

## ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: PREJUDICE TOWARD MUSLIM AMERICANS  
AND AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION

Kerem Ozan Kalkan, Doctor of Philosophy, 2010

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This dissertation attempts to answer an important question: What explains prejudice toward Muslim Americans in contemporary American society? Through a new theoretical framework — the “Band of Others,” — I empirically show that attitudes toward Muslim Americans follow an ethnocentric pattern. Those who dislike other minorities such as blacks, Latinos, Asians, Jews, homosexuals, illegal immigrants, and people on welfare are prejudiced against Muslims as well. I find evidence that attitudes toward the Band of Others are highly stable and not radically altered by dramatic events. The ethnocentric structure that explains anti-Muslim prejudice was not affected by the September 11 terrorist attacks. I also find that the band of others plays a more important role in determining vote choice for hypothetical Muslim candidates than political orientations, authoritarian personality, and religious traditionalism. The subsequent empirical evidence also suggests that prejudice toward the band of others shaped the tendency to think Barack Obama is a Muslim — a salient rumor during the 2008 presidential election. I also find evidence that suggests

the misperception about Barack Obama's faith was electorally consequential. This research also shows that the band of others is a powerful dynamic among Muslim Americans as well. As Muslim Americans grow less prejudice toward non-Muslims, homosexuals, and interfaith marriage, they are more likely to become integrated into American society. In the conclusion, I discussed the normative implications of the band of others for democracy in America.

PREJUDICE TOWARD MUSLIM AMERICANS  
AND AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION

by

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Journey of Muslim Americans . . . . .	1
<b>2</b>	<b>Ethnocentrism and Mainstream Americans</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1	Prejudice in America . . . . .	10
2.2	Ethnocentrism Defined . . . . .	12
2.2.1	Potential Causes of Ethnocentrism . . . . .	14
2.3	Who is mainstream? . . . . .	24
2.3.1	Immigrants Becoming Mainstream: Historical Overview . . . . .	25
2.3.2	Who is Mainstream in America Today? Perceptual Explanation	34
<b>3</b>	<b>A Theory of Band of Others</b>	<b>41</b>
3.1	Attitudes Toward Muslim Americans: An Extension of Ethnocentrism	41
3.2	Structure of Minority Attitudes and Ethnocentrism . . . . .	46
3.2.1	Measurement of Ethnocentrism . . . . .	49
3.2.2	Dimensional Analysis of Minority Attitudes . . . . .	54
3.3	Band of Others and Muslim Attitudes . . . . .	60
3.3.1	Persistence of the Band of Others . . . . .	70
3.4	Muslims, Familiarity, and Band of Others . . . . .	74
3.5	Conclusion . . . . .	79
<b>4</b>	<b>Voting for a Hypothetical Muslim Candidate</b>	<b>82</b>
4.1	Muslims in Politics . . . . .	82
4.2	Stereotypes as Shortcuts and Voting . . . . .	85
4.3	Band of Others and Voting . . . . .	90
4.4	Survey Experiment and Measurement . . . . .	93
4.5	Findings . . . . .	100
4.6	Conclusion . . . . .	121
<b>5</b>	<b>A Muslim President?</b>	<b>123</b>
5.1	Rumor in Action . . . . .	123
5.2	Racial Attitudes and the 2008 Elections . . . . .	126
5.2.1	Prejudice and Political Behavior . . . . .	128
5.2.2	Misperception and Political Implications . . . . .	131
5.3	Who Believes This Misperception? . . . . .	139

5.4	Misperception and Obama Vote . . . . .	142
5.5	“Obama is a Muslim”: A Negative Ad? . . . . .	147
<b>6</b>	<b>Muslims’ Integration Story</b>	<b>159</b>
6.1	Muslims in America and Europe . . . . .	159
6.2	Measuring Assimilation of Muslim Americans . . . . .	161
6.3	Assimilation and Ethnocentrism . . . . .	166
6.4	Behavioral Factors of Assimilation . . . . .	170
6.5	Politics, Demographics and Assimilation of Muslim Americans . . . . .	173
6.6	Models and Findings . . . . .	174
6.7	Conclusion . . . . .	182
<b>7</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>184</b>
7.1	American Democracy and Muslim Americans . . . . .	184

## LIST OF TABLES

3.1	Multi-Dimensional Structure of Band of Others in 2004 and 2008 . . .	62
3.2	Structure of Muslim Attitudes Before and After September 11, 2001 .	73
3.3	The Impact of Familiarity on Muslim Favorability . . . . .	78
4.1	Factor Analysis of Minority Attitudes in 2007 . . . . .	98
4.2	All Treatments and Likelihood of Voting for Hypothetical Candidate	102
4.3	Test of Muslim, Ethnicity, and Name Effects on Likelihood of Voting for the Candidate . . . . .	105
4.4	Combined Treatments and Likelihood of Voting for Hypothetical Can- didate . . . . .	106
4.5	Cultural/Behavioral Outgroup Affect and Voting for Hypothetical Candidate . . . . .	109
4.6	Political Orientations and Voting for Hypothetical Candidate . . . . .	113
4.7	Authoritarianism and Voting for Hypothetical Candidate . . . . .	116
4.8	Religious Traditionalism and Voting for Hypothetical Candidate . . .	119
6.1	Latent Variable Factor Loadings from Confirmatory Factor Analysis .	176
6.2	Assimilation Factor Score Measurement Model . . . . .	177
6.3	Model Information . . . . .	179

## LIST OF FIGURES

2.1	Comparison of Socio-Economic Status of Muslims, Whites, and General Population . . . . .	17
3.1	Structure of Minority Attitudes in 2004 . . . . .	56
3.2	Structure of Minority Attitudes in 2008 . . . . .	58
3.3	Band of Others and Muslim Attitudes in 2004 . . . . .	67
3.4	Band of Others and Muslim Attitudes in 2008 . . . . .	68
3.5	Feeling Thermometer Ratings of Minorities in 2004 . . . . .	75
3.6	Feeling Thermometer Ratings of Minorities in 2008 . . . . .	76
4.1	Predicted Probability of Candidate Support Across Seven Treatment Groups . . . . .	103
4.2	Predicted Probