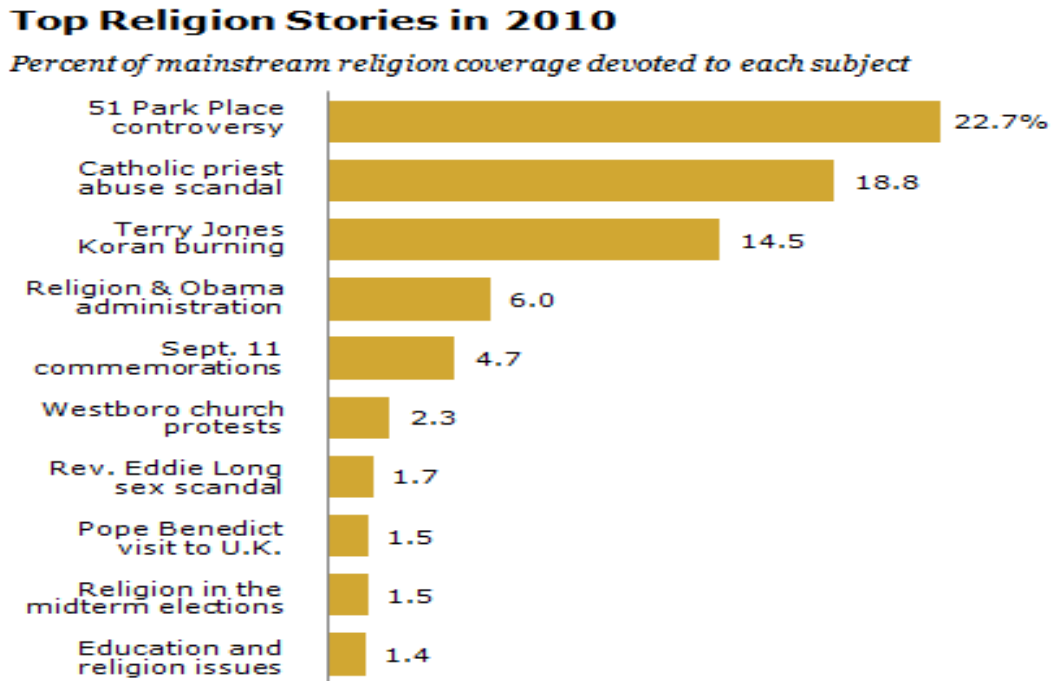
- 1.** To what extent does exposure to positive (single story exposure) and negative (single story exposure) news stories lead to respective increases or decreases in tolerance?

2. To what extent does more frequent exposure to positive or negative news stories lead to respective increases or decreases in tolerance?
3. Does contact with a member of an out-group increase or decrease tolerant attitudes in the absence and availability of positively and negatively framed media?

Why Study Muslim Americans As a Case?

To best understand the effects of repeated media exposure on tolerance, I selected a minority group that has been consistently covered in the media but has not been considered extensively in scholarship: Muslim Americans. Stories involving Muslims in the media have been frequent. For example, Figure 1.1 from the Pew Research Center illustrates four of the top five religion stories in 2010 involved controversies related to Islam. The plan to build an Islamic center and mosque near ground zero was the top religion story in 2010. The third story involved a Florida pastor's plan to host a Koran burning event on September 11th. The fourth most covered religion story "dealt with public perceptions of the president's faith and the belief among a large segment of the public that Obama is a Muslim" (Pew, Feb, 2011).

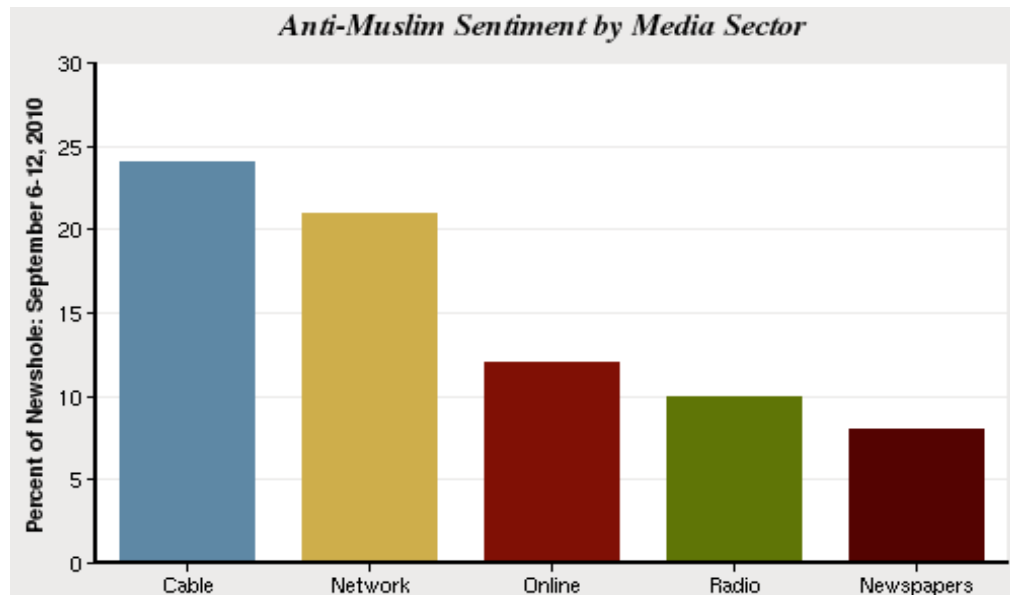
Figure 1.1. Pew Research Data demonstrates four of the top five religion stories in 2010 involved controversies related to Muslims and/or Islam.



PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S PROJECT FOR EXCELLENCE IN JOURNALISM
AND PEW FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE

Importantly, coverage on Islam and Muslims has been both frequent and consistently framed negatively (Figure 1.2). The Pew Research center conducted a review of news media to determine the number of stories that express anti-Muslim sentiments. They found 24% of cable news airtime studied expressed anti-Muslim sentiments between September 6-12, 2010. The proportion was similarly high for broadcast news (21%), online (12%), radio (12%), and newspaper (8%).

Figure 1.2. Anti-Muslim Sentiment, Percent of Newshole by Media Sector.



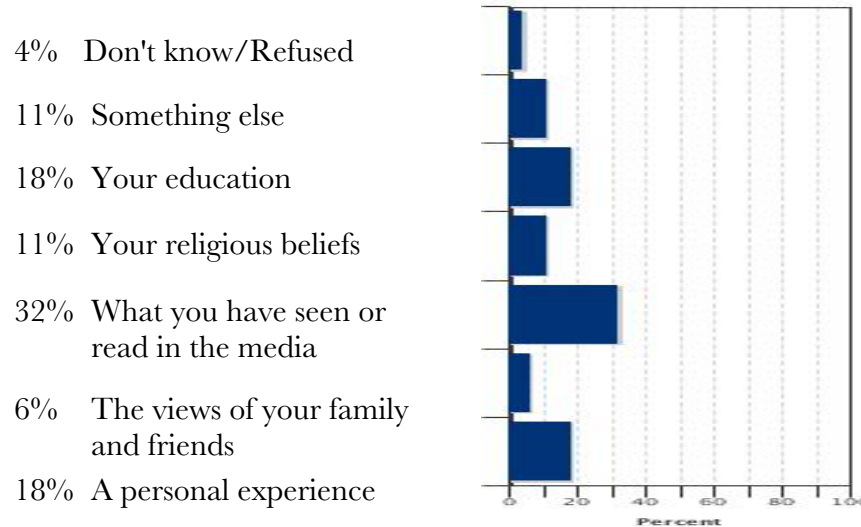
It is well-established that minorities have been consistently underrepresented, negatively represented, or completely erased from US media (Behm-Morawitz & Ortiz, 2013; Tukachinsky, Mastro, & Yarchi, 2015). In particular, media portrayals of Muslims, Arabs, and people from the Middle East has been especially negative (e.g., Lajevardi and Oskooi, 2019; Colligwood, Lajevardi, and Oskooi; 2018; AlSultany, 2012; Dill et al., 2005; Dixon & Williams, 2015; Nacos & Torres-Reyna, 2007; Powell, 2011; Shaheen, 2009). This has been especially the case since September 11, 2001 (Bridge Initiative Team, George Town University). Muslims and Islam have been framed as ‘terrorist’, ‘violent’, ‘extremists’, ‘fundamentalist’, ‘aggressors’, ‘radicals’, and ‘fanatics’ (Mishra, 2007b; Trevino et al., 2010; Ibrahim, 2010; Kumar, 2010; Martin and Phenlan, 2002; (Saleem et al. 2017; AlSultany, 2012; Dill et al., 2005; Dixon & Williams, 2015; Nacos & Torres-Reyna, 2007; Powell, 2011; Shaheen, 2009; Das, Bushman, Bezemer, Kerkhof, & Vermeulen, 2009; Kalkan, Layman, & Uslaner, 2009; Nisbet et al., 2009; Saleem &

Anderson, 2013). This type of negative reporting is found across several media outlets including cable news (Dixon & Williams, 2015), newspapers (Nacos & Torres-Reyna, 2007; Powell, 2011), television and movies (Alsultany, 2012; Shaheen, 2009), web animations and flash-based games (Van Buren, 2006), and traditional video games (Dill, Gentile, Richter, & Dill, 2005).

Scholarship on the effects of media frames on tolerance of Muslims, while not extensively studied, is generally in agreement with works on other groups. Ogan et al. (2013) analysis demonstrated that U.S respondents who were more attentive to media coverage of Park 51 were less likely to support building of the Islamic Center in New York City. These individuals were also more likely to have negative views of Islam and Muslims. Some examples of these views include: Islam is a religion of violence and Muslims should not have the same rights as other religious groups. The increase of negative opinions towards Muslims has been partly driven by security threat perceptions in the media (Ciftci, 2012; Wike and Grim, 2010). In many cases, individuals themselves recognize, at least implicitly, the strong influence of media on the formation of their opinions and views. The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life Survey (2007) found that respondents reported the media as the most influencing factor towards forming opinions of Muslims (Figure 1.3). Importantly, studies detailing effects of repeated exposure to both positively and negatively framed media on tolerance of Muslims is limited, and existing work has not considered how this intersects with interpersonal interactions with Muslims.

Figure 1.3: Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life Survey, Aug, 2007

Earlier you said that you had a very/mostly favorable/unfavorable opinion of Muslims. Which of the following has had the biggest influence on your view of Muslims? A personal experience, the views of your family and friends, what you have seen or read in the media, your religious beliefs, your education, something else [Q.48F2]



In this dissertation, I examine the effects of media exposure and contact on tolerance of groups using Muslim Americans as a case study. I argue and demonstrate that when individuals are exposed to a single negative news story tolerance is decreased. Conversely, when individuals are exposed to a single positive news story tolerance increases. I also demonstrate that frequency of exposure has additional effects. I will show that the effects of single exposure are enhanced when respondents are exposed to multiple news stories. Furthermore, I argue that contact plays a significant role in influencing tolerant judgments. Specifically, contact on its own increases tolerance. I also argue and demonstrate that contact has a moderating effect in the context of negative news media and enhancing effect in the context of positive media.

The Rest of the Dissertation

The following chapters will examine the effects of media exposure to either negative or positive news stories on tolerance. Importantly, I also test the effects of repeated exposure to both positively and negatively framed media. In addition, I assess the effects of contact in isolation and its interaction with media exposure. In chapter 2, I develop my core theoretical arguments and hypotheses through an in-depth literature review. Chapter 3 details the qualitative dimension of my research, which further develops the ideas I test experimentally in chapters 4 and 5. My qualitative work first includes a detailed content analysis of over 40 articles related to construction of a Mosque in the City of Temecula in 2010. I find fear of Islamic extremism and increased traffic are the two most commonly cited reasons Mosque construction is opposed. I later use this finding to develop my experiment treatment articles. A second important aspect of my qualitative work employs phone interviews of Temecula residents who either supported or opposed construction of the Temecula Islamic Center. Importantly, all members of the interview cohort lived in Temecula concurrent with the controversial debate on construction of the Islamic Center. Qualitative analysis of my interviews provides initial support of my hypotheses that both media and contact are important factors influencing tolerance. Overall, chapter 3 enhances our understanding of what contributes to tolerance judgments.

In chapter 4, I employ quantitative methods to answer the following questions: 1) To what extent does exposure to negative frames in media coverage lead to decreases in tolerance, and 2) To what extent does exposure to positive frames in media coverage lead

to increases in tolerance. Chapter 4 utilizes data from three experiments I conducted on both student (experiments I and III) and national population (experiment II) samples using Qualtrics and Amazon Mechanical Turk. My three experiments complement each other to present a strong case demonstrating how media exposure matters in affecting tolerance judgments. Specifically, I first show that exposure to a single, positively framed article causes significant increases in tolerance, which is particularly striking given an environment that overwhelmingly covers Muslims negatively. Second, I demonstrate that exposure frequency is a critical element in understanding the effects of both positive and negatively framed media.

Chapter 5 focuses on the effects of contact on tolerance. Specifically, I assess the effects of contact in isolation and its interaction with single and repeated exposure to both positive and negative media. Chapter 5 employs data from experiments II and III. Importantly, experiment II utilizes a national sample and provides treatments to assess the interaction of contact with both single and repeated exposure. Experiment II employs self-reported measures of contact using an approach common in the literature. Experiment III utilizes a unique design in which contact is randomly assigned using female assistants with and without the very recognizable Islamic headscarf (hijab). Experiment III was specifically designed to manage problems associated with self-reported measures of contact, and improves my ability to draw causal inferences. I demonstrate that contact is an important factor in affecting tolerant judgements. I further show that contact can both mitigate the effects of negative media and enhance the effects of positive media exposure. Chapter 6 concludes my work by providing a summary of

findings and includes suggestions for future work to further develop our understanding of the effects of media and group contact on tolerance.

Chapter 2: The Theoretical Perspective: How Media Exposure Affects Tolerance of Groups

“No one is disputing that America stands for, and should stand for, religious tolerance. It is a foundation of our republic. This is not an issue of religious tolerance but of common moral sense. To build a mosque at Ground Zero is a stab in the heart of the families of the innocent victims of those horrific attacks.”— Sarah Palin (McManus, LA Times)

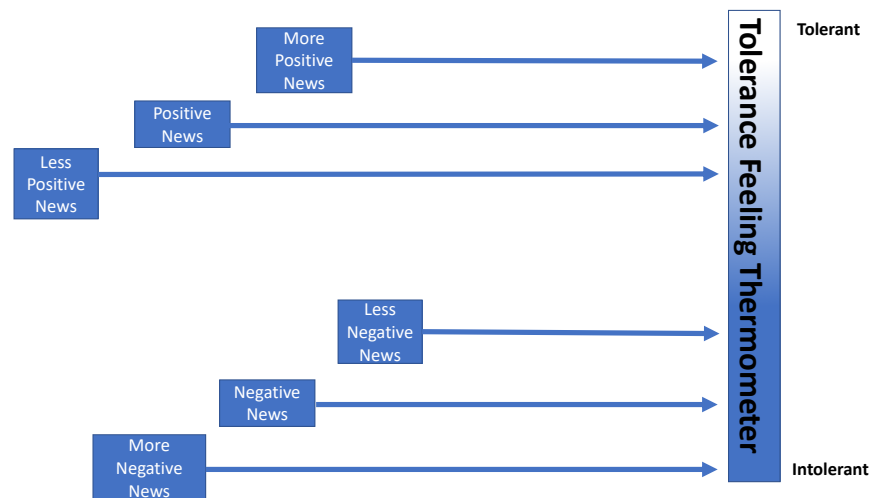
The words of former Governor of Alaska, Sarah Palin illustrate a common narrative that emerged during the planned construction of an Islamic Center and Mosque in New York City.

In May 2010, an announcement was made for a proposed Islamic cultural center and mosque near ground zero (known as Park 51). This event sparked national media attention that manifested in protests and attacks on existing and proposed mosque sites all across the country. Park 51 reflects one of the many salient and controversial incidents in the last decade, in which the media have presented Muslims and Islam through an “un-American or even anti-American” lens (Nacos and Torres-Reyna. 2011). While the headlines on the Park 51 mosque have dissipated, the effects of its overwhelmingly negative coverage are still reverberating today. Over the last few decades, scholars have consistently demonstrated overwhelmingly negative coverage of Muslims and Islam (Kortese, 2008; Mishra, 2007a; Shaheen, 2009; Bowe et al., 2013; Ibrahim, 2010; Colligwood, Lajevardi, and Oskooii; 2018; AlSultany, 2012; Dill et al., 2005; Dixon & Williams, 2015; Nacos & Torres-Reyna, 2007; Powell, 2011) and an overall increase in anti-Muslim sentiment across the country (Saad, 2006; Ciftci, 2012; Strabac and Listhaug, 2008; Lajevardi and Abrajano, 2019; Lajevardi and Oskooii; 2018). My research seeks to better understand the connections between media coverage and these

sentiments. I employ Muslims as a case study to better understand the effects of both positive and negative media on tolerance of groups, and to what extent contact can increase tolerance in the presence and absence of media.

In the previous chapter, I presented my main argument that the media plays a role in affecting tolerance of groups and that contact with individuals plays a role in mitigating the effect of news exposure on tolerance. This chapter will fully specify the mechanisms by which these processes occur. I argue and demonstrate in the chapters that follow, exposure to a positive news story involving a Muslim salient issue leads to increases in tolerance towards Muslims, while exposure to a negative news story involving a Muslim salient issue leads to decreases in tolerance of Muslims. Furthermore, I argue and demonstrate that frequency of exposure to positive and negative news stories also plays a role in shifting public opinion of Muslims. In essence, as individuals are exposed to multiple negatively framed news articles, tolerance will correspondingly decrease and as individuals are exposed to multiple positively framed articles tolerance will increase. Figure 2.1 illustrates a graphical depiction of my theory. This chapter will expand upon and elaborate the mechanisms of my theory. I begin by specifying the ways in which media exposure may influence and change public opinion. Next, I examine how and why negatively framed media leads to decreases in tolerance. Third, I elaborate on how positive news also matters in reflecting positive attitudes towards groups. Fourth, I examine how and why more frequent exposure to news effects tolerance of groups. The final section explains how group contact plays a role in mitigating the effect of news exposure on tolerance.

Figure 2.1: Graphical Depiction of Theory



The Media:

In what ways does the media affect public opinion? Scholars have worked extensively to answer this question and it is well accepted that our political beliefs are shaped in part by the political information we receive directly or indirectly from mass media. Numerous studies have demonstrated that the media has the power to shape public perceptions and political preferences (McCombs, 2014; Djerf-Pierre and Shenhata, 2017; Chong & Druckman, 2007; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Krosnick and Kinder, 1990; Rogers and Dearing, 1996; Iyengar, 1991; Neuman, Just, and Crigler, 1992). Early scholars of media effects recognized the far-reaching power of the media to shape and mold mass attitudes. Amongst the earliest works are Lasswell (1938, 1972) and Lippman (1992). These scholars demonstrated that use of mass media propaganda during the early twentieth century successfully increased public support for World War I.

Early work on media effects argued that the media has expansive reach in shaping and molding opinions. Consumers of mass media were seen as victims who could be easily manipulated. It was not until the midcentury where scholar began to pull back and clarify early findings on media effects. For example, in 1960 Joseph Klapper argued that the mass media “does not serve as a necessary and sufficient cause of audience effects, but rather functions among and through a nexus of mediating factors and influences” (8; 1960). While decades of research have concluded that the media plays a significant role in influencing public opinion, recent scholarship has developed a more nuanced view of the media’s role in the development of mass attitudes. The idea is that the media does not necessarily dictate “public opinion but rather engages in more subtle processes in which they respond to how individuals acquire and process information and trigger cognitive and affective reactions by the public” (Jacobs and Shapiro, 2011, p.10). In the subsequent section of this chapter, I will discuss the emerging body of literature that highlights complex ways in which the media influences public attitudes, and how it relates to support of my overall theory.

Agenda Setting:

Research has shown media may influence political thinking by agenda setting. Specifically, the media plays a role in telling people what to think about through the issues they cover more prominently and frequently (Cacciatore, Scheufele, and Iyengar; 2016; Sheafer, 2007). The amount of media attention devoted to certain issues increases their accessibility and subsequently influences the degree of public concern for these issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Dearing & Rogers, 1996; Chyi & McCombs, 2004). Among

the earliest work to identify the agenda-setting function of mass media was McCombs and Shaw (1972) who conducted a study in which they asked survey respondents to name the “main things...government should concentrate on doing something about.” (McCombs et al.; 2004) They found that the issues respondents named, were the same issues that were stressed in the newspaper and television coverage of the campaign. The authors suggested that the media plays a role in setting the agenda for the public and shaping reality. The public learns not only about a given issue, “but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position” (McCombs & Shaw; 1972). The media not only identifies key issues and topics of the day, it also has the ability to influence the salience of these issues and topics (McCombs, 2014).

Barnard Cohen famously stated, the media “may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling [people] what to think about” (Choen, 1964). While there has been a great increase in the types of communication channels and outlets available to the public, one critical element has remained the same: the information that people receive is “a second-hand reality that is structured by journalists’ reports about these events and situations” (McCombs, 1, 2014). As socialist Robert Parks explains, when journalists select specific events and issues, they focus our attention and influence our perceptions of what are the most important issues of the day. A significant amount of research on agenda setting has studied the relationship between the amount and prominence of coverage and the public’s perceived importance of those issues. While the outcomes of the studies have been mixed, many share a common conclusion of a positive correlation and a causal relationship between the

emphasis that mass media places on certain issues and the importance attributed to these issues by the public (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Shoemaker & Reese, 1991, 1996; Cobb & Elder, 1971; Turk, 1986; McCombs, 2018; Iyengar & Kinder, 2010; McCombs, 2005; Iyengar, 1991; Perse, 2001; Chong & Druckman, 2007; Gilens, 2003; Cacciatore, Scheufele, & Iyengar, 2016).

Priming:

Priming is another effective way in which the media influences public opinion. Scholars have built upon the study of agenda setting by developing an understanding of the consequences of agenda setting for public opinion (Iyengar and Kinder, 2010). Priming refers to “the effects of the content of the media on people’s later behavior or judgments related to the content that was processed” (Roskos-Ewoldsen et al. 2009, pg. 75). When forming an opinion, individuals will rarely engage in a comprehensive analysis based on their total store of information. Rather citizens frequently draw upon small bits of information that are particularly salient at the time the opinion is being made (Popkin, 1994). In other words, citizens selectively rely on the information that is most salient in their mind when reaching opinion. By priming, the media can activate particular constructs in our memories, which may result in specific thoughts becoming more influential and available when reaching an opinion or making a decision (Ratcliff and McKoon, 1988). Priming is seen as an extension to agenda setting (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987), because the media first makes some issues more salient in people’s minds (agenda setting) and in turn the media can also shape the considerations that individuals take into account when making judgments about political candidates and issues (priming). Many

scholars have demonstrated that media coverage of a topic serves as a prime influence on how the public formulates political opinions, including how they evaluate the effectiveness of political leaders (Iyengar and Kinder, 2010, 1982; Krosnick and Kinder, 1990; Josephson, 1987). For example, if the issue of the economy is primed by the media, it would become the basis for evaluating the political leader's performance (Iyengar & Simon, 1993; Krosnick & Kinder, 1990; Pan & Kosicki, 1997).

Framing:

A particularly important aspect of media studies is the significant role media plays in affecting public opinion by framing issues in different ways. My research focuses on this dimension of media effects by supporting and further detailing how through framing, media affects tolerance of groups. Framing refers to the “subtle alterations in the statement or presentation of judgment and choice problems” (Iyengar, 1991, p.11) Scholars have consistently demonstrated that the media can shape political opinion by framing issues in distinct ways (Gamson et al. 1992, Iyengar 1991, Zaller, 1992; Nelson and Kinder 1996, Nelson et al., 1997; Druckman, 2001, Chong and Druckman, 2007; Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007; Haynes et al., 2016). In essence, the alternative phrasing of the same basic issue can significantly alter the meaning to an individual. From this literature we learn that alteration of frames by politicians and news media shapes and alters opinions of individuals (Gamson et al. 1992, Iyengar 1991, Nelson and Kinder 1996).

Frames can include both visual and verbal material, which can have significant consequences for how viewers perceive and understand an issue, and in turn can direct

the formation of individual opinions about a controversy (Iyengar 1991, Nelson and Kinder 1996). Specifically, frames may shape individual opinion by stressing a specific element or feature of a broader controversy (Nelson, Oxley, and Clawson, 1997). For example, Sniderman and Theriault (2004) find that when government spending on programs for the poor is framed as improving economic outcomes, individuals overwhelmingly support increased spending. However, when the same issue is framed as resulting in higher taxes, individuals tend to oppose increased spending.

One important impact framing has on public opinion is shifting support or opposition to public decisions. For example, Haynes et al (2016) demonstrated that different frames on immigration have important effects on shaping opinions of specific policies that affect undocumented individuals. The media can contribute to transforming which issues and policies elites and politicians focus on through framing (Auerbach and Bloch-Elkon, 2005). Frames have a significant effect on how individuals perceive and understand an issue, which can also lead to the formation of specific opinions about a controversy (Iyengar 1991; Nelson and Kinder, 1996).

Through the use of framing, media can reduce a very complex event or issue into a centralized and simplified perspective (Nelson et al. 1997).

Tone of Media Coverage:

An important way in which scholars have explored framing effects is through the study of coverage tone. Tone provides for a more detailed understanding of the ideas we develop in our minds and the subsequent attitudes and opinions that are derived from these ideas (McCombs; 2002). Scholars have found that coverage tone can shift public

opinion and attitudes of individuals (Kepplinger et al. 1989; Shaw, 1999). For example, the shifting pattern of positive and negative media tone influenced approval levels of Helmut Kohl in Germany between 1975 and 1984 (Kepplinger et al. 1989). A similar finding is also present in the United States where tone of television coverage about key campaign events has been shown to influence voters' preferences for candidates (Shaw, 1999). Positively toned coverage of Democratic campaign events decreased support for the Republican candidates, while positively toned coverage of Republican campaign events increased support for the Republican candidate. Tone of coverage not only affects public opinion of leaders and political parties (Zaller 1992, 1996; Norris et al. 1999; Fournier et al., 2004), but is also found to influence public perceptions of economic health (Blood and Philips; 1995) and views towards immigrants (Van Klingeren et al. 2014). For example, scholars have found that positive tones in reporting on immigration issues has the power to reduce negative attitudes towards immigration (Haynes et al., 2016; Abrajano et al. 2017).

The way in which media reports and presents information plays a major role in the attitudes and opinions people develop (Hamill, Wilson, and Nisbett, 1980; Gamson et al. 1992, Iyengar 1991, Nelson and Kinder 1996; Chong & Durckman, 2007; Neslon, Oxley, & Clawson, 1997). In a study conducted at the University of Michigan (Hamill, Wilson, and Nisbett, 1980) Hamill and colleagues randomly assigned some of their participants to read a short article containing a "vivid and unflattering description of a mother of three living in New York City who had been on welfare for the last thirteen years". The other group was not given an article to read. The authors found that

participants who were given the article expressed significantly more negative views about welfare recipients in general than did subjects who had not read the article. This work suggests that a single article can influence readers views. I argue and demonstrate in my dissertation that multiple exposure to media has effects beyond that of a single story.

Why Negative Media Leads to Intolerance

Among the seminal works detailing mechanisms by which negative information influences opinion is Lau (1982). Lau refers to the *figure ground* hypothesis, which suggests that most of the time, most individuals live a positive life where they are overall satisfied with their jobs, families, friends, living situation, and experiences (Campbell, Converse, and Rodgers, 1976; Lau, Sears, and Centers, 1979; Matlin and Stang, 1978; Sears, 1983). Negative information stands out in this overall positive environment because it is infrequent. Most individuals expect others in their community to be similar to “everyone else-basically good, likable people”. Given these expectations, negative information is highly salient and as a result, individual opinions are negatively influenced when confronted with negative information about a person or group. Recall that in the case of Muslims, media coverage employs particularly strong negative frames and terms such as “terrorist”, “violent”, “extremist”, etc. These terms are in stark contrast with an overall positive environment, and the idea that Muslims are “basically good”. Therefore, exposure to media coverage using these types of negative frames would be expected to decrease perceptions of Muslims, including tolerance judgments.

The *cost-orientation hypothesis* is a second mechanism detailing the cognitive effects of negative information. Lau (1982, 1985) suggests that people are more strongly motivated

to avoid costs (in the general sense) than seek gains. The *cost-orientation hypothesis* further argues that the effects of negative information should be especially strong when the stakes are high, and that humans are predisposed to avoid costs to ensure survival. Some of the negative frames used to cover Muslim salient issues can be construed as particularly costly, and as such would be expected to negatively affect individual opinions of Muslims. For example, frames related to “the spread of Shariah” law may be considered particularly risky in light of perceived incompatibility with American values and democratic norms. I expect exposure to these types of negative frames to reduce tolerance of Muslim Americans.

More recent work suggests that individual judgments are constantly influenced by heuristics and biases (Sunstein, 2006). The idea is that individuals have “rapid, immediate reactions to persons, activities, and processes, and the immediate reaction operates as a mental short cut for a more deliberative or analytic assessment of the underlying issues” (Slovic, 2000, 414). In short, people rely on heuristics to simplify their judgements. For example, when asked “whether Americans should be fearful of a terrorist attack?”, people are far more likely to be frightened and concerned if they can easily think of relevant example. “Attribute substitution” is another example where a simplification process can negatively affect tolerance judgments. In this case, individuals answer a difficult question by substituting an easier one from the most readily available information heuristics (Kahneman, Slovic, and Tversky, 1982). Negative media provides negative heuristics that individuals use to create mental shortcuts when forming opinions, which would be expected to negatively affect tolerance.

Negative media can also increase the perception of threat, which in turn may lead to a decrease in tolerance. Extensive research has demonstrated perceived threat as one of the most powerful and pervasive effects on tolerance (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus 1982; Gibson, 1992; Gibson 1998; Gibson & Bingham, 1982; Kuzma, 2000; Marcus, Sullivan, Theiss-Morse, & Wood, 1995; Davis and Silver 2004; Davis 2007; Merolla and Zechmeister 2007, 2009). Intolerance is thought to be directly related to the perception of threat posed by dissenting groups (Stouffer, 1955). The idea is that dissident groups threaten values important to the public, or otherwise constitute a danger to the constitutional order (Sullivan et al. 1981). This threat, real or perceived leads to increased prejudice against a threatening out-group (Bettencourt et al. 2001). Many negative media frames of Muslims relate to intensely threatening ideas. For example, coverage of the proposed Temecula Mosque construction included comments from community leaders suggesting that the Mosque would turn Temecula into a “haven” for Islamic Extremism and the spread of Sharia Law, which are likely considered to threaten both life and democratic values, thereby reducing tolerant judgements.

Although there is little work specifically detailing the effects of negative media on tolerance of Muslim-Americans, I believe that existing scholarly works enable establishment of expectations and a testable hypothesis. Published works demonstrating the effects of negative media on tolerance of other out-groups in conjunction with scholarly literature on the cognitive effects of negative information, lead me to believe that when individuals are exposed to negative coverage discussing Muslims, individuals will be less likely to express tolerant judgments of Muslims:

H1: Exposure to negative media coverage decreases tolerance of Muslims.

Why Positive Media Leads to Increases in Tolerance

Scholars have identified individual level processes supporting why positive information plays a role in shifting public opinion. This work finds that individuals' opinions are driven by *cognitive weighting*. In this conception, "more attention is given to information that is regarded as unique or novel, which tends to be information that is more extreme (e.g., Fiske 1980)" (Soroka; 2006). In the case of Muslims Americans, positive media represents extremely unique and novel information in the context of overwhelmingly negative media coverage in the environment (see chapter 1). This leads to an expectation that unique positive information would capture more attention, thereby positively impacting opinion formation, including tolerance.

The cognitive weighting model is also consistent and supported by the *learning model*, which holds that mass media messages influence individuals' opinions by providing "new information" about an issue (Graber, 1994). For example, if an individual was unaware that building an Islamic Center in their community could potentially lead to positive outcomes, exposure to media coverage suggesting that the new Mosque will boost the local economy would be expected to positively influence opinions towards Muslims.

Positive information can also have a significant impact on opinions by the way in which information is presented through visual and verbal material in news stories. As elaborated earlier, this type of framing can shape opinions by stressing specific elements or features of the broader issue or story, which in turn can reduce a complex issue down to one or two central aspects (Nelson, Oxley, and Clawson; 1997). For example, consider

coverage of the proposed Temecula Mosque emphasizing positive ideas, such as the constitutional right for Muslims to practice their religion, while presenting visual images of community members carrying signs indicating support for the mosque. This story distills a complex issue into a set of positive central ideas, which in turn would be expected to have a positive effect on opinion formation. The emphasis on these positive messages can “translate into differing tolerance levels among observers of these frames” (Nelson, Oxley, and Clawson, pg. 568, 1997).

While the effects of positive media coverage on tolerance of Muslims has yet to be fully studied, existing literature detailing processes whereby positive media influences opinion formation, along with scholarly work demonstrating the effects of positive media in the context of other groups, lead to the development of a specific hypothesis. I expect positive coverage to lead to increases in tolerant judgments.

H2: Exposure to positive media coverage increases tolerance of Muslims

Why Frequency of Media Exposure Matters

In a strong democratic society there is an expectation that media presents multiple competing viewpoints (Prothro and Grigg, 1960; McClosky, 1964). The public’s job is to receive and grapple with these competing viewpoints to form public preferences. When the same or similar viewpoint is repeated, it leaves little room for competing points of view. For example, Vergeer et al (2000) found that individuals who were frequently exposed to Dutch newspapers that characterized immigrants in a negative way, expressed significantly increased ethnic threat perceptions. Similarly, Schluter and Davidov (2013) found that in Spain, frequent exposure to negative news about immigrants lead to

“perceived group threat above and beyond the effects of immigrant group size” (pg. 270). Importantly, greater frequency also leads to significant effects for positive media. Schemer (2012) found that frequent exposure to positive news reduced negative out-group attitudes among those who are less knowledgeable about immigrants.

Individuals are unable to simultaneously process large number of ideas, and as a result “political judgments and evaluations are based on only a subset of all potentially relevant thoughts, feelings, or other considerations” (Zaller, 1992). Media coverage alone brings associated beliefs and feelings to the forefront of conscious thought (Iyengar, 1991; Iyengar and Kinder, 1987; Jacobs and Shapiro, 1994; Kinder and Sanders, 1996; Zaller 1992). When information is frequently repeated, it becomes easily accessible and retrieved when making decisions (Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley; 1997). For example, an individual repeatedly exposed to negative portrayals of Muslims would be more likely to have these negative ideas at the forefront of their conscious thought than someone who was exposed only once. This leads to an expectation that repeated exposure in this case, would create a larger negative effect than a single story in reducing tolerance judgements. Using similar logic, I expect more frequent positive exposure to lead to significant increases in tolerance when compared to single exposure.

Specific characteristics of negative media may be related to the enhancing effects of frequency. Recall the *cost-orientation* hypothesis, which suggests that people are motivated to avoid risk. A risk or threat that is familiar will be seen as more serious than a risk that is less familiar (Sunstein (2007). Berlyne (1970) demonstrated that as information is repeated it becomes more familiar. As discussed above, much of the

negative media involving Muslim salient issues may be construed as particularly risky. Therefore, I expect repeated negative frames of Muslims will correspondingly enhance the effects of negative media exposure.

Careful review of the above literature leads me to expect that more frequent exposure to positively or negatively toned coverage will have corresponding increased effects on tolerance. I expect that when individuals are exposed to repeated positive or negative news stories this will make the issue more relatively accessible and thus have a greater potential to influence their judgments and opinions. Specifically, I formulate the following hypotheses:

H3: Individuals more frequently exposed to negatively toned coverage will express increasing levels of intolerance

H4: Individuals more frequently exposed to positively toned coverage will express increasing levels of tolerance

Contact

In addition to understanding how media affects tolerance, my research seeks to address a second important dimension. Specifically, to what extent does group contact affect tolerance judgements, and how do these effects interact with media frames (positive and negative) and frequency? Scholars have previously examined the effect of group contact on tolerance and many have argued that intergroup contact is one of the most effective strategies for improving intergroup relations (Allport, 1954, 1979; Amir, 1969; Cook, 1985; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006; Watson, 1947). The intergroup contact hypothesis states “interaction between individuals belonging to different

groups will influence the attitudes and behavior between members of these different groups” (Stein et al. 2000, pg. 285). In 1943, F. Tredwell Smith conducted a study in which white Columbia University students had a series of intellectual contacts with black leaders in Harlem. The author found that the students who had the interaction demonstrated significant improvements in their attitudes towards African Americans, which was not the case for students who did not experience interracial contact.

The literature has identified many prerequisite conditions for group contact to successfully reduce intergroup conflict. Allport’s (1954/1979) highly influential Contact Hypothesis argued that there are four prerequisite features for contact to be successful. These include: 1) equal status: when different groups engage equally in the a relationship 2) Intergroup cooperation: groups work together for a common goal without competition 3) Common goals; when groups work to solve a problem together and 4) Support of authorities, law, or customs: groups must agree and respect some authority that supports the contact between the groups. The contact should also be positive and not include ingroup- outgroup comparisons. Many scholars have supported Allport’s formulation. Brewer and Kramer (1985) found that contact is more effective at reducing bias when groups enter the contact situation with equal status.

Several other factors have been identified in the literature as critical conditions for successful intergroup contact. One is the “opportunity for personal acquaintance between members” of groups (Dovidio, Gaertner, and Kawakami; 2003, pg. 8). Specifically, Miller (2002) argues that the “trust implicit in personalized communication reduces anxiety and discomfort” (p.397). Simultaneously, these processes provide an opportunity to disconfirm

negative stereotypes of disliked out-groups, and thereby break down the monolithic perception of the out-group as a homogenous unit. A second factor that has been identified as critical for successful intergroup contact is friendship. Pettigrew (1997) examined the responses of over 3800 majority group members in probability samples from France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and West Germany, and found that people with out-group friends had significantly lower levels of bias towards that group, and the development of intergroup friendship played a critical role in the way that contact reduced bias.

Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) conducted a meta-analysis of 203 studies on intergroup contact as an influence on varied measures of prejudice. They found 94 percent of these studies had an inverse relationship between contact and prejudice. Specifically, they argued that successful contact with members of one out-group, could extend to greater tolerance and willingness to interact with other out-groups. We know that interpersonal conversations permeate the political world, and a failure to consider their impact can lead to misleading conclusions about the media's impact on tolerance. It is important to learn the extent to which contact with individuals from other groups can mitigate or enhance the effects of media on tolerance.

Pettigrew (1998) and others suggest four specific, related mechanisms whereby contact effects may increase tolerance: 1) Learning about the outgroup, 2) Changing behavior, 3) Generating affective ties, and 4) Ingroup reappraisal. The learning model holds that “new learning corrects negative views of the outgroup, [and] contact should reduce prejudice” (Pettigrew 1998). For example, Stephan and Stephan (1984) found

that contact between Anglo and Chicano students enabled a learning process whereby Anglo students' attitudes towards their Chicano classmates were improved. I expect similar learning in the case of contact with Muslims leads to corresponding increases in tolerance. Recall the *learning model* discussed above as a cognitive means whereby positive media exposure may increase tolerance. I also expect learning related to contact and positive media to lead to enhanced effects in creating more tolerant judgements.

Contact may also lead to behavioral changes, which in turn lead to improved attitudes towards outgroups. The idea is that new behavior can be a precursor to attitude changes and that contact may force behavior that is accepting of out-group members thereby challenging one's expectations and shifting attitudes (Pettigrew 1998). In the case of Muslims, contact may challenge expectations developed from overwhelmingly negative media coverage thereby exerting a moderating effect and increasing tolerance. It is worth noting that this behavioral mechanism may benefit from repeated experiences (Jackman & Crane 1986), and that external benefits reinforce and enhance its effects (Pettigrew 1998).

Contact is particularly effective in moderating negative emotions and increasing positive emotions associated with outgroups, which in turn improves attitudes. Contact, especially repeated contact, is thought to reduce anxiety (Pettigrew 1998), which can lead to increases in tolerance. Empathy and friendship also play important roles. For example, Reich & Purbhoo (1975) found that empathy towards a single stigmatized outgroup member can improve attitudes towards the group as a whole and Rippl (1995) found friendship to be a critical factor in determining attitudes between East and West

Germans. I expect contact with Muslims acts through multiple emotional pathways to reduce anxiety, increase empathy, and improve the likelihood of friendship, which may all lead to increased tolerance. This emotional pathway may be a particular way in which contact and negative media interact. Specifically, contact may reduce anxieties related to risk and threat associated with exposure to negative media, thereby exerting a moderating effect.

Finally, positive outgroup contact experiences may create new perspectives that cause individuals to reevaluate attitudes towards their own group (Pettigrew 1998). The amount of contact is thought to play an important role in this case. The idea is that contact, especially friendship simply reduces the amount of time an individual spends with their own ingroup. Mullen and others (1992) showed that ingroup biases were closely associated with ingroup salience. As individuals spend more time in contact with Muslims, I similarly expect biases to decrease, thereby increasing tolerance.

While the effects of both contact and media exposure represent significant areas of study, the specific effects in the case of Muslim-Americans have yet to be fully detailed. However, careful review of the above literature leads me to formulate the following testable hypothesis related contact and interactions with media:

H5: Contact with a member of an out-group increases tolerant attitudes

H6: Contact with a member of an out-group mitigates decreases in tolerance caused by negative media exposure.

H7: Contact with a member of an out-group interacts with positive media exposure to enhance tolerance.

Conclusion:

Together, previous research supports my expectations that media exposure matters. Specifically, the media plays a role in increasing the perceived importance of an issue, which in turn may affect attitudes towards groups. Media content has been shown to affect the importance viewers attach to different issues (Gilens, 1999). Scholars have argued when media presents both side of an issue, public opinion changes only slightly. However, when only one side is presented, public opinion responds to the dominant message (Zaller 1992; Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Jacobs and Shapiro 2000; Gershkoff and Kushner 2005). While we know media reporting on Muslim Americans has been overwhelmingly negative, I argue that exposure to this increased negative reporting creates intolerant attitudes towards Muslim Americans. Based on the body of research reviewed in this chapter, I argue and expect that the more an individual is exposed to positive tone media coverage, the more tolerant they will become. Conversely, the more an individual is exposed to negative tone of coverage, the less tolerant they will become. Using Muslim Americans as a case study, and a mixed methods approach that relies on both quantitative (laboratory experiments) and qualitative (interviews) methods, I will demonstrate in my research how the media plays a role in affecting tolerance judgments and how contact may mitigate the effects of media in the case of negative coverage, while enhancing the effects of positive coverage.

Chapter 3: A Closer Look: Content Analysis of Media and Interviews with Temecula Residents

“So far as the United States seems to be concerned, it is only a slight overstatement to say that Moslems and Arabs are essentially seen as either oil suppliers or potential terrorists. Very little of the detail, the human density, the passion of Arab-Moslem life has entered the awareness of even those people whose profession it is to report the Arab world. What we have instead is a series of crude, essentialized caricatures of the Islamic world presented in such a way as to make that world vulnerable to military aggression” (Edward Said; 1980)

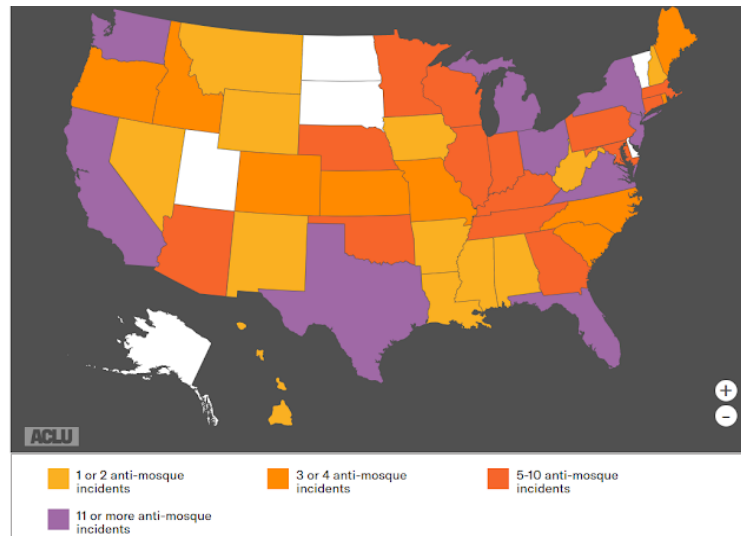
Edward Said, one of the twentieth century’s most influential thinkers, was among the first to recognize a common narrative surrounding overtly negative media representations of Islam, Muslim, and Arabs. Contemporary scholars have argued that media has consistently portrayed negative characterizations of Muslims both before and after the tragic events of September 11, 2001 (Gershkoff and Kushner, 2005; Reese, 2007; Powell and Abadi, 2003, Lajevardi, 2017, Lajevardi and Oskooii 2018). Multiple studies have found that the American public evaluates Muslim Americans more negatively than all other racial, ethnic, or religious groups (Edgell, Gerteis and Hartmann 2006; Putnam and Campbell 2010; Lajevardi and Oskooii 2018). Scholars argue that these negative evaluations are due in part to overwhelmingly negative media coverage (Lajevardi 2017).

As explained in earlier chapters, my research is focused on understanding the media’s role in influencing tolerance of Muslim Americans. Before investigating the effects of positively and negatively framed coverage, coverage frequency, and contact, it was important to develop a comprehensive understanding of the specific frames and language used by the media to characterize Muslim salient topics. Although the effects of negative and positive frames have been studied, the specific relationship between the types of frames used to characterize Islam and Muslims and their effects on tolerance

have yet to be thoroughly characterized. In this chapter, I employ a detailed content analysis of over 40 articles related to the 2010 proposed construction of a Mosque in Temecula, CA. I further utilized phone interviews of both pro- and anti-Mosque Temecula residents to collect detailed qualitative data related to perceptions of Muslims and how these perceptions relate to media and contact. Importantly, the interview process enabled open ended questions that were particularly helpful in informing the design of experiments for later chapters, especially with respect to the particular frames to use.

When an announcement was made in May 2010 for the proposed construction of an Islamic and Cultural Center near Ground Zero, opposition and protests from democrats and republicans quickly intensified in New York City, and rapidly spread across the county. In the decade since, there has been a spike in anti-Muslim sentiment, which has manifested in attacks on Muslims, and existing and proposed mosque sites. These attacks have included vandalism, criminal acts, and increased efforts to block or deny necessary permits for construction or expansion of mosques (ACLU, 2019). The American Civil Liberties Union has compiled data on mosque attacks since 2005, which is shown in Figure 3.1. While ACLU data is striking, they themselves acknowledge their data is not comprehensive of all attacks, and is likely missing data related to incidents that were not reported by news media.

Figure 3.1: Anti-Mosque Incidents Across the United States since 2005



Of particular note to my dissertation, one incident that received both considerable media attention and public opposition was the proposed construction of a Mosque in the city of Temecula, California. Opponents collected hundreds of signatures, bombarded city planners with angry letters and e-mails, and staged protests with bullhorns and dogs (usually during Friday prayers, which is the busiest time for mosques) (Flaccus, Huffington Post, May 2011). Many of the protesters expressed opposition because they believed Islam was a radical religion. For example, during her protest, Zorina Bennett, 50, of Temecula argued “this is America. This is a Christian country, this is not a Muslim country. They are known terrorists, Read the Koran. They are trained to kill people from the time they’re in their youth” (LA Times, Willon, 2010). The proposal for the Mosque was not new. The Temecula Islamic Center had purchased the site 10 years prior and had been saving money to build the new center. Importantly, they did not encounter opposition or resistance until planning work coincided with the media coverage of the

proposed Park 51 Islamic Center in New York City (Flaccus, Huffington Post, May 2011). This suggests that the media may be influencing tolerance judgements towards Muslim Americans.

To provide a more thorough picture of how the media has represented Muslims, I conducted a content analysis of stories that discussed the proposed construction of an Islamic Center and Mosque in the city of Temecula. I expected that the majority of the coverage would be negative as there was significant opposition coinciding with negative coverage of Park 51. I collected all newspaper articles that directly referenced the words: *Temecula, Mosque, Islamic Center*, from the stories released from May 2010 (coinciding with the release of Park 51 coverage) to December 2010, when coverage began to slow down. This totaled 42 articles, which provided a great diversity of news sources that included moderate, liberal and conservative viewpoints. The articles featured several quotes that captured opinions of religious and political leaders, other community elites, in addition to citizens of Temecula. I first assessed 15 articles to develop an overall idea of article frames: positive, negative or conflicting. In that process, I also began to identify the main reasons that individuals cited in expressing opposition or support for the center. Overall, my content analysis revealed that a considerable majority (about 70%) of the 42 articles were overwhelmingly negative, and only about 10% were positive. The remaining 20% were conflicting; including both positive and negative information. Table 3.1 provides a list of the primary reasons cited for opposition or support specifically mentioned in the articles.

Table 3.1: Content Analysis of News Stories Discussing Temecula Mosque Controversy

Reasons for Opposition	Number of Articles	Reasons for Support	Number of Articles
1. Fear of extremist activity	36	1. mosque passed all city environment and traffic requirements	4
2. Traffic problem	8	2. Freedom to practice religion	7
3. Protest letters and signature	18	3. Threat to religious freedom	3
4. fear of Muslims taking over/ "Islamization of America"/	24	4. Opposition goes against constitutional protection	2
5. Obama supports/ speaks positive about NY Mosque building/ Muslims religious freedom	6	5. Interfaith; other religious groups showing support	5
6. Islam encourages violence		6. Mentioning knowing/ contact with Muslims	2
7. Related to terrorism	14		
8. Islam is not a religion	3		
9. Islam and Muslims are not compatible with being American and American way of life	15		
7. Mentioning NO contact with a Muslim	7		
8. Fear of spread of sharia law	17		
9. Fear of Islam as domestic threat	32		

The results from my content analysis lead to several important conclusions. First, the articles identified more reasons for opposition to building the Temecula Islamic Center than reasons to support. I also note that the articles more frequently addressed

negative reasons for opposition than positive reasons for support, which is a subtle, but important distinction. One particularly striking example related to terrorism, fear of extremist activity, and fear of Islam as a domestic threat was an August 2010 TIME article citing the Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church (located directly across from the proposed mosque site) who stated Islam and Christianity are like “oil and water”, and that Islam is “intolerant at its core. The Islamic foothold is not strong here, and we really don't want to see their influence spread...There is a concern with all the rumors you hear about sleeper cells and all that. Are we supposed to be complacent just because these people say it's a religion of peace? Many others have said the same thing." He added that when Islam becomes dominant in a society “you also see a repression of freedom of speech and religious expression. In my view, building a mosque in Temecula would act as a magnet. It would embolden the more aggressive acting on the beliefs.” (TIME, Aug 2010).

Fear that the mosque would harbor extremists (86% of articles) and spread sharia law (40%) were common themes that emerged in the articles. These ideas are in stark contrast to scholarship showing that there is no systematic data to support the claim that mosque involvement, or religiosity is associated with anti-American attitudes or behavior among American Muslims (Dana, Barreto and Oskooii, 2011). Rather Dana, Barreto and Oskooii's (2011) findings suggest that an association exists between higher levels of involvement in mosque-related activities and participation in American politics. Specifically, they argue “overwhelmingly, mosques help Muslims integrate into US society, and in fact have a very productive role in bridging the differences between Muslims and non-Muslims in the United States” (pg. 517).

While the reasons of support for the Temecula mosque were less prominent, one common theme that emerged discussed how like other religious groups in the United States, Muslims also have a constitutional right to freely worship. For example, one Temecula resident stated “the Constitution protects the right of all citizens to worship as they see fit. If we deny that right to one group, we endanger freedom of worship for everyone” (Neff, LA Times, 2010). Several articles also mentioned the support that the mosque received from other religious groups and community members. Temecula mosque members expressed gratitude for the support they received from community members from all faiths and beliefs. The chairman of the Temecula mosque stated “This is much better than I could have even expected. It helps show that we are part of this community, that we belong here” (Willon, LA Times, 2010).

Only two articles mentioned positive contact between Temecula residents and a Muslim(s). I believe this helps to explain the strong opposition to the mosque. One example suggesting the role of positive contact in creating tolerant judgments was an August 2010 TIME article citing resident Briana Bowers, 16, who mentioned that she has Muslim friends and that at her school several discussions have risen in her classrooms about the mosque. Her overall conclusion was her “Muslim friends observe that there are dozens of churches in town and wonder what is wrong with building one mosque...I think it would broaden the culture in Temecula.” My subsequent chapter on contact supports previous research that argues that contact is one of the most effective strategies for improving intergroup relations (Allport, 1954, 1979; Amir, 1969; Cook, 1985; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006; Watson, 1947). As Miller (2002) argues

contact “reduces anxiety and discomfort.... [while] simultaneously, these processes provide an opportunity to disconfirm negative stereotypes of disliked out-groups, and thereby break down the monolithic perception of the out-group as a homogenous unit” (p. 397). Since contact between Muslims and other Temecula city residents is low, I expect a lower likelihood of observing these positive outcomes.

An absence of contact with Muslims creates a greater likelihood that false information is spread by those who oppose the mosque. This was observed in several articles citing a fear of extremist activity and potential traffic problems. In one example, Ron Patterson, a 65-year-old retired mail man mentioned that he signed a petition to stop the building of the mosque, after a lady had canvassed his neighborhood telling him that over 3,000 people would be attending the mosque during at least 3 services a day, and that these services will spread extreme and radical views. In a second example citing Islam as a domestic threat, Karen Fesini, 68, a member of the Republican women’s groups in the Temecula and Murrieta, said she made calls to warn her friends about the project. She mentioned ““They say they're not radicals, but how do we know? Right now, we're at war with the Taliban and the Muslims and our boys are over there fighting and dying for our freedom. What would it be like if they come home and found out we just let them in the front door?” (Los Angeles Times, July 2010). Other community members admitted to not personally knowing any Muslims, but also argued that the “Islamic religion is contrary to the American way of life” (Weiner, 2010). I believe this lack of contact between Muslims and other community members in the city of Temecula may contribute to the forming of negative opinions towards Muslims.

The opposition to construction of Islamic Centers in Temecula, New York, and across the country highlight a fundamental paradox that exists in American society. Specifically, the majority of Americans support the fundamental principles of democracy (life, freedom, liberty, equality, and pursuit of happiness) in principle, but not necessarily in action. For example, following the tragic attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon on September 11, 2001, Americans increased their willingness to sacrifice some of the civil liberties that traditionally define a liberal democracy (Skitka, Bauman, and Mullen, 2004; Merolla and Zechmeister 2009; Davis and Silver 2004; Davis 2007). I consistently observed this paradox in my content analysis. For example, Diana Serafin, 59, a Temecula resident explained "we have a constitutional right to freedom of religion, but Islam is more than a religion. It is an ideology to enforce Shari'a law [Islamic jurisprudence] in America, and Shari'a law is in direct contrast to the American Constitution." Another example that generated significant media attention was Sarah Palin's argument in opposition to Park 51 "No one is disputing that America stands for, and should stand for, religious tolerance. It is a foundation of our republic. This is not an issue of religious tolerance but of common moral sense. To build a mosque at Ground Zero is a stab in the heart of the families of the innocent victims of those horrific attacks" (McManus, LA Times). These statements illustrate a common narrative that has emerged in American society, in which fundamental principles of democracy are increasingly at risk.

My content analysis reveals that the majority of the articles were framed in a way that described the opposition of the building of the Islamic Center in a negative way.

Fear of extremist activity (86%), fear of Islam as a domestic threat (76%), and Islamization of America (57%) were particularly common themes. In my subsequent chapters I argue and demonstrate that this type of media exposure negatively influences tolerance toward Muslim Americans, and more frequent coverage like this only exacerbates these trends. Of particular interest considering the relative minority of positive articles, I further demonstrate that exposure to a single positive article leads to substantial positive shifts in tolerance, and that exposure to a second positive article leads to a second, smaller positive shift.

Qualitative Interviews

The qualitative dimension of my research was particularly instructive in providing additional details and support for my argument. I conducted phone interviews with community members who resided in Temecula during the 2010 controversy surrounding the proposed construction of a Mosque and Islamic Center. Interviews are an extremely helpful and essential tool for understanding how the world works (Mosley, 2013). Specifically, they allow researchers to directly interact with individuals to understand and make sense of political phenomena. In my case, the interview process served as a first means of connecting common themes in the media to perceptions about the proposed mosque and Muslims among supporters and detractors. Importantly, I employed several open-ended questions to develop contextual understandings related to media, contact, and how they relate to opinions of the proposed mosque.

In the preceding section, I found fear of Islamic extremism, fear of Islam as a domestic threat, and Islamization of America to be the most common themes cited in

news articles as reasons people expressed opposition to the proposed Temecula Islamic Center. In my interviews, I used questions to discern whether these patterns were also prevalent in citizen's perceptions of the Temecula Mosque. These interviews also allowed me to gauge whether in fact, threat is at play in influencing tolerance judgments related to the Temecula Mosque. Table 3.2 includes the list of questions that were used during the interviews:

Table 3.2: Interview Questionnaire

1. How often do you watch the news?
2. Do you trust the media?
3. How satisfied, unsatisfied, or indifferent are you to Trump being president?
4. Did you hear about the building of the Islamic Center In Temecula?
5. How did you hear about it?
6. How closely were you following the story?
7. Are there any particular features of the stories that you remember or found persuasive in the media or from other individuals?
8. Where do you think these opinion (opposition and support) come from?
9. What was your opinion on the Islamic Center? Did you support, oppose, or were neutral?
10. Why did you support, oppose, or were neutral?
11. Did you play any particular role in supporting or opposing the center?
12. Did you feel obligated to play a role in the narrative on building the center?
13. Did you do anything in particular to show your support or opposition?
14. If yes, how did you frame these conversations with others in the community?
15. What is your opinion of Muslims?
16. Do you know any Muslims? If yes, how would you describe your relationship with them? (i.e. Close friends, acquaintances, neighbors)
17. Has your opinion of the mosque changed over time? If so, why?
18. Is there anything you would change about the media? What would you change about the media?

I first identified names of community members in the city of Temecula who have been quoted frequently in news articles discussing the Islamic Center of Temecula. Importantly, many of these were community leaders who participated in framing the issue for their community. I then sent out emails and called both the Islamic Center of Temecula and the Calvary Baptist Church (a neighboring church to the mosque) to request interviews. Once in contact with members of these centers, I requested referrals and conducted further interviews through snowball sampling. I concluded my interviews once I began to receive significantly similar and repeated information. In total, I conducted 24 interviews from April 2018 to Jan 2019. In the majority of these interviews, the subject had strong opinions on the Temecula Mosque.

Throughout the interview process, I found multiple themes broadly expressed across interview participants. Three primary themes were repeated among supporters of the Temecula Islamic Center. First, a majority recognized and believed that the media played a significant role in creating or increasing opposition to the mosque and “hatred” towards Muslims. Second, supporters noted they were able to garner support for the Temecula Mosque through meaningful contact. Third, supporters generally had a positive outlook and cited considerable community support, despite negative coverage that highlighted community opposition.

One prominent individual, who was at the time and remains a board member of the Islamic Center of Temecula, argued that the media “mobilized racist mentality to object to building the spiritual place (Temecula mosque)”. This individual further suggested that the opposition to the Temecula mosque began only after reporting on the

ground zero mosque in New York City. Other individuals expressed similar sentiments. One college student argued, “unfortunately, especially in the past two decades there has been a large focus in the media on negative things that are happening to people who may have names that appear to Muslims, or look like they are Muslims, or from somewhere that is majority Muslim. This gives the public the idea that this is what all Muslims are like”.

A Muslim woman that I interviewed argued that anytime the media reported on an issue that discussed Muslims in a negative way, she noticed an increase in “hatred” and “racism” towards people in her Muslim community. She recalled driving when someone threw eggs at her car and yelled out racist slurs such as “go back to your country you terrorist” following the San Bernardino shooting. Another individual shared an emotional story about a trip to Target with her 3-year-old child, when a man began to follow them yelling “do you have a bomb under your dress”. She explained to me that she had never felt more scared and vulnerable in her entire life.

Not only did the majority of mosque supporters argue that the media plays a role in creating opposition towards Muslims, but they also explained specific mechanisms they believed created these feelings: the media created fear by reporting negatively on the mosque. One individual argued “the media buzz definitely brought insecurity and fear into people. I have people at work that live in Temecula and work in Temecula...they don’t know the depth of the stories, they just see [a] credible number of people and credible media sources that are showing that there is an opposition to building a Muslim mosque that will bring whatever Sharia or whatever those labels, Islamophobic labels”.

This individual goes on to argue that exposure to this news increased fear and that conversations (contact) with these people in some cases dissipated this fear. Another interviewee expressed a similar point of view, “media creates this sense of fear and distrust and called a group of people the ‘others’ ...so the damage is done”. These perceptions corroborate extensive research demonstrating perceived threat as one of the most powerful and pervasive effects on tolerance (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus 1982; Gibson, 1992; Gibson 1998; Gibson & Bingham, 1982; Kuzma, 2000; Marcus, Sullivan, Theiss-Morse, & Wood, 1995; Davis and Silver 2004; Davis 2007; Merolla and Zechmeister 2007, 2009), and aligns with my expectations that fear and threat lead people to become intolerant in the case of the Temecula Mosque. In chapters 4 and 5, I present survey experiments in which respondent were exposed to negatively constructed news stories that involved threatening tones.

The second commonly observed theme among supporters was that most recognized contact with different members of the community enabled them to garner support for the proposed new Temecula Mosque. One individual mentioned that through conversations with her coworkers and neighbors, she changed their outlook on the debate. Interestingly, several interviewees mentioned that they did not believe individuals with strong negative opinions on the mosque could be influenced to change those opinions. Rather, only individuals who are either undecided or unfamiliar with the issue could be influenced to support the mosque. Mosque detractors often mentioned that they did not have any contact with Muslim(s). Somewhat paradoxically, supporters of the mosque do not believe they can change the opinions of opponents through contact (although this

contact does not exist), while those who oppose the mosque do not have meaningful positive contact Muslims. This perception is striking considering scholarship arguing contact as one of the most effective strategies for improving relations between groups (Allport, 1954, 1979; Amir, 1969; Cook, 1985; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006; Watson, 1947). In Chapter 5 of my dissertation, I develop an experiment where contact is randomly assigned to draw causal inferences related to the role contact plays in affecting tolerance.

The third common theme to emerge among supporters of the Mosque was an overall positive outlook on the issue. Many mentioned that although there was opposition from members of the community, there was also a lot of support and allies as a direct result of opposition. One individual recalled during the nine-hour town hall meeting in Temecula, many individuals from other religious communities that came to speak in support of the mosque. One supporter noted that while the media did not adequately highlight support, it actually did exist.

My content analysis highlighted a fundamental paradox in American society. The majority of Americans support fundamental principles of democracy (life, freedom, liberty, equality, and pursuit of happiness) in principle, but not necessarily in action. Many of those interviewed also recognized the strong opposition for the freedom to worship in the country whose fundamental value is to support and advocate for this right. One interviewee who attends the Temecula Mosque expressed sadness and concern that “some people want to limit our freedom”. One supporter mentioned she would “never forget” a particular comment at a Temecula City Council town-hall meeting. An

individual introduced herself as a teacher before expressing her concern the mosque would spread sharia law and extremism. When I asked why this example was so distinctive, she explained “its concerning to have a person who defines themselves as an educator to be advocating for something that goes against our constitution of freedom to worship”.

Several common observations emerged in interviews of detractors of the proposed Temecula mosque. First, similar to supporters, those opposed expressed dissatisfaction with and distrust of the media. In particular, many believed the media over emphasized certain issues while ignoring others. This observation is consistent with literature finding large numbers of Americans no longer trust the media to report the news fairly (Jone, 2004; Chanley et al. 2000; Dautrich and Hartley, 1999; Sabato; 1991; Patterson, 1993; West 2001). These low levels of trust in media should be concerning as Dautrich and Hartley argue:

“Lower levels of confidence in the media may deprive the public of some of the essentials of democracy: a source of current information and public education that it can trust and a watchdog for public officials in which it has confidence. Without a trustworthy source of information, the public is left without the ability to discern the important issues of the day, the differences between candidates in elections, and whether what the candidates and advertisers are telling them is accurate. And a public that does not know which candidate stands for what may be less likely to vote and more likely to become cynical regarding elections. (Dautrich and Hartley 1999: 15)

Importantly, a second common theme aligned with common themes observed in my content analysis. Opponents of the mosque expressed fear the mosque would be used as a safe haven to spread sharia law and extremism. One Temecula retiree stated, “if you want to see the effects of the mosque, go back to 9/11”. Another individual argued “most

people don't know what Sharia law is, if they did they would not allow the mosque to be built". The word "fear" was repeated by many of the interviewees. In particular they expressed the fear of the unknown and potential threats that the mosque would bring. When I asked one individual why he believed people did not support the mosque she stated "there was fear, and uncertainty by the way Muslims have been portrayed. Some people are afraid the mosque would bring in more radical people". Another individual mentioned "we don't feel safe having them close to us". In chapter 4, I employ experiments designed to expose respondents to negatively constructed news stories to further develop our understanding of the effects of exposure to negative news stories on tolerance.

Of particular interest to my work on contact, most interviewees who expressed strong opposition to the mosque, also mentioned that they did not have any contact with Muslims, although they had strong opinions on who they believed Muslims are. One attendee of the Calvary Baptist Church neighboring the mosque stated "Muslims can be a little more unloving and harsher. Like I said, I have not seen it myself first hand, but what I see from the way they treat their women and what you hear in the media". Another interviewee admitted she did not personally know any Muslims or has never looked at the mosque's website to learn about the center, but she explained "their religion goes against the American way of life".

Some detractors expressed frustration with others who were upset about their opposition. One interviewee mentioned "people thought we were opposing them as people, but were not, we just disagree on religion". A staff member of the Calvary Baptist

Church explained that they would receive calls from “angry people”. She recalled one caller stating, “I am gay, and I am sure you don’t support that either”. She argued that the beauty of living in the United states is that we have rights to express our opinions. When I asked about the right to worship, she said she believed in that right, but still had concerns that a mosque would spread extremism. This highlights the paradox that in conditions of threat Americans are increasingly willing to sacrifice fundamental civil liberties (Huddy et al. 2002).

Together, these interviews provide a framework to design a set of survey experiments that will rigorously assess the effects of media coverage and contact on tolerance. First, the interview process enabled open ended questions, without an enumerated list to guide the response. This provided additional context in the development of my experiment survey questions and treatment articles. Second, these interviews further support my expectations as they relate to media and contact. For example, both opponents and supporters of the Temecula mosque expressed negative feelings towards media, which they believed affected their opinion. Importantly, Temecula community members noted a marked increase in opposition coinciding with coverage of Park 51 in New York City. Also, in general, detractors had little to no meaningful contact with Muslims. In chapters 4 and 5 of my dissertation I discuss my experiments in which respondents are exposed to single, and multiple positively and negatively framed news stories about Muslims. I also introduce and discuss an experiment in which both media exposure and contact are randomly assigned, which uniquely enables inference of causal relationships between contact, media, and tolerance.

Chapter 4: Tolerance Uncovered: How Frequency of News Exposure Affects Tolerance of Groups

Over the course of history and especially in the last decade following the tragic events of September 11, 2001, Muslims and Islam have been depicted negatively by the media who have consistently associated Islam with violence, terrorism, and incompatibility with democratic values (Pew Research Center, 2013; Sides & Gross, 2013; Dixon & Williams, 2015; Nacos & Torres-Reyna, 2007; Powell, 2011; Alsultany, 2012; Shaheen, 2009; Dill, Gentile, Richter, & Dill, 2005; Šisler, 2008). Several public opinion surveys reveal that Muslim Americans are evaluated more negatively than any other racial, religious, or ethnic group (Edgell, Gerteis, and Hartmann 2006; Putnam and Campbell 2010; Pew Research Center, 2013; Sides & Gross, 2013). Given this context, my research is interested in examining the extent to which the media plays a role in influencing tolerance judgments of Muslim Americans.

In this chapter, I ask, to what extent is tolerance affected when individuals are repeatedly exposed to negatively or positively framed issues about Muslim Americans? I argue and demonstrate that as individuals are exposed to an increasing number of negatively framed news articles, tolerance decreases. Conversely, tolerance increases as individuals are exposed to an increasing number of positively framed articles. In essence, frequency of exposure to negatively or positively framed articles plays a role in shifting attitudes towards groups. It is not only the type of exposure that matters, but also the amount of exposure. In this chapter I conduct three experiments to test the following hypotheses:

H1: Exposure to positively toned media coverage increases tolerance of Muslims

H2: Exposure to negatively toned media coverage decreases tolerance of Muslims.

H3: Individuals more frequently exposed to negatively toned coverage will express increasing levels of intolerance

H4: Individuals more frequently exposed to positively toned coverage will express increasing levels of tolerance

I test these hypotheses with three original experiments. Experiment I was conducted at the University of California, Riverside using a student sample. Subjects were randomly assigned to a positive, negative or control treatment article to test the claim that media affects tolerance of Muslims. I find support for the idea that exposure to a positive news story increases tolerance towards Muslims. Experiment II is a larger national study conducted using Amazon Mechanical Turk. This experiment overlaps tremendously with most of the features of experiment I, but varies by increasing the presentation of more positive and negative stories. This study addresses one of my main arguments, which is that frequency of exposure to positive and negative news matters. My analysis provides clear evidence that frequency of exposure matters in influencing tolerance towards Muslims. Lastly, experiment III allows me to test for media effects on tolerance, as well as test how contact with a member from an out-group may mitigate the effect of media exposure on intolerance (discussed further in the next chapter).

Media Exposure Effects on Tolerance (Experiments I, II, and III)

Methods:

I conducted three laboratory experiments to test my main hypotheses about the effect of repeated exposure to media fames on tolerance. A laboratory experiment is the best approach to test my main hypotheses about the effect of frequency of exposure of

media coverage on tolerance. Through random assignment of participants to control and treatment groups, experiments help facilitate causal inference (Druckman et al. 2006). Experiments are especially helpful to use when studying contextual situations whose impact can be difficult to gauge. With respect to media effects, it is difficult to know precisely the type (positive or negative) and frequency of exposure from survey data. Specifically, in the case of news coverage on Muslims, we know that coverage is overwhelmingly negative. This makes it difficult to assess the effects of positive coverage. Additionally, because experimental treatments are randomly assigned, we can control for confounders. Through clear and transparent methods and experimental procedures of assigning participants to random conditions, and manipulating the independent variable, a laboratory experiment will provide “superior information about the causal relationship between independent and dependent variables” (Kinder and Palfrey, 1993).

My experiments include both undergraduate student samples from the University of California, Riverside as well as an Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) sample. MTurk is an online platform used to recruit survey respondents by paying individuals to complete tasks such as answering survey questions. MTurk has become popularly used by social scientists because of its relatively low cost, less time required to implement a study, ease of use, and its potential to generate more heterogeneous samples (Berinsky, Huber, and Lenz 2012; Krupnikov and Levine 2014; Paolacci, Chandler, and Ipeirotis 2010). Since MTurk and undergraduate student respondents self-select to participate rather than being randomly selected from the population, there is concern that the results observed do not reflect what would be found with population-based samples. A concern may be that

student and MTurk samples may diverge from a representative population sample in ways that bias the estimated treatment effect. Many scholars have found that varying types of convenience samples are reliable, affordable, and produce experimental effects similar to population-based surveys (e.g. Berinsky, Huber, and Lenz 2012; Goodman, Cryder, and Cheema 2012; Horton, Rand, and Zeckhauser 2011; Krupnikov and Levine 2014; Paolacci, Chandler, and Ipeirotis 2010; Weinberg, Freese, and McElhattan 2014; Mullinix, Leeper, Druckman, and Freese; 2016).

While convenience samples have been found to play a fruitful role in helping to progress research agendas, I am aware of some of the issues that may arise from using these samples and have used a number of tools to account for and try to mitigate these issues. One very useful tool with MTurk is that the principle investigator can accept (pay) or reject (not pay) a worker's submission if "a worker makes multiple attempts at a study, fails an attention check, does not submit the correct end-of-survey code, answers the survey too fast, makes a submission but never completes the study, or for any other reason" (Wessling et al. 2017, pg. 218). In order to ensure that respondents were treated ethically, I informed the potential respondents of specific requirements of the study in the consent form, so they could choose if they would like to participate or not based on those requirements. MTurk respondents had to submit both their worker ID to prevent them from multiple entries, they also had to submit a unique code that was given to them at the end of the survey. Another concern for both MTurk and Student respondent is whether or not they would actually read the treatment or control articles presented to them. I

attempted to mitigate this problem by including screening questions. Respondents who answered the screening questions incorrectly were excluded from data set.

Research Design

Experiment I:

My first study was launched on January 20th, 2017 and ended on February 17th, 2017 at University of California, Riverside and included 558 undergraduate student participants. Students were recruited from political sciences courses and received extra credit in exchange for participating in the study or reading an assigned article about experimental methods in political science. The majority of students selected to participate in the experiment instead of reading the article. Experiment I address my first and second hypotheses:

H1: Exposure to positively toned media coverage increases tolerance of Muslims

H2: Exposure to negatively toned media coverage decreases tolerance of Muslims.

As I mentioned previously the use of a sample of undergraduate students may raise questions about the representativeness of my findings. Table 4.1 provides a summary of the demographic and political characteristics of my sample and compares it to the national data from the United States Census Bureau and the Pew Research Center. The data shows that my sample varies substantially on important demographic and political variables. I would expect it to be more difficult to find support for my hypotheses using college students since my sample is younger, more diverse, more democratic, more college educated, and has a higher proportion of Hispanics and Asians and less Whites. These demographic differences provide for a more difficult test case to find differences

between treatment groups. For example, scholars have consistently found that education is strongly related and linked to tolerance (Nunn, Crockett, and Williams, 1978; Bobo and Licari, 1989; Prothro and Grigg, 1960; Sullivan, Pierson, Marcus, 1993; Stouffer, 1955; Davis, 1975; Golebiowska, 1995). For this reason, I believe it is reasonable to assume that my sample may provide for a more rigid test of the extent to which the media may affect tolerance.

Table 4.1 Sample Characteristics for Experiment I

	Experiment I	National Sample
Sample Size	556	
Sex		
Female	64.70%	50.8
Male	35.2	49.2
Race/ethnicity		
Hispanic	49.4	17.8
Asian	21.5	5.7
White	11.8	76.9
Black	5.9	13.3
Middle Eastern	5.7	0.5
Other	4.6	7
Native American	0.53	0.5
Party Identification		
Democrat	64.4	28
Independent	12.9	41
Don't know/Refused	8.1	1
Republican	7.9	25
Something else	6.6	1
Religion		
Roman Catholic	33.2	20.8
Nothing in particular	19.1	15.8
Evangelical Christian	8.6	25.4
Agnostic	8.4	4
Something else	7.7	0.3
Atheist	5.9	3.1
Protestant	5.9	14.7
Muslim	3.5	0.9
Hindu	2.1	0.7
Jewish	0.9	1.9
Eastern or Greek Orthodox	0.7	0.5
Mormon	0.5	1.6

Sources: Pew Research Center and U.S. Census Bureau

Poststudy diagnostics using Chi-squared and ANOVA as appropriate for categorical and numerical data indicate the experimental conditions were balanced with respect to education, gender, race, partisanship, and age.

Treatments:

All participants were assigned to read a total of three articles and all began the experiment by reading two warm up articles: one was an article about health and nutrition in the world and the second was about a police officer saving a dog in the city of Fort Worth, Texas. The final story, immediately following the warm up articles was one of the three treatment articles. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three treatments groups: positive frame story, negative framed story, and control article. The first and second treatment articles (positive and negative frame articles) had considerable overlap in regard to presenting background information about the building of an Islamic Center and mosque in the city of Temecula, California. But the treatments varied tremendously in the alternative framing of the overall opinion of community members and leaders. The alternative framing was consistent and similar to the framing found in articles I read while conducting the content analysis (described in depth in chapter 3). The positive frame emphasized that the community members, religious leaders, and politicians expressed overwhelming support for the right to build the center. The negative frame emphasized that the community members, religious leaders, and politicians expressed overwhelming concern and opposition to the building of the center. Besides the fear of increased traffic in the area, the largest concern was the center would be used to harbor Islamic extremism. The final treatment was a control article that discussed how

Mark Zuckerberg was building a new home in Hawaii. Table 4.2 provides a summary of the stories' content. Appendix A contains the full text articles as presented to participants.

Table 4.2: Content of Building of Mosque Story, Experiment I

Table 4.2 Content of Building of Mosque Story, Experiment I		
	<i>Positive Frame</i>	<i>Negative Frame</i>
Theme	Community members, religious leaders, and politicians have expressed support for the right to build an Islamic Center. Muslims have made great contributions to the community. Center would help the local economy.	Community members, religious leaders, and politicians have expressed great concern about the Islamic Center. Fear of creating a haven for Islamic extremists. Increased traffic and noise to the area.
Quotes	"we remember when there were protests in this country against Synagogues being build. I believe that Muslims have the same right to practice their religion as anyone else in this country. That includes the right to build a place of worship and a community center on private property"	"we have a constitutional right to freedom of religion... But Islam is more than a religion. It is an ideology to enforce Sharia Law (Islamic jurisprudence) in America, and Sharia las is in direct contrast to the American Constitution"
Images	Women holding sign that states "Temecula supports freedom of religion"	Several protesters holding signs that expressed opposition to the Islamic Center. Signs state, "No Sharia Law" "Muslims danced with joy on 9/11 Never Forget" "No rights for Women- No rights for Mosques"

Immediately following the reading of the articles, respondent answered questions corresponding to the treatment group they received. This was to ensure that respondents were paying attention and actually reading the articles. The manipulation check confirmed that the vast majority (87%) of respondents paid attention to the articles and answered the questions correctly. To conclude the study respondents answered questions concerning their perceived personal threat and questions measuring their contact with

Muslims, KKK members and LGBT individuals. These items will be discussed in more depth in the next chapter where the analysis of the findings will be reported.

Tolerance Measures:

Immediately following the reading of articles and the answering of screening questions participants answered a battery of questions concerning their tolerance of Muslims. It is imperative to specify how tolerance was measured in my study. As discussed earlier in this dissertation, I utilize the definition of tolerance developed by Bernard Crick (1973) and Sullivan et al. (1981). Tolerance implies willingness and ability to put up with opinions and/or behaviors that one opposes or rejects by extending liberties and protections to these “disliked” groups (Sullivan et al. 1981). When we say that one tolerates an individual we certainly do not mean that one likes or approves of them but merely that, in spite of their dislike, and opposition, one shall endure them and/or their action (Allport, 1979). Tolerating someone implies the willingness to permit the expression of other people’s ideas or interests. Tolerant individuals do not restrict ideas that challenge their own opinions. My dependent variable assesses respondent’s attitudes towards allowing individuals to access liberties and protections. Respondents answered a number of questions measuring their tolerance toward Muslims (See table 4.3 for the list of questions). These questions correspond with Sullivan, Pierson, and Marcus (1982) definition of tolerance: The willingness and ability to put up with opinions and/or behaviors that one opposes or rejects. The degree of tolerance or intolerance was assessed on 6-point scale of: strongly approve, approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, disapprove, and strongly disapprove. My experiment also asked respondents to answer

my tolerance battery questions about other groups besides Muslims. This was done to ensure that respondents are not aware of the hypotheses and expectations that exposure to media effects tolerance of Muslims. These groups included tolerance towards LGBT individuals and KKK members.

Table 4.3 Tolerance Battery Questions:

A. Do you approve or disapprove allowing _____ to build a center and in the city of Temecula?
B. Do you approve or disapprove allowing _____ to build a center in your community?
C. Do you approve or disapprove allowing _____ to make a public speech in your city?
D. Do you approve or disapprove of having _____ phone conversations recorded by the government?
E. Do you approve or disapprove allowing of _____ holding public rallies in your city?
F. Should _____ be subject to more searchers in airports or public buildings?

Importantly, results from an overall tolerance battery (all questions in table 4.3) show excellent agreement (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$). In the analysis below, I utilize support for the construction of a mosque in the city of Temecula and one's own community as mosque construction is the subject of the treatment articles. To test if the overall tolerance battery assesses a similar latent variable related to tolerance, I performed principal components factor analysis. The result was a single factor with a minimum value of -2.79 and a maximum of 1.10. The distribution is skewed with a tail out towards more negative values, a mean of 0, median of 0.19, and a standard deviation of 0.96. In the analysis below, I use this tolerance construct as an additional, more general, measure of tolerance.

Experiment II:

Experiment II overlaps tremendously with most of the features of experiment I, but varies by increasing the presentation of more positive and negative frames. Besides addressing H1 and H2, experiment II is especially focused on addressing one my main arguments that frequency of exposure to positive and negative news matters. While previous studies have identified important determinants of tolerance, I argue that we are still not clear to what extent frequency of exposure to the media affects tolerance and whether or not interactions with individuals may mitigate the effect. My research project is centered on understanding the effect of frequency of exposure to both negative and positive tone of coverage.

Experiment II was designed to assess the effects of frequency and maintain the treatments from experiment I. This is important because this experiment design enables me not only to examine differences between high frequency (two articles) exposure to media coverage and control, but also to examine differences between low frequency (1 article) and high frequency treatments (two articles).

In my last study I used a sample of undergraduates, which inevitably may raise questions about the representativeness of my findings. To ensure that the findings I observed in my last experiment was not a product of using a student sample, I conducted a second experiment using a national sample from Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). The goal was to be able to replicate the results from my first Experiment. My second experiment was launched on Amazon Mechanical Turk on September 28th, 2017 and ended October 30th, 2017. I paid respondents \$0.50 for participating in the study from a

research fellowship I received from University of California Riverside and ended up with 2423 participants. Table 4.4 provides a summary of some of the sample demographic characteristics of experiment II. As is typical for MTurk studies, my sample slightly overrepresents American females and Democrats (Berinsky et al., 2011). Poststudy diagnostics using Chi-squared and ANOVA as appropriate for categorical and numerical data indicate the experimental conditions were balanced with respect to education, gender, race, partisanship, and age.

Table 4.4 Sample Characteristics for Experiment II

	Experiment II	National Sample
Sample Size	2423	
Sex		
Female	58.1	50.8
Male	41.9	49.2
Race/ethnicity		
White	76.4	76.9
Black	7.2	13.3
Hispanic	6.2	17.8
Asian	5.9	5.7
Other	1.9	7
Native American	0.5	0.5
Middle Eastern	0.3	0.5
Party Identification		
Democrat	38.6	28
Independent	28.4	41
Republican	24	25
Something else	5.4	1
Don't know/Refused	3.3	1
Political ideology		
Somewhat liberal	28.3	
Moderate	26.2	
Somewhat conservative	20.1	
Very liberal	16.7	
Very conservative	6.9	
Religion		
Protestant	19.4	14.7
Roman Catholic	16.1	20.8
Nothing in particular	15.1	15.8
Atheist	12.6	3.1
Agnostic	12.2	4
Evangelical Christian	8.6	25.4
Something else	7.2	0.3
Jewish	2.2	1.9
Mormon	1	1.6
Muslim	0.8	0.9
Hindu	0.8	0.7
Eastern or Greek Orthodox	0.5	0.5

Treatments:

Since the second experiment is focused on understanding how frequency of exposure to positive and negative news stories affects tolerance, I increased the respondent’s exposure to negatively and positively framed stories. Just like the first experiment I constructed two new artificial but very realistic negatively and positively framed articles that were very similar to the news articles I collected for my content analysis (discussed in depth in chapter 3). I then embed the stories into an electric newspaper style format to make them as realistic as possible (See Appendix A for full text articles as presented to respondents). Constructing my own articles allows for “greater control over the information that varied across framing conditions, minimizing the change that idiosyncratic features of the news stories confounded with the frames were responsible for the observed effects” (Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley; 1997, pg. 575). Table 4.5 lists all five treatment groups that participants were randomly assigned to.

Table 4.5 Treatment Exposure Options

Treatment	Framing of Story
1	Positive Mosque story
2	Negative Mosque story
3	Ice Cream Museum Control story
4	1 Positive Mosque Story & 1 Positive Muslims Story
5	1 Negative Mosque Story & 1 Negative Muslims Story

The two new positive and negative articles that I constructed shared the similarity of discussing the same topic, which were stories involving Muslims in America. Overall the stories varied in how they presented Muslims either in an overwhelmingly positive or negative frame. The positive frame article emphasized many positive qualities found in

American Muslims for example, how Muslims in America are better educated than most Americans. The negative frame emphasized a story about a Muslim couple who committed a horrific shooting at a work place killing 14 people. I also included a new control article that discussed the opening of an Ice Cream Museum in Los Angeles. Table 4.6 provides a summary of the news stories content (see Appendix A for full articles).

Table 4.6: Content of News Stories About Muslim Americans, Experiment II.

	Positive Frame	Negative Frame
Title	"The Truth about Muslims in America"	"Muslim Newlyweds slaughter co-workers who threw them a baby shower"
Quotes	"Muslims have been crucial in helping law enforcement find terror suspects in the United States. Many have served in the military protecting the country against terrorists. And in many ways, they're a lot like other everyday Americans".	Authorities have said that the couple were inspired by Islamic extremism, calling it the deadliest such attack on US soil since Sept. 11, 2001. "This was not a casual workplace argument," one law enforcement source told The Post. "It's a well-planned and thought-out attack."
Images	Image of woman smiling wearing a hijab (headscarf) with the print of United States flag.	Image of people in distress and fear over what had occurred on the site of the attack. A man whose shirt shows blood stains is being hugged by women who is crying.

After reading the articles participants answered screening questions to ensure they did not skip over the articles and actually read them. The manipulation check confirmed that the vast majority (89%) of respondents paid attention to the articles and answered the questions correctly. Immediately following the reading of articles and the answering of screening questions participants answered a battery of questions concerning their

tolerance of Muslims, KKK members, and LGBT individuals just like in experiment, as well as perceived personal threat. Similar to experiment I, in the analysis below, I utilize support for the construction of a mosque in the city of Temecula, in one's own community, and a factor constructed from the overall tolerance battery¹.

Experiment III:

Experiment III overlaps tremendously with most of the features of experiment I but varies in one important way, which is the method of which contact is measured in this experiment. In my first two experiments, I use the common approach of self-reported measure of contact, which may limit the ability to draw causal inferences since contact is not randomly assigned. In my third experiment, I developed a novel method of measuring contact in a laboratory setting, by recruiting female research assistants who wore the hijab (Muslim Women Head Covering) or not while running the experiments. Experiment III was specifically designed to assess the effect of contact where contact is randomly assigned. However, in this chapter, I use experiment III treatment groups without contact to further test H1.

In experiment III, respondents were exposed to one of three treatments groups: one positively framed article, two negatively framed articles, or a control article. (See table 4.7) These treatment groups were designs based on the findings from experiments I and II, as well as after considerable literature review and conducting a through content analysis of a large set of news articles (from Chapter 3). As will become clear later, I find

¹ The overall tolerance battery showed good agreement ($\alpha = 0.9$). To assess tolerance as a latent variable, I performed principal components factor analysis. The result was a single factor with a minimum value of -2.25 and a maximum of 1.20. The distribution is skewed with a tail out towards more negative values, a mean of 0, median of 0.17, and a standard deviation of 0.96.

that a single negative story does not create a significant difference with respect to the control, likely as a result of the overwhelmingly negative coverage in the broader environment. Therefore, in order to assess the effects of contact in the presence of negative news I used the treatment from experiment II, which used 2 negative articles. I also observed in experiment I and II significant differences with respect to the control upon exposure to 1 positive new story. I therefore utilized a single positive story in the positive treatment group. I used the same articles that were used in experiments I and II.

Table 4.7 Treatment Options in Experiment III

Treatment	Framing of Story
1	1 Positive Mosque story
2	1 Negative Mosque Story & 1 Negative Muslims Story
3	Ice Cream Museum Control story

My third experiment was launched on November 13th, 2017 and ended on December 13th, 2017 at the University of California Riverside School of Business Behavioral Research Laboratory and included 568 undergraduate student participants. Students were recruited from political sciences courses and received extra credit in exchange for participating in the study in person at the Business Behavioral Research Laboratory or reading an assigned article about experimental methods in political science. The majority of students selected to participate in the experiment instead of reading the article. Table 4.8 provides a summary of the demographic and political characteristics of my sample and compares it to the national data from the United States Census Bureau and the Pew Research Center. The data shows that my sample varies substantially on important demographic and political variables. As mentioned earlier in

my discussion of experiment I, I expect it to be more difficult to find support for my hypotheses using college students and I believe it is reasonable to assume that my sample may provide for a more rigid test of the extent to which the media may affect tolerance.

Poststudy diagnostics using Chi-squared and ANOVA as appropriate for categorical and numerical data indicate the experimental conditions were balanced with respect to education, gender, race, partisanship, and age.

As in the previous experiments, immediately following the reading of articles and the answering of screening questions participants answered a battery of questions concerning their tolerance of Muslims. In the analysis below, I utilize support for the construction of a mosque in the city of Temecula and in one's own community, in addition to a tolerance factor constructed using principal components factor analysis².

² The overall tolerance battery showed good agreement ($\alpha = 0.87$). To assess tolerance as a latent variable, I performed principal components factor analysis. The result was a single factor with a minimum value of -2.99 and a maximum of 1.06. The distribution is skewed with a tail out towards more negative values, a mean of 0, median of 0.19, and a standard deviation of 0.96.

Table 4.8 Sample Characteristics for Experiment III

	Experiment III	National Sample
Sample Size	562	
Sex		
Female	60.4	50.8
Male	39.6	49.2
Race/ethnicity		
Hispanic	46.2	17.8
Asian	25.9	5.7
White	10.5	76.9
Other	6.7	7
Black	5.1	13.3
Middle Eastern	4.9	0.5
Native American	0.3	0.5
Political ideology		
Somewhat liberal	32.7	
Moderate	28.6	
Very liberal	22.9	
Somewhat conservative	10.3	
Very conservative	2.8	
Party Identification		
Democrat	62.6	28
Independent	14.2	41
Something else	8.1	1
Don't know/Refused	6.2	1
Republican	5.3	25
Religion		
Roman Catholic	31.3	20.8
Nothing in particular	19.6	15.8
Evangelical Christian	9.2	25.4
Agnostic	6.9	4
Something else	6.4	0.3
Atheist	6.2	3.1
Muslim	4.6	0.9
Protestant	4.4	14.7
Eastern or Greek Orthodox	1.4	0.5
Hindu	1.2	0.7
Jewish	1.1	1.9
Mormon	0.4	1.6

Results:

H1: Exposure to negative media coverage decreases tolerance of Muslims.

There is considerable support for the idea that negative news exposure adversely affects individuals' opinions and tolerance of groups (Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley; 1997; Kepplinger et al. 1989; Shaw, 1999; Cacioppo & Berntson, 1994; Kahaneman, Slovic, & Tversky, 1982; Lau and Rover; 2009; Marcus, Neuman, & Makuen, 2000; Mutz, 1998; Schul & Schiff, 1993; Soroka, 2006; Soroka and McAdams, 2015; Skitka, Bauman, and Mullen, 2004). Across all three of my experiments, I only find support for this idea in experiment I, when respondents are asked whether they approve of allowing Muslims to hold public rallies in their city (higher values on a 6-point scale indicating more tolerance, when comparing the mean). I found that in the negative treatment individuals were less tolerant with a mean tolerance score of 4.44 as compared to 4.61 for the control group. This difference is statistically significant according to a difference in mean test ($p=0.10$).

It was initially surprising that the negative treatment did not overall adversely affect tolerance of Muslims. However, if we recall from the literature discussed in chapter 2, many scholars have demonstrated that Muslims have overwhelmingly been portrayed negatively by the media. Many contemporary scholars have found that the media has both before and after the tragic events of September 11, 2001 characterized and demonized Muslims negatively (Gershkoff and Kushner, 2005; Reese, 2007; Powell and Abadi, 2003, Powell, 2011; Lajevardi, 2017, Lajevardi and Oskooii 2018). The media overwhelmingly has focused on a narrative of us versus them, or the United States versus Islam. This allowed for a consistent climate of fear of terrorism that was often linked to

Muslims (Reese, 2007). Even prior to September 11, U.S media reporting on Muslims and Islam was connected to oil, Iraq, Afghanistan and Terrorism. This reporting all involved exposing Americans to stories concerning control of oil, war, and terrorism (Said, 1978). The majority of Muslim Americans have also expressed and recognized that media reporting of Muslims and Islam has been negative. My own content analysis that I conducted and discussed in chapter 3 also supports these findings. Recall that my content analysis looked at stories that discussed the building of mosque in the city of Temecula and overall the content analysis revealed that the majority (about 70%) of the 42 articles overwhelmingly reported on the building of the Mosque in Temecula negatively and only about 10% were positive, and about 20% were conflicting (including both positive and negative information).

From this information we can conclude that my experiments took place in an environment where news coverage of Muslims is overwhelmingly negative. It is not surprising therefore that a single negative article in this context does not create a significant response as the baseline is already negative. Importantly, as I will discuss below, we can explore this further by turning to the studies that included exposure to multiple negative stories.

H2: Exposure to positive media coverage increases tolerance of Muslims

I find support for H2 across all three experiments. Recall that hypothesis 1 relates to increases in tolerance of Muslims corresponding to exposure to positively toned media coverage and my key assumption is that any amount of media exposure matters in effecting tolerance of groups. I first test whether positive coverage increases support for

the construction of the Temecula mosque, with higher values on a 6-point scale indicating more tolerance. I find that in the positive treatment individuals express greater tolerance with a mean tolerance score of 5.03 as compared to 4.86 for the control group. This difference is statistically significant according to a difference in means test ($p=0.05$). I also observed greater increases in support for the Temecula Mosque between positive and control treatments in experiments II and III. In experiment II, the positive treatment received a mean score of 4.91 as compared to 4.32 for the control group. This difference is statistically significant according to a difference in means test ($p=0.00$). In experiment III, the positive treatment yields a mean tolerance score of 5.38 versus 4.83 for the control. This difference was also statistically significant ($p=0.00$). Together, this supports the idea that in the context of more positively toned coverage, support for construction of the Temecula mosque is increased.

Turning to support for construction of a Mosque in a respondents' own community, I again find considerable, repeated support in experiments II and III. In experiment II, the positive treatment received a mean tolerance score of 4.72 as compared to 4.28 for the control group. The difference in the means is highly significant at ($p= 0.00$). In experiment III, the same comparison yields 5.27 in the positive treatment vs. 4.69 in the control, and this difference is statistically significant ($p=0.00$). Therefore, these finding suggest that not only is support for construction of Temecula mosque increased (the subject of the positive article), but that tolerance towards construction of a mosque in one's own community is also increased. Interestingly, in experiment I, I find that positive media treatment (group mean = 4.95) led to a smaller increase in support for

construction of a mosque in one's own community as compared to the control (group mean = 4.84). This difference is significant, but only using a one tailed test ($p=0.09$, one tailed). I also note that in a secondary analysis of experiment I, which excludes participants who failed reading comprehension tests, I find a larger difference between the positive (group mean = 5.00) and control (group mean = 4.86), which is significant with a two tailed difference in means test ($p=0.09$, two tailed). The different results observed between experiment I and experiments II and III may suggest that respondents are more willing to extend tolerance to Muslims in Temecula than in their own community.

The results from my tolerance construct from experiments II and III also support H1. In experiment II, I find that the positive toned treatment results in increases in the mean tolerance factor score. The positive treatment received a mean value of 0.167 as compared to -0.11 in the control group, and the difference between the two mean scores is significant at ($p= 0.00$). I find similar support in experiment III, where the same comparison yields a mean of 0.29 for the positive treatment in comparison to -0.19 for the control treatment, and this difference is statistically significant ($p=0.00$). My tolerance construct captures the latent attitudes towards Muslims and is constructed from assessments of willingness to allow Muslims to not only construct a mosque, but also attitudes towards surveillance, public speech, and public rallies. Therefore, I conclude that the effects of positive toned coverage extend beyond the primary subject of the news story³. It is important to note that results from my tolerance construct is a second area where I find differing results between experiment I and experiments II and III. In

experiment I, the difference between positive (group mean = 0.05) and control (group mean = -0.01) treatments was not significant ($p=0.40$, two tailed). It is also important to note a specific difference between experiment I and experiments II and III. In experiment I, respondents were exposed to the treatment article (e.g. control, positive, or negative article) along with two warm-up articles, whereas in experiments II and III respondents were only exposed to the treatment article. Although treatments were randomly assigned, previous scholarly work suggests that individuals have difficulty simultaneously processing a large number of ideas (Zaller, 1992). Despite this null result, on the preponderance of evidence from experiments II and III provides support for H2.

H3: Individuals more frequently exposed to negatively toned coverage will express increasing levels of intolerance

Now that the core assumption about news exposure has been tested above (H1 and H2), I now turn to experiment II, which was specifically designed to assess whether frequency of exposure (positive and negative increased exposure) to news stories affects tolerance of groups (H3 and H4). To assess the effects of multiple exposure to news stories I compared the results between treatments where respondents are exposed to a single negative news story and a treatment where respondents are exposed to two negative news stories. Just like H1 and H2, for H3 I ask respondents if they support the construction of the Temecula mosque (higher values on a 6-point scale indicating more tolerance). I find that the mean response among individuals exposed to two negative stories (4.12) to be less than individuals exposed to 1 negative story (4.29). This difference is statistically significant according to a difference in means test ($p=0.02$). While there is no significant

difference between the single negative treatment and control group, two negative stories do create a statistically significant difference ($p=0.00$). Turning to support for construction of a Mosque in a respondents' own community, I find similar support, that frequency of exposure to negative news stories increases intolerance. The mean response among individuals exposed to two negative stories (mean 4.11) is less than individuals exposed to 1 negative story (mean 4.27). The difference in means is significant at ($p= 0.04$, two tailed). Importantly with respect to the control vs two negative treatment the difference in means is also significant ($p=0.03$).

The results from my tolerance factor from experiment II also support H3. In experiment II, I find that the two negative treatment results in decreases in the mean tolerance score. The two negative treatment received a mean value of -0.23 as compared to -0.11 for the single-story negative treatment. The difference in means is significant at ($p= 0.01$, two tailed). With respect to the control vs two negative treatment, I find a significant difference in means with the ($p=0.01$).

It is important to note that similar to my findings in experiment I, a single negative article does not create a significant difference on the tolerance factor. But two negative articles do create a significant difference with a net decrease in tolerance with respect to both the control and the single negative article treatments. As explained earlier in my literature review and findings from my content analysis, this is likely a product of the overwhelmingly negative environment of reporting on Muslims. Overall, I find that the effect of more frequent exposure to negative news stories is significant, measurable and repeated across several tolerance measures, which overall supports my hypothesis

that individuals more frequently exposed to negatively toned coverage express increasing levels of intolerance.

H4: Individuals more frequently exposed to positively toned coverage will express increasing levels of tolerance

Experiment II also enables me to test my fourth hypothesis, where I argue that exposure to multiple positive news stories increases tolerance of groups. To assess the effects of exposure to multiple news stories I compared the results between treatments where respondents are exposed to a single positive news story and a treatment where respondents are exposed to two positive news stories. I find that mean support for building a mosque in Temecula among individuals exposed to two positive stories (5.02) is higher than individuals exposed to 1 positive story (4.91). This difference is statistically significant according to a difference in means test ($p=0.07$). Importantly, exposure to two positive stories also leads to a significant ($p=0.00$) increase as compared to the control (4.32).

Turning to support for construction of a Mosque in a respondents' own community, I find similar support, that frequency of exposure to positive news stories increases tolerance. The mean response among individuals exposed to two positive stories (mean 4.91) is greater than individuals exposed to 1 positive story (mean 4.72) and control (mean 4.28). These differences are statistically significant according to a difference in means test ($p=0.01$ and $p=0.00$ respectively). The results from my tolerance construct from experiment III supports H4. In experiment III, I find that the two positive treatment results in increases in the mean tolerance score. The two positive treatment received a

mean value of 3.87 as compared to 3.51 for the single-story positive treatment. The difference in means is significant at ($p= 0.02$, two tailed).

My experiments reveal among the above tolerance measures that more frequent exposure to positive news stories yields increases in tolerance. Exposure to one news story creates a substantial increase in tolerance. Exposure to two positive stories creates a subsequent, but smaller increase.

Conclusion:

The results from my three experiments substantiate my claim that media exposure matters and plays an integral role in affecting tolerance of groups. My present results show that not only does the type of exposure to news matter (positive or negative) but also the amount; and both can exert substantial influence on opinions of groups. My results from experiment II show that frequency of exposure is very important, as I demonstrate that increased exposure to negative news stories increases intolerance towards Muslims, and increased exposure to positive news stories correspondingly increases tolerance towards Muslims. The results from this chapter and the next lead me to the conclusion that we need to think of the factors that influence tolerance on a continuum. These factors (type of exposure, amount of exposure, and contact (explored in next chapter) interact with each other to create an overall effect on tolerance. In the following chapter, I demonstrate the effect of contact and interactions between contact and multiple news exposure.

Chapter 5: Intergroup Contact and Tolerance: How Mediated and Self Reported Contact Affects Tolerance in the Context of Media Exposure

What effect does intergroup contact and media have on tolerance of groups?

This question has received considerable attention among scholars who have argued that intergroup contact is one of the most effective strategies for improving intergroup relations (Allport, 1954, 1979; Amir, 1969; Cook, 1985; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006; Watson, 1947). Specifically, the inter-group contact hypothesis states that “Prejudice, unless deeply rooted in the character structure of the individual, may be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority individuals in pursuit of common goals. The effect is greatly enhanced if this contact is sanctioned by institutional support (i.e. by law, custom or local atmosphere), and provided it is of a sort that leads to the appropriation of common interests and common humanity between members of the two groups” (Allport, 1954, p. 281). While past studies on intergroup contact have advanced and validated our understanding of implications and outcomes that may be achieved from intergroup contact, we still do not fully understand how the media may play a role in influencing the effect of intergroup contact on tolerance towards Muslim Americans. Specifically, I am interested in understanding how both intergroup contact and media exposure influence individuals’ tolerance of American Muslims. The present study will look at the comparative effects of both non-mediated (self-reported) and mediated (contact stimulated in a laboratory setting) effects on tolerance.

Scholars have argued and found that media representations of Muslims and Islam have been consistently negative, especially in the decade following the tragic events of September 11, 2001 (Lavevardi and Oskooii; 2018; Huntington 2004; Lewis 2002;

Panagopoulos 2006; Pipes 2003; Saleem et al. 2015; Ahmed and Matthes, 2016; Powell and Abadi, 2003; Reese, 2007; Ibrahim, 2010; Powell, 2011; Shaheen, 2009; Ibrahim, 2010; Kumar, 2010;). The media has set a consistent narrative of us versus them, or the United States versus Islam. Muslims and Islam have been framed as ‘terrorist’, ‘violent’, ‘extremists’, ‘fundamentalist’, ‘aggressors’, ‘radicals’, and ‘fanatics’ (Mishra, 2007b; Trevino et al., 2010; Ibrahim, 2010; Kumar, 2010; Martin and Phenlan, 2002; (Saleem et al. 2017; AlSultany, 2012; Dill et al., 2005; Dixon & Williams, 2015; Nacos & Torres-Reyna, 2007; Powell, 2011; Shaheen, 2009; Das, Bushman, Bezemer, Kerkhof, & Vermeulen, 2009; Kalkan, Layman, & Uslaner, 2009; Nisbet et al., 2009; Saleem & Anderson, 2013). This has allowed for a consistent fear of terrorism that has been often linked to Muslims (Reese, 2007). Even prior to September 11th, U.S media reporting on Muslims and Islam was connected to oil, Iraq, Afghanistan and terrorism (Said, 1978). Some research has also suggested that many view Muslim Americans as foreign and disloyal (Selod, 2015).

This pervasive negative rhetoric among the media raises an important question that my research seeks to understand: how does intergroup contact affect tolerance and how does it condition the effects of negative and positive media coverage? We know that intergroup contact may lead to increases in tolerance and decreases in prejudice, but a failure to consider the relationship between media exposure and contact may lead to misleading conclusions about how each impacts tolerance. In this chapter, I test whether contact with Muslims increases tolerance, and whether it also mitigates the effect of negative media on tolerance and enhances the effect of positive media.

Intergroup Contact Theory:

Studies on intergroup contact began to gain momentum in the United States following the Second World War, but these early studies revealed confusing and contradicting trends. Some concluded that contact with members of an out-group would create positive relationships that could lead to “mutual understanding and regard” (Lett, 1945, p.35). While others argued that contact can produce more prejudice and “suspicious, fear, resentment, disturbance, and at times open conflict” (Baker, 1934, p. 120). With two opposing conclusions at the forefront, researchers were compelled to complete more rigorous studies involving field work and laboratory experiments to better understand intergroup contact.

Scholars have since argued that intergroup contact is often effective in improving intergroup relations. F. Tredwell Smith conducted a prominent study in 1943, in which white Columbia University students had a series of intellectual contacts with Black leaders in Harlem. The author found that the students who had this interaction demonstrated significant improvements in their attitudes towards African Americans, which was not the case for students who did not experience interracial contact. Later, Deutsch and Collins (1951) conducted a large field experiment interviewing White housewives across different public housing projects. Two housing projects in Newark had Black and White residents separated while two other housing projects in New York City desegregated apartment assignment. The authors concluded that White women in the desegregated apartments had more positive contact with their Black neighbors, which in turn lead to more positive opinions and support for interracial housing. Many scholars have further extended and

repeated these findings, demonstrating interracial contact in public housing can lead to positive feelings for both Whites and Blacks (Wilner, Walkley, & Cook, 1952; Works, 1961).

One of the most influential studies on contact is Gordon Allport (1954) who formulated what is known today as contact theory in his book *The Nature of Prejudice*. He argued through empirically grounded analysis, as people increase interaction with other groups, prejudice decreases (1954/1979). Specifically, Allport identified several prerequisite conditions for group contact to successfully reduce intergroup conflict. These include: 1) equal status 2) Intergroup cooperation 3) Common goals; and 4) Support of authorities, law, or customs. Many scholars have supported and validated Allport's formulation (Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006) and have expanded these studies to include a variety of groups including individuals of various age groups, disabled people, homosexuals, and others.

Several additional factors have been identified in the literature as critical conditions for successful and optimal intergroup contact. These have included common language, voluntary contact, regular and frequent contact, balanced ratio of in-group to out-group members, a prosperous economy, and low levels of anxiety (Dixon et al. 2005). Some research suggests that interpersonal contact succeeds best and leads to positive relationships when individuals learn to appreciate shared values and interests. According to Allport (1954) and Pettigrew (1998) this process occurs in three stages. First, by turning away from a focus on group differences, which allows for friendships to develop while fear of the other declines. Second, by appreciation of group differences, which leads to

improved attitudes. Finally, through development of a shared identity that leads to a significant reduction in prejudice views.

We learn that extended intergroup contact is more effective at reducing prejudice than short term contact because of increased opportunity to create friendships. Pettigrew (1997) examined the responses of over 3800 majority group members in probability samples from France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and West Germany, and found that people with out-group friends had significantly lower levels of bias towards the group and that the development of intergroup friendship played a critical role in the way that contact reduced bias. These friendships create trust that are rooted in a personalized form of communication, which in turn “reduces anxiety and discomfort.... [while] simultaneously, these processes provide an opportunity to disconfirm negative stereotypes of disliked out-groups, and thereby break down the monolithic perception of the out-group as a homogenous unit” (Miller; 2002, p. 397)

Scholars have examined the effect of group contact on tolerance. The inter-group contact hypothesis states “interaction between individuals belonging to different groups will influence the attitudes and behavior between members of these different groups” (Stein et al. 2000). Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) conducted a meta-analysis of 203 studies on intergroup contact as an influence on varied measures of prejudice. They found that about 94 percent of the studies had an inverse relationship. Specifically, they argued that successful contact with members of one out-group could extend to greater tolerance and willingness to interact with other out-groups.

Studies have also found that contact at an early age is very effective in creating long lasting openness and diverse racial and ethnic friendships. For example, children who grow up in a more racially diverse area and in a multi-racial educational setting are more likely to have and form friendship from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds when they are older (Emerson, Kimbro, & Yancy, 2002).

Media and Intergroup Contact

While the intersection of intergroup contact theory and media effects has not been extensively studied, scholars have found that mass media plays a role in influencing opinions of other groups. Several studies have demonstrated that people form their views about different social groups based on what they hear, read, and or see from all types of media sources (Fujioka, 1999; Tan et al., 1997; Schiappa et al., 2005; Ortiz & Harwood, 2007). For example, as early as 1956, psychologists Horton and Wohl argued that mass media messages could create for the public the illusion of face-to-face contact with the characters presented in the media. Others have found that individuals who depend heavily on the media as a source of information are likely to hold worldviews that are similar to the media's viewpoint (Ball-Rokeach, 1976). This has been known as media dependency theory.

In the 1990's several research projects began to expand our understanding of the relationship between intergroup contact and media consumption. The majority of studies involving contact and media effects have focused on how the mass media has unfairly and negatively portrayed many minority groups, and how this in turn has created negative views and stereotypes about them. These studies have been referred to as media

stereotype research.

Much of the research on media exposure and group contact has focused on the negative consequences of media consumption, since historically minorities, racial and, ethnic outgroups have been overwhelmingly portrayed in a negative light by media (Hall, 2003). For example, African Americans have been regularly depicted as law breaking, unmotivated, and clownish (Bogle, 2001; Dixon & Linz, 2000; Entman, 1990; Stroman, Merritt, & Matabane, 1989). Specific wording used by media, such as “welfare queens” and “Inner-city residents, has also reinforced the negative stereotypes of African Americans as being lazy, disruptive, and inferior, “bad minorities” (Feagin, 2006). Other studies have revealed a strong link between exposure to mass media and negative views towards African Americans (Dixon & Azocar, 2007; Ford, 1997; Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000). One study conducted by Armstrong et al. (1992) argued that those with higher exposure to news had a more negative view towards African Americans socioeconomic status. Another study with similar results found that exposure to news programs made people view African Americans as more dangerous and violent (Dixon, 2008).

Many important theories and processes have emerged over the years to help better explain the relationship between media consumption and intergroup contact. One of these processes includes what Fujioka (1999) calls “vicarious contact”, which is the idea of intergroup contact experienced through media exposure. The study finds that that television messages had a significant impact on viewers’ perceptions when firsthand information was lacking. Specifically, Fujioka found that vicarious contact with African Americans was more significant with White American students than it was for Japanese

international students. I expect that in the case of Muslims, contact will provide firsthand information, thereby leading to moderation of negative media. Another process of intergroup contact introduced by Schiappa, Gregg and Hewes (2005) is known as “prosocial contact”. The authors argued that when audience members form a friendship-like relationship with an out-group member via a character(s) in the media, this increases the audiences understanding of the outgroup and further improves their attitudes towards the entire outgroup. A few years later a similar conclusion was made by Ortiz and Harwood (2007) when they introduced what they called “mediated intergroup contact”. In this relationship audience members observe an in-group member character who has a positive relationship with an outgroup member. This observation in turn allows the individual to also possess a more positive view of the outgroup. I expect direct, positive contact to operate in a similar manner, thereby enhancing the effects of positive media.

In chapter 2, I describe the *figure ground* and *cost orientation* hypotheses as mechanisms whereby negative media leads to decrease in tolerance. In the *figure ground* hypothesis, negative media about outgroups juxtaposes against the idea that people are “basically good”. I expect that this effect is moderated by contact with a Muslim, as a positive contact experience provides direct firsthand evidence that Muslims are “basically good”. Recall that the *cost orientation* hypothesis relates to perceived risk. Here again, I expect that positive contact will moderate perceptions of risk thereby reducing the effects of negative media.

In chapter 2, I also describe the *cognitive weighting* and *learning models* whereby positive media increases tolerance by capturing attention and providing new information.

I expect that positive contact as a first-hand experience will capture attention even more so than media alone, leading to an enhancement of media effects and increases in tolerance. Similarly, I expect that contact will provide new information, especially emotional information leading to reduced anxiety, thereby enhancing the effects of positive media.

In the sections below, I test my expectations related to intergroup contact and its interaction with both positive and negative media:

H5: Contact with a member of an out-group increases tolerant attitudes

H6: Contact with a member of an out-group mitigates decreases in tolerance caused by negative media exposure.

H7: Contact with a member of an out-group interacts with positive media exposure to enhance tolerance.

Methods:

In chapter 4, I fully detail 3 experiments used to test my hypotheses. In this chapter, I focus on experiments II and III to study the effects of contact on tolerance of Muslims. In the analysis below, I use Experiment II to assess the relationship between contact and tolerance in the context of 5 types of media exposure. Experiment II was specifically designed to assess the effects of media exposure frequency, and comprised treatments exposing respondents to one or two, positive or negative news articles about proposed construction of a Mosque in Temecula, CA. Importantly, experiment II employs a large national sample and provides a good means to assess the relationship between contact and tolerance in the context of 5 types of media exposure (i.e. control, one positive, two

positive, one negative, and two negative articles). In experiment II, I use a self-reported measure of contact, in which all respondents were asked about the number, frequency, and quality of contact with Muslims, LGB individuals, as well as KKK members (see appendix B for detailed questions). Importantly, results from my contact battery show reasonable agreement (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.63$). To test if my contact battery assesses a similar latent variable related to contact, I performed principal components factor analysis. The result was a single factor with a minimum value of -1.513 and a maximum of 1.953. The distribution is skewed with a tail out towards more negative values, a mean of 0.057, median of -0.040, and a standard deviation of 0.874. In the analysis of experiment II below, I employ ordinary least squares (Table 5.1) analysis to relate this contact factor, dummy variables for each experiment treatment, and interaction terms (e.g. contact*one negative article) to support for construction of a mosque in the city of Temecula, one's own community, and my tolerance factor (see chapter 4). To assess the interactions between contact and experiment treatments, I calculate the average marginal effects (Table 5.2) of each treatment for low (15th percentile), average (mean), and high (85th percentile) levels of contact.

The third experiment measures contact utilizing a novel and unique experimental design. While self-reported measures of contact are common in the literature, it has limitations in the ability to draw casual inference since contact is not randomly assigned. For this reason, I conducted an experiment in which contact is measured and manipulated in a controlled laboratory setting where assignment to treatments can be administered and monitored. Specifically, experiment III was conducted in a laboratory

setting with female assistants who were randomly instructed to wear or not to wear a Muslim head-scarf (hijab) while helping study participants use a computer system. Comparing the control treatment with the hijab only treatment (i.e. control article vs. control article plus hijab) enables assessment of contact effects absent positive and negative media treatments. Together Experiments II and III provide a multi-faceted understanding to the study of contact as it relates to tolerance and media.

Results

H5: Contact with a member of an outgroup increases tolerant attitudes towards the outgroup.

I find considerable support for hypothesis 5 using both self-reported measures of, and randomly assigned contact. Recall that hypothesis 5 associates an increase in tolerance with Muslim contact. Table 5.1 shows the results of OLS models that relate tolerance of mosque construction in Temecula, one's own community, and my overall tolerance factor (see chapter 4 for complete details on tolerance factor construction) to each treatment in experiment II, my contact factor, and interaction terms (e.g. 2 negative story treatment * contact factor). In these models, the control treatment is the baseline and contact is a continuous factor ranging from -1.513 to 1.953. The contact factor is significant in all three models ($p < 0.05$, one tailed). In the case of the Temecula mosque, the coefficient for contact is 0.202 ($p = 0.00$, one-tailed), which implies that across the full scale of contact, support for Temecula Mosque construction is boosted by 0.700 units, which is significant on my six-point scale and comparable, but slightly larger than viewing 2 positive articles (0.666, $p = 0.00$, one tailed). Turning to support for construction of a

Mosque in one's own community, the result is similar although slightly more pronounced. In this case contact has a coefficient of 0.273, which across the full scale of my contact factor boosts tolerance by 0.946, or nearly one-full point on my six-point scale. I find additional support for Hypothesis 5 in examining results with the tolerance factor (column 3 in Table 5.1). In this case the coefficient for contact is again significant 0.190 ($p < 0.00$, one tailed) and causes a boost of 0.659 across the full scale of contact, which is considerable compared to the range of my tolerance construct (-2.25 to 1.20, or 3.45 units full scale).

Turning to experiment III where contact was randomly assigned more readily enables causal inference. Recall that experiment III was conducted in a laboratory setting with female assistants who were randomly instructed to wear or not to wear a Muslim head-scarf (hijab) while helping study participants use a computer system. Comparing the control treatment with the hijab only treatment (i.e. control article vs. control article plus hijab) enables assessment of contact effects absent positive and negative media treatments. Looking first at support for Temecula mosque construction, a difference in means test shows significantly increased tolerance ($p = 0.09$, one-tailed) in the hijab treatment (5.03) vs. the control (4.83). The results were similar and slightly larger when assessing support for a mosque in one's own community. In this case, the control group mean was 4.69 as compared to 4.98 for the hijab treatment. This difference in means is significant, $p = 0.04$, one-tailed. Finally, when comparing results of my overall tolerance construct, I again find a significant difference 0.25 units between the means

($p=0.04$, one-tailed) which is considerable compared to the tolerance factor range (-2.25 to 1.20, or 3.45 units full scale).

Overall, I find repeated, significant support of hypothesis 5 using both self-reported and randomly assigned contact measures. This results of randomly assigned contact are particularly interesting as they most readily enable inference of causal effects. Perhaps most striking is the consistency of the effect. Recall from chapter 2, that contact may be more effective with repeated experiences, whereby relationships and friendships develop. In my experiment, contact involved assistance with a computer system in a single instance. While this experience provides an opportunity for learning and initial anxiety reduction, it will be particularly interesting in future work to modulate the type of contact to create a detailed understanding of its effects. For example, an experiment where participants have meaningful or multiple conversations with hijab or non-hijab wearing female assistants followed by an assessment of tolerance. In the sections below, I again employ experiments II and III to assess interaction between contact, media exposure and their combined effect on tolerance judgements.

Table 5.1: Experiment II OLS regression results relating contact, experiment treatments, and interaction terms to tolerance measures.

	Temecula Mosque	Community Mosque	Tolerance Factor
	Coefficient (Standard Error)	Coefficient (Standard Error)	Coefficient (Standard Error)
Intercept	5.018* (0.360)	4.853* (0.386)	0.294 (0.257)
Contact	0.202* (0.054)	0.273* (0.0580)	0.190* (0.0386)
2 Negative Articles	-0.204* (0.0690)	-0.171* (0.0740)	-0.124* (0.0492)
1 Negative Article	-0.010 (0.0686)	-0.0262 (0.0736)	0.0305 (0.0490)
1 Positive Article	0.591* (0.0690)	0.463* (0.0740)	0.293* (0.0493)
2 Positive Articles	0.666* (0.0692)	0.590* (0.0580)	0.355* (0.0494)
Contact*2 Negative Articles	0.131* (0.0768)	0.143* (0.0823)	0.122* (0.0548)
Contact*1 Negative Article	0.133* (0.0785)	0.118† (0.0841)	0.0645 (0.0561)
Contact*1 Positive Article	0.118† (0.0779)	0.0901 (0.0835)	0.0784† (0.0556)
Contact*2 Positive Articles	0.002 (0.0776)	0.0132 (0.0832)	0.0293 (0.0554)
Highschool graduate	-0.03 (0.396)	0.168 (0.385)	0.180 (0.257)
Some College	0.056 (0.355)	0.306 (0.380)	0.256 (0.253)
College Graduate	0.124 (0.354)	0.308 (0.379)	0.301 (0.252)
Post Graduate Degree	0.207 (0.356)	0.374 (0.382)	0.344† (0.254)
Liberal	-0.357* (0.0647)	-0.368* (0.0693)	-0.321* (0.0463)
Moderate	-0.924* (0.0672)	-1.019* (0.0721)	-0.788* (0.0481)
Somewhat Conservative	-1.267* (0.0711)	-1.482* (0.0762)	-1.120* (0.0508)
Conservative	-1.727* (0.105)	-1.859* (0.112)	-1.401* (0.0749)

* p<0.05 (one tailed), †p<0.10 (one tailed)

H6: Contact with a member of an out-group moderates decreases in tolerance caused by negative media exposure.

Turning to the specific relationships between contact and negative news exposure, my OLS models for experiment II include interactions between my contact factor and dummy variables (coded 0 or 1) for exposure to a single and two negative stories. While interaction terms are often used to study moderating effects between variables (Kam and Franzese 2007), it is particularly instructive to consider the construction of my particular OLS models. Importantly, experiment II comprised treatments with exposure to a single and two negative news articles. Each of these treatments is coded as 0 or 1. I employ marginal effects calculations (Kam and Franzese 2007) to determine the effect of each treatment in the context of low (15th percentile), average (mean), and high (85th percentile) contact (Table 5.2). Looking first at support for Temecula Mosque construction (i.e. the topic of treatment articles), I find that contact has a significant ($p < 0.05$, one tailed) moderating effect in the context of exposure to both single (coefficient = 0.133) and two (coefficient = 0.131) negative news stories (Table 5.1). Inspection of the marginal effects (Table 5.2) reveals an interesting interplay between negative news exposure frequency and the moderating effects of contact. Exposure to two negative articles creates significant decrease in tolerance for both low (-0.332, $p < 0.05$, one-tailed) and average (-0.196, $p < 0.05$, one-tailed) contact. In contrast, exposure to a single negative only creates a significant decrease in tolerance in the case of low contact (-0.139, $p < 0.1$ one-tailed). Importantly, when contact is high, I find that exposure to either one or two negative articles does not lead to significant decreases in tolerance. In the case of single negative

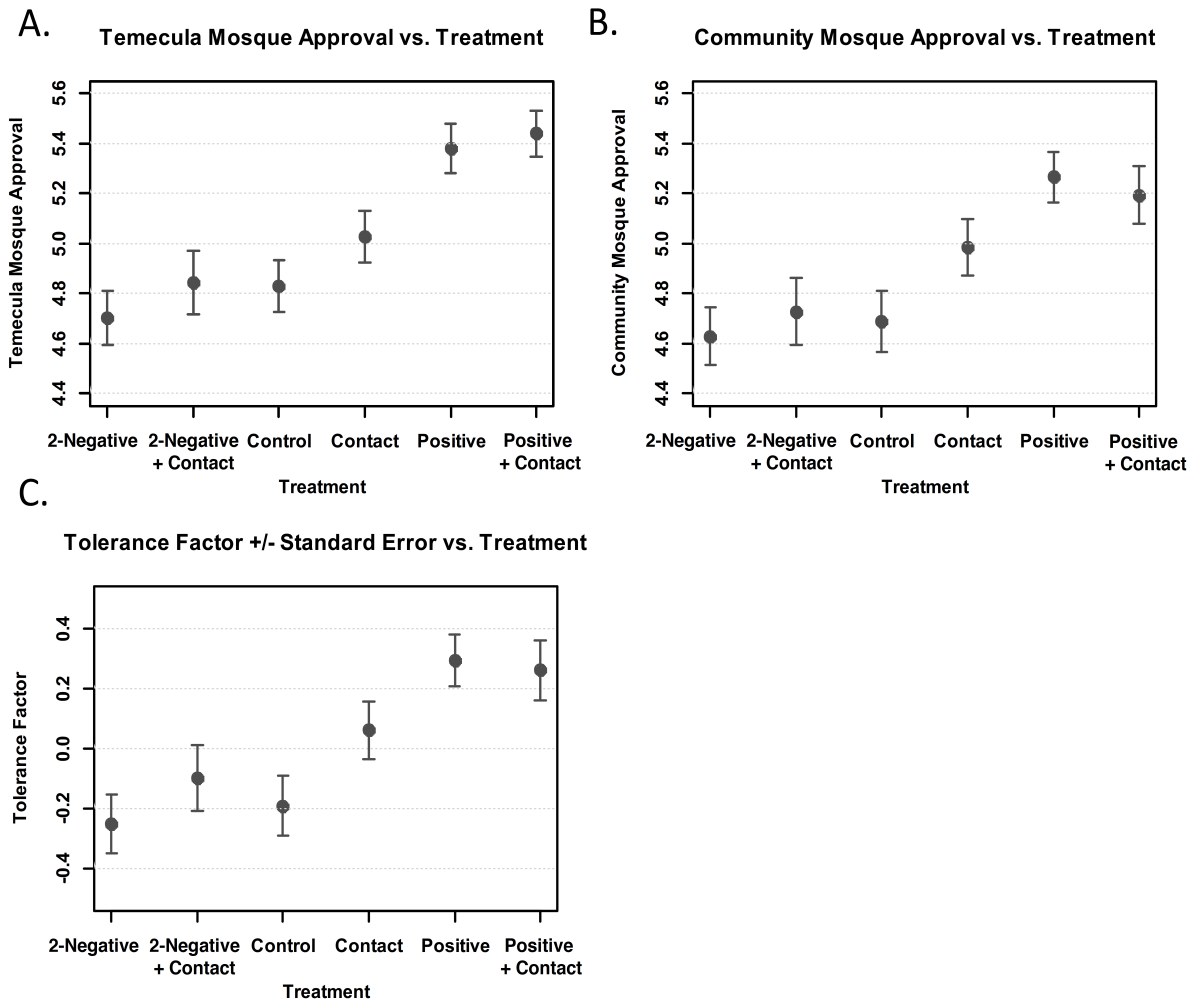
exposure, I find no treatment effect at average levels of contact as well. Turning to support for mosque construction in one's own community, I again find significant interaction terms between contact and single and two negative article treatments. In the presence of two negative articles the coefficient is 0.143 ($p < 0.05$, one tailed).

Examination of the marginal effects shows a similar pattern to Temecula mosque support. Exposure to two negative articles leads to significant reduction in tolerance at both low (-0.311, $p < 0.05$ one-tailed) and average (-0.163, $p < 0.05$ one-tailed) levels of contact, but not when contact is high. In the single negative article treatment the interaction coefficient is 0.118 ($p < 0.1$, one-tailed). Interestingly, inspection of the marginal effects shows that exposure to a single negative article leads to a net increase (0.149, $p < 0.1$ one-tailed) in tolerance. This is a striking difference when compared to Temecula Mosque support. Recall from chapter 2 that media may activate particular constructs in our memories (Ratcliff and McKoon, 1988). Perhaps exposure to negative media leads to positive evaluations of mosque construction in one's own community as a result of positive memories when contact is high. Finally, in the case of my tolerance factor, the interaction between contact and exposure to two negative stories was significant (coefficient = 0.122, $p < 0.05$, one-tailed), while the interaction between contact and exposure to a single negative story was not. Looking at the marginal effects reveals a similar pattern in the case of two negative articles, which leads to significant reductions in tolerance when contact is low (-0.243, $p < 0.05$ one-tailed) or average (-0.118, $p < 0.05$ one-tailed), but not when contact is high. Exposure to a single negative article does not lead to significant reduction in tolerance at low, average, or high contact as assessed by my

tolerance factor. Recall that my tolerance factor is constructed from a battery of 6 questions, only two of which are specifically related to Mosque construction (i.e. the topic of treatment articles).

In experiment II, the moderating effects of contact related to increasing support for mosque construction in the context of negative news exposure was generally comparable across exposure to one and two negative articles on the Temecula Mosque. Importantly, the coefficients for interaction terms between contact and negative media treatments for all three models in Table 5.1 are positive, which suggests a moderating effect. Examination of the marginal effects at low, average, and high contact also support my hypothesis that contact moderates the effect of negative news exposure. Marginal effects analysis also suggests that negative media exerts larger effects when contact is low. In general, as contact increases, the effect of negative media exposure is reduced. Together, these findings support hypothesis 6.

Figure 5.1: Experiment III. A. Mean +/- standard error support for Temecula Mosque construction vs. treatment. B. Mean +/- standard error support for construction of a mosque in your own community vs. treatment. C. Mean +/- standard error tolerance factor scores vs. treatment.



Interestingly, when compared to the results of experiment II, I do not find direct support for hypothesis 6 in experiment III where contact was randomly assigned³. What is particularly striking is that the positive effects of contact with respect to the control (see

³ I do find a significant ($p < 0.1$, one tailed) increase in tolerant judgments specifically related to support for the right of Muslims to hold public rallies between the two-negative article plus contact (4.623), and each the control (4.304) and two negative article (4.305) treatments. See Figure 5.1 in the chapter appendix B: Chapter 5.

discussion of hypothesis 5 above and Figure 5.1) group are diminished in the context of exposure to two negative articles. Recall that support for the Temecula Mosque significantly ($p=0.09$ one tailed) increased in the control article plus contact (group mean = 5.03) condition as compared to the control (group mean = 4.83). This effect is washed out in the two negative article plus contact treatment (group mean = 4.84), which is not statistically different from the control ($p=0.4$). The difference between the contact and two negative articles plus contact groups is very nearly, but not quite significant ($p=0.12$, one-tailed). Importantly, the difference between two negative articles (group mean = 4.70) and two negative articles plus contact treatments (group mean = 4.84) is not statistically significant ($p = 0.2$ one-tailed). This pattern is repeated when looking at support for Mosque construction in one's own community. In this case, the significant ($p=0.04$, one-tailed) increase between the hijab (group mean = 4.98) and control (group mean = 4.69) is washed out in the two negative articles plus contact treatment (group mean = 4.73). Here the difference between the contact and two-negative articles plus contact treatments is significant ($p=0.06$, one-tailed). It is important to note here again, there is no significant difference ($p = 0.28$, one-tailed) between exposure to two negative articles (group mean = 4.63) and two negative articles plus contact (group mean = 4.73). In the case of my tolerance construct, I again find the two negative articles plus contact group (group mean = 0.0996) is not significantly ($p=0.5$) different from control (group mean = -0.191), again washing away the significant ($p=0.04$) difference between control and contact (group mean = 0.0604) groups. Importantly, I again find no significant ($p = 0.14$) difference between exposure to two negative articles (group mean = -0.25) and two

negative articles plus contact (group mean = -0.10). Together, these results suggest that exposure to two negative articles mitigates the positive effects of the type and amount of contact in the experiment III. Recall from experiment II that the effects of exposure to two negative articles are only mitigated by contact when contact is high. This result largely agrees with experiment III if we accept that assistance with a computer constitutes low or average contact. Together, the results of experiments II and III suggest a complex interplay between negative media exposure and contact. Future experiments with multiple and different types of randomly assigned contact will be needed to fully map these interactions and their effects on tolerance.

H7: Contact with a member of an out-group interacts with positive media exposure to enhance tolerance.

Turning to the relationship between contact and exposure to positive media, recall that the OLS models in Table 5.1 employ interaction terms between contact and dummy variables for single and two positive article treatments. Looking first at support for Temecula Mosque construction, I find contact had a significant ($p < 0.10$, one tailed) enhancing effect in the context of exposure to a single article (coefficient = 0.118), but not in the context of exposure to two positive articles. Examination of the marginal effects (Table 5.2) suggests that the effects of exposure to a single positive article are increasingly enhanced by increased contact. The net effect of single positive article exposure is 0.477, 0.598, and 0.714 units at low, average, and high contact respectively. Each of these increases is significant ($p < 0.05$, one-tailed) and considerable given my six-point scale. Importantly, the trend is itself significant (coefficient = 0.118, $p < 0.05$), suggesting an

enhancing effect of contact in the context of exposure to a single positive article. Turning to support for a mosque in one's own community, I do not find enhancing effects for contact in either single or two positive article treatments. Finally, looking at my tolerance factor, I again find a significant ($p < 0.10$) enhancing effect (coefficient = 0.0784) in the single positive article treatment, but not in the context of two positive articles. Examination of the marginal effects in this case again show that the effects of positive media are correspondingly enhanced with increased contact. Here the net effect of single positive exposure is an increase of 0.217, 0.298, and 0.374 at low, average, and high contact respectively. Again, these increases are all significant ($p < 0.05$, one-tailed) and the trend is also significant (coefficient = 0.0784, $p < 0.10$, one-tailed). Together, these results show enhancing effects of contact in the case of single positive exposure and support my hypothesis.

Turning to Experiment III where contact was randomly assigned, I find a very consistent pattern. Looking first at support for Temecula Mosque construction, a difference in means tests shows exposure to a single positive article plus contact (group mean = 5.442) leads to significantly ($p < 0.05$, one-tailed) greater tolerance than contact alone (group mean = 5.028). Interestingly, there is no statistical difference between exposure to a single positive article (group mean = 5.381) and single positive plus contact group. Each of these treatments is significant with respect to the control (group mean = 4.830). Interestingly, the relative increase in the positive article plus contact treatment compared to the contact only treatment is significant ($p < 0.05$), which suggests that contact effects are enhanced by positive media. I find a similar result related to support for mosque

construction in one's own community. Exposure to a single positive article plus contact (group mean = 5.195) yielded significant ($p < 0.05$, one tailed) increases in tolerance with respect to both the control (group mean = 4.688) and control article plus contact treatments (group mean = 4.986). Again, I found no significant difference between the single positive exposure (group mean = 5.267) and single positive article plus contact (group mean = 5.195) treatments. These results further support the idea that the effects of contact are enhanced by positive media. Turning to my tolerance factor, a difference in means test show a significant ($p < 0.05$, one-tailed) increase in tolerance upon exposure to a single positive story plus contact (group mean = 0.261) as compared to contact alone (group mean = 0.060) and no statistical difference between exposure to a single positive article (group mean = 0.295) and single positive article plus contact treatments. Across support for mosque construction in Temecula, one's own community, and my tolerance factor, I find a very consistent pattern showing no statistical difference between single positive story and single positive story plus contact groups. Across the same three measures, I find an increase in tolerance when comparing the positive article plus contact treatments to both the control and control plus contact treatments. Together, this suggests for the type and amount of contact in experiment III, positive media enhances the effects of contact, while contact does not enhance the effects of positive media.

Conclusion

My mixed method approach contributes to our understanding of how the public develops opinions of groups. Specifically, tolerance reflects not only long-standing public characteristics, but can also be impacted by short term political forces such as news and

contact. Overall, I find strong support for **H5**: Contact with a member of an outgroup increases tolerance towards the outgroup. However, I find mixed support for my expectations related to interactions between media and contact. OLS models using self-reported measures of contact in experiment II largely support my hypotheses and examination of marginal effects reveals a complex interplay between contact, the type of media exposure (negative or positive) and frequency of media exposure. Experiment III revealed that the positive effects of contact may be washed out by exposure to two negative articles, or enhanced by exposure to a single positive one. As discussed in chapter 2, the behavioral and cognitive effects of contact are enhanced with duration, repetition and increased emotional ties. It will be instructive in future work to conduct new experiments similar to my experiment III, where the type, duration, and frequency of contact are modified to further develop the effects of contact and its interaction with media.

Table 5.2: Marginal effects of each Experiment II treatment at low, average, and high contact.

		Temecula Mosque	Community Mosque	Tolerance Factor
	Contact	Marginal Effect (Standard Error)	Marginal Effect (Standard Error)	Marginal Effect (Standard Error)
2 Negative Articles	low	-0.332* (0.106)	-0.311* (0.113)	-0.243* (0.076)
	average	-0.1964* (0.069)	-0.163* (0.074)	-0.118* (0.049)
	high	-0.068 (0.101)	-0.023 (0.108)	-0.001 (0.072)
1 Negative Article	low	-0.139† (0.106)	-0.089 (0.113)	-0.032 (0.076)
	average	-0.002 (0.069)	0.033 (0.074)	-0.034 (0.049)
	high	0.128 (0.103)	0.149† (0.111)	-0.097 (0.074)
1 Positive Article	low	0.477* (0.107)	0.376* (0.115)	0.217* (0.076)
	average	0.598* (0.069)	0.469* (0.074)	0.298* (0.049)
	high	0.714* (0.101)	0.556* (0.109)	0.374* (0.072)
2 Positive Articles	low	0.664* (0.109)	0.578* (0.117)	0.327* (0.078)
	average	0.667* (0.099)	0.591* (0.074)	0.357* (0.049)
	high	0.669* (0.099)	0.604* (0.106)	0.386* (0.071)

* p<0.05 (one tailed), †p<0.10 (one tailed)

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In my dissertation research I sought to address questions related to the effects of positive and negative media exposure on tolerance of groups, and to what extent contact can increase tolerance in the presence of media. Early scholars of media effects recognized the far-reaching power of the media to shape and mold mass attitudes (McCombs, 2014; Djerf-Pierre and Shenhata, 2017; Chong & Druckman, 2007; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Krosnick and Kinder, 1990; Rogers and Dearing, 1996; Iyengar, 1991; Neuman, Just, and Crigler, 1992), while others have demonstrated contact as one of the most effective strategies for improving intergroup relations (Allport, 1954, 1979; Amir, 1969; Cook, 1985; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006; Watson, 1947). Little work has been conducted to understand the effects of frequency (i.e. exposure to multiple news stories) and its interaction with contact. I utilize tolerance of Muslim Americans as a case study to further our understanding of the effects of media--specifically the type (positive and negative) and amount (frequency)--contact, and the complex interplay between them.

My research aims to better understand the driving forces of tolerance. This is crucially important because tolerance is a fundamental principle of democracy (Prothro and Grigg, 1960; McClosky, 1964). Political tolerance is crucial and any deviation in society from promoting tolerance is undesirable and threatens the very existence of democracy (Prothro-Grigg 1960, McClosky 1964; Lawrence 1976, Davis 1975). A key factor distinguishing democracies from alternative forms of government is the degree to which opposition is permitted. Although democratic regimes both allow and encourage

opposition, they sometimes face the challenge of balancing between opposing viewpoints and tolerance (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus 1989). Citizens within democracies should not restrict the participation of their fellow citizens in the political system, even if their ideas challenge the view of the majority (Gibson 2010). Tolerance is essential because it protects citizens' rights to political opposition and expression, thereby protecting them from the danger that members of a majority may violate the rights of the minority. Using Muslim Americans as a case study and a mixed methods approach, which relies on both quantitative (laboratory experiments) and qualitative (interviews) methods I demonstrated the role of media in affecting tolerance judgments and how contact may mitigate the effects of media in the case of negative coverage, while enhancing the effects of positive coverage.

In chapter two of my dissertation I lay out my theoretical framework that leads to the development of my testable hypotheses. Previous work demonstrated that the way in which media reports and presents information plays a major role in the attitudes and opinions people develop (Hamill, Wilson, and Nisbett, 1980; Gamson et al. 1992, Iyengar 1991, Nelson and Kinder 1996; Chong & Durckman, 2007; Neslon, Oxley, & Clawson, 1997). I first considered negative media exposure, and why it can lead to intolerance. The *figure ground* hypothesis postulated by Lau in 1982 suggests that when negative media is presented in an environment where people are overall satisfied with their lives, it stands out since it is infrequent. A second important mechanism that helps explain the effects of negative media is the *cost-orientation* hypothesis, which explains that a desire to avoid costs is part of human nature (to ensure our survival). Exposure to negative media presents

ideas that can be construed as particularly costly, and as such would be expected to negatively affect individual opinions. Individuals also rely on heuristics to simplify their judgments. In particular, negative media provides negative heuristics that individuals use to create mental shortcuts when forming opinions, which would be expected to negatively affect tolerance.

Turning to the role that positive media has on shifting public opinion we look to *cognitive weighting* model, which states that “more attention is given to information that is regarded as unique or novel, which tends to be information that is more extreme (e.g., Fiske 1980)” (Soroka; 2006). This idea is also supported by the *learning model*, which holds that mass media messages influence individuals’ opinions by providing “new information” about an issue (Graber, 1994). The existing literature detailed in chapter 2 highlights the processes whereby positive media influences opinion formation, along with scholarly work demonstrating the effects of positive media in the context of other groups, which together lead me to expect that positive media coverage would increase tolerant judgments.

A central aspect of my research argues that more frequent exposure to positive and negative news matters in shifting tolerance. Specifically, when the same or similar information is repeated, it leaves little room for competing points of view. When information is frequently repeated, it becomes easily accessible and retrieved when making decisions (Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley; 1997). For example, an individual repeatedly exposed to negative portrayals of Muslims would more likely have these negative ideas at the forefront of their conscious thought than someone who was exposed only to one. Additionally, in chapter 2, I highlight the mechanisms by which group

contact can affect tolerance judgments. Scholars have previously examined the effect of group contact on tolerance and many have argued that intergroup contact is one of psychology's most effective strategies for improving intergroup relations (Allport, 1954, 1979; Amir, 1969; Cook, 1985; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006; Watson, 1947). Contact may lead to behavioral changes, which in turn lead to improved attitudes towards outgroups (Pettigrew 1998). Contact is also particularly effective in moderating negative emotions and increasing positive emotions associated with outgroups, which in turn improves attitudes (Pettigrew 1998; Reich & Purbhoo, 1975).

After detailing the mechanisms of my theory in chapter 2, I turn to the qualitative dimension of my work in chapter 3, where I conduct a detailed content analysis of over 40 articles related to construction of a Mosque and Islamic Center in the City of Temecula in 2010. My content analysis revealed that the majority of the articles were framed in a way that described the opposition of the building of the Islamic Center in a negative way. Fear of extremist activity (86%), fear of Islam as a domestic threat (76%), and Islamization of America (57%) were particularly common themes. I later use these finding to develop my experimental treatment articles. Chapter 3 also includes results from my phone interviews with Temecula residents who expressed their opinions about the controversy surrounding the proposed construction of a Mosque in the city of Temecula in 2010. Analysis of my interviews provided initial support of my hypotheses that both media and contact are important factors influencing tolerance. Overall, the interviews in chapter 3 provided a framework to further understand the outcome of survey experiments that statistically assess the effects of media coverage and contact on

tolerance in chapter 4 and 5. In particular, the interview process enabled open ended questions, without an enumerated list to guide the response. Importantly, these interviews further supported my expectations as they relate to media and contact, which in turn enhanced our understanding of what contributes to tolerance judgments.

In Chapter 4, I move on to begin my discussion on the quantitative dimension of my research. I use results from three original experiments to better understand the relationship between media exposure and tolerance of groups. The results from my three experiments substantiate my claim that media exposure matters and plays an integral role in affecting tolerance of groups. My present results demonstrate that not only does the type of exposure to news matter (positive or negative), but also the amount; and both can exert substantial influence on our opinions of groups. For example, when respondents were exposed to one negative news story about Muslims in an environment where news coverage of Muslims is overwhelmingly negative, I observed that a negative treatment did not overall adversely affect tolerance of Muslims. However, when individuals were exposed to multiple negative news stories, I observed a significant decrease in tolerance. Overall, I found that the effect of more frequent exposure to negative news stories is significant, measurable and repeated across several tolerance measures, which together supported my hypotheses that individuals more frequently exposed to negative coverage express corresponding increasing levels of intolerance. My experiments also revealed that more frequent exposure to positive news stories yields increases in tolerance. Exposure to one news story creates a substantial increase in tolerance while exposure to two positive stories creates a subsequent, but smaller increase.

In chapter 5, I moved on to demonstrate the relationships between intergroup contact, media, and tolerance. Overall, I find strong support for my hypothesis that contact (both self-reported and assigned in a laboratory setting) with a member of an outgroup increases tolerant attitudes towards the outgroup. However, I found mixed support for my expectations related to interactions between media and contact. OLS models using self-reported measures of contact in experiment II largely supported my hypotheses and examination of marginal effects revealed a complex interplay between contact, the type of media (negative or positive) and frequency of exposure. Experiment III revealed that the positive effects of contact may be washed out by exposure to two negative articles or enhanced by exposure to a single positive one. The results from chapters 4 and 5 lead me to the conclusion that factors influencing tolerance operate on a continuum. These factors (e.g. type of exposure, amount of exposure, and contact) interact with each other to create an overall effect on tolerance.

My research demonstrates a complex interplay between the type (positive vs. negative), and the amount (frequency) of media, and contact on formation of tolerant judgments. It is imperative for future scholarly work to consider this complex interplay. Additional work will be needed to fully map the effects of both frequency and contact. Specifically, in my work I compared the effect of single vs. double news exposure, but a question remains as to how far the frequency effect extends. For example, what is the effect of 3 vs 2 news stories for both negative and positive exposure and when does the effect plateau? Additionally, my novel contact experiment design may be further developed to provide even more meaningful contact. This will be particularly instructive

in increasing our understanding of the interactions between contact and media. Finally, it will be important to generalize these effects beyond Muslim Americans by studying other groups.

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Appendix: A
Negative News Story: (Used in Experiment I, II, and III)



Anti-Mosque Protests Increase in Temecula



A mosque rises in the city of Temecula. And fed-up community members are crying, "No!"

Plans are under way for a Muslim house of worship, topped by a 5-story cultural center with a swimming pool. Many have criticized the building of the mosque and worry that the mosque will promote terrorism in the area.

A community resident stated, "It will bring in Islam and usher out our freedoms and liberties, as has happened all across Europe and already parts of the US, we will not allow this...Not in our city"

Many community members are worried that the mosque is being funded by terrorist organizations or States such as Iran. They have urged politicians to conduct an investigation.

A rally against the mosque is being planned by the human-rights group Stop Islamicization of America. Many community members, religious leaders, and politicians have expressed great concern about the Islamic Center. Many fear the mosque would turn into a haven for Islamic extremists. Local resident remarked, "We have a constitutional right to freedom of religion...But Islam is more than a religion. It is an ideology to enforce Shari'a law in America, and Shari'a law is in direct contrast to the American Constitution."

Positive News Story: (Used in Experiments I, II, and III)



Mosque Project Receives Support from Community Members



The Islamic Center of Temecula has requested a permit to build a 5-story mosque and cultural center with a swimming pool. The City Council will vote early next month to decide whether to approve or deny the request.

Many community members, religious leaders, and politicians have expressed support for the right to build an Islamic Center. Many local businesses also welcome the building of the mosque since they believe it would help the local economy. Members of other Temecula-area houses of worship rallied around the Islamic community and cited the contributions made by American Muslims. Others argue that Muslims have the right to practice their religion freely. Eric Greener, director of the Los Angeles-based Progressive Jewish Alliance spoke out in support of the project, "We remember when there were protests in this country against Synagogues being built." He also said, "I believe that Muslims have the same right to practice their religion as anyone else in this country. That includes the right to build a place of worship and a community center on private property."

Research conducted by Professors Dana and Barreto finds that as Muslims report being more involved in their mosque, they also report being more actively involved in American politics. Overwhelmingly, mosques help Muslims integrate into U.S. society, and in fact have a very productive

Warm Up News Story: (Used in Experiment I)

BBC Sign in Menu

NEWS

Home Video World US & Canada UK Business Tech Science Magazine

Health

Obesity boom 'fuelling rise in malnutrition'

By Tulip Mazumdar
Global health reporter



Malnutrition is sweeping the world, fuelled by obesity as well as starvation, new research has suggested.

The **2016 Global Nutrition Report** said 44% of countries were now experiencing "very serious levels" of both under-nutrition and obesity.

It means one in three people suffers from malnutrition in some form, according to the study of 129 countries.

Being malnourished is "the new normal", the report's authors said.

Malnutrition has traditionally been associated with children who are starving, have stunted growth and are prone to infection.

These are still major problems, but progress has been made in this area.

The report's authors instead highlighted the "staggering global challenge" posed by rising obesity.

The increase is happening in every region of the world and in nearly every country, they said.

Hundreds of millions of people are malnourished because they are overweight, as well as having too much sugar, salt or cholesterol in their blood, the report said.

'Totally unacceptable'

Professor Corinna Hawkes, who co-chaired the research, said the study was "redefining what the world thinks of as being malnourished".

"Malnutrition literally means bad nutrition - that's anyone who isn't adequately nourished.

"You have outcomes like you are too thin, you're not growing fast enough... or it could mean that you're overweight or you have high blood sugar, which leads to diabetes," she said.

While many countries are on course to meet targets to reduce stunted growth and the number of underweight children, very few are making progress on tackling obesity and associated illnesses such as heart disease.

In fact, the report says, the number of children under five who are overweight is fast approaching the number who are underweight.

Co-chairman Lawrence Haddad said: "We now live in a world where being malnourished is the new normal.

"It is a world that we must all claim as totally unacceptable."

The report calls for more money and political commitment to address the problem. It says for every \$1 (70p) spent on proven nutrition programmes, \$16 (£11.25) worth of benefits ensue.

Warm Up News Story: (Used in Experiment I)

abc NEWS Election U.S. World Entertainment Health Tech ...

Stolen Dog Reunited With Overjoyed Owners, Thanks to 13 Police Officers

By ELIZA MURPHY · Jun 28, 2016, 4:10 PM ET

Share with Facebook

Share with Twitter

One lucky puppy named Petey is home with his family, thanks to the excellent detective work of 13 Fort Worth, Texas, police officers.

The officers did such a good job sleuthing out the criminals who stole the 4-month-old Collie/Heeler mix directly from his home that they're being honored today in a ceremony with the mayor.

"The suspects went into their house and stole a bunch of stuff -- electronics and jewelry and the dog," Officer Daniel Segura, the police department's public information officer, told ABC News. "The detectives and officers were looking out for the stolen property for anything to have a lead to catch the suspects.

"The officers went to a pawn shop and they found a few items that belonged to the family that had been pawned," he added. "So they followed up on their leads to see who pawned it and got a search warrant and went to the house, and when they went to the house, as soon as the occupants opened up the door, they saw the rest of the stolen items inside the house. And the dog was inside the house, too. That's how they were able to catch the suspects."



 **Fort Worth Police** 
@fortworthpd

 Follow

Dog taken in Burglary Returned to Owners - Officers to be recognized at City Hall tomorrow, 6/28! #petey #dogs

12:47 PM - 27 Jun 2016

  36  98

Control News Story: (Used in Experiment I)

CNN Money U.S. + Business Markets Tech Media Personal Finance Small Biz

Mark Zuckerberg is building a wall

by Hope King @lisahoeking

Recommend 14K



June 29, 2016: 12:07 PM ET

Walls are tricky, divisive things. Just ask Mark Zuckerberg.



Residents complain that it blocks ocean views and breezes -- and that it sets an unfriendly tone for the neighborhood.

"It feels to me like, 'This is my property and you don't have any rights to see it.' It's that negative kind of view and that doesn't feel neighborly," Maria Maitino told the paper.

But that's not Zuckerberg's intention, according to his spokesman.

The structure serves as a sound barrier to cut down on highway and road noise, and the wall's construction has followed all rules.

"Our entire team remains committed to ensuring that any development respects the local landscape and environment and is considerate of neighbors," a statement reads.

But not all locals are upset with the wall.

"There's no way it's blocking the breeze," Joan Conrow, a journalist who lives on the island, told CNNMoney.

Conrow suspects that the people who are complaining might be used to walking or biking on the road and accustomed to seeing the ocean. But she also notes that the wall is much shorter than the trees that used to be there.

Related: [Mark Zuckerberg to tear down and rebuild four houses surrounding his home](#)

It's not Zuckerberg's only construction plan in the works. Earlier this year he submitted development plans to tear down four houses that he owns near his home in Palo Alto, making the new houses 20% smaller than their original size.

But many people find it ironic that Zuckerberg is building a wall, especially given some of his past comments.

Second Positive News Story: (Used in Experiment II)



The Truth about Muslims in America



Donald Trump sparked a firestorm of criticism from liberals, conservative and those in between when he called for a ban on Muslims entering the United States.

The truth about Muslims in America is perhaps surprising. A look at polls and studies conducted in the last few years shows that Muslims have been crucial in helping law enforcement find terror suspects in the United States. Many have served in the military protecting the country against terrorists. And in many ways, they're a lot like other everyday Americans.

Here's the reality of Muslims in America -- and how it smashes stereotypes:

They're better educated than most Americans. U.S. Muslims have the second-highest level of education among major religious groups in the country

They have more gender equality. While in many parts of the Muslim world, women are confined to second-class status, that's not the case among American Muslims. Virtually all of them, 90%, agree that women should be able to work outside the home. American Muslim women hold more college or postgraduate degrees than Muslim men.

Muslims who report being more involved in their mosque, also report being more actively involved in American politics. overwhelmingly, mosques help Muslims integrate into U.S. society, and in fact have a very productive role in bridging the differences between Muslims and non-Muslims in the United States.

They've also spoken out against terrorism. A Duke University study found more terrorism suspects and perpetrators were brought to the attention of law enforcement by members of the Muslim-American community than were discovered through U.S. government investigations.

Second Negative News Story: (Used in Experiment II, and III)



Muslim Newlyweds slaughter co-workers who threw them a baby shower



Authorities were investigating terror links after a government worker and his wife shot up his San Bernardino, Calif., office party Wednesday, killing 14 people.

The suspected male shooter, 28, is a devout Muslim. Authorities stated he stormed out of the festivities and later returned with his new wife. Both wore dark tactical gear and masks while toting assault rifles and handguns, police said.

The murderous duo sprayed bullets inside a conference room, slaughtering colleagues who earlier this year had thrown a shower for their new baby. In addition to the dead, 17 were seriously wounded.

Authorities have said that the couple were inspired by Islamic extremism, calling it the deadliest such attack on US soil since Sept. 11, 2001. "This was not a casual workplace argument," one law enforcement source told The Post. "It's a well-planned and thought-out attack."

The California Killers' were linked to a controversial mosque in the area that has drawn fire from the Anti-Defamation League because they believe the mosque advocates for Sharia Law and extremist ideology.

According to nearby residents, the terrorist couple seemed suspicious with working late at night in their garage and receiving numerous packages at their home. They regret not reporting them.

A co-worker said Farook was a reserved man who behaved strangely, but he never thought he had links to terrorism. Another co-worker remarked that she is afraid of Muslims. They seem normal but you don't know what their religion is teaching them and if they will snap.

Control News Story: (Used in Experiment II and III)



Museum of Ice Cream set to open in downtown LA



Ice cream fans can soon visit perhaps one of the tastiest museum exhibits in the world as the Museum of Ice Cream prepares to open its doors in downtown Los Angeles.

The first pop-up Museum of Ice Cream opened last summer in New York City. The exhibit sold out within five days and attracted a waiting list of more than 200,000, according to the museum.

Now she's moved it to a warehouse in the Arts District. "It's not a museum in any traditional sense," Bunn explained. "I want adults to feel like kids. I want kids to come in and feel like children and it's just fun."

The West Coast location is four times larger than the New York City exhibit and features 10 installations. All the rooms have things you can eat or smell. There's even a room full of bananas which is just a short walk from the swimming pool full of sprinkles.

"The sprinkle pool is filled with 100 million sprinkles," Bunn said.

While there's ice cream on walls, faces and even a shoe, there's also plenty of ice cream to eat.

The Museum of Ice Cream will be in the Southland from Saturday until May 29. The exhibit will be open from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Wednesday through Monday. Tickets are \$29 per person - \$18 for children and seniors - and include two curated ice cream tastings and edible treats

Appendix B:

Experiment II contact questions:

How many _____ do you know?

1. None
2. 1
3. 2
4. 3-5
5. More than 10

How frequently do you have contact with a _____?

1. Never
2. Very Rarely
3. Rarely
4. Occasionally
5. Frequently
6. Very Frequently

When you meet _____ individuals, in general do you find contact pleasant?

1. Not at all
2. Slightly
3. Moderately
4. Very
5. Extremely

When you meet Muslims, in general do you find contact superficial?

1. Extremely
2. Very
3. Moderately
4. Slightly
5. Not at all

Figure 5.2: Experiment III. Support for Muslim public rallies is significantly increased ($p < 0.1$, one-tailed) in the two negative article plus contact treatment as compared to both control and two negative article treatments.

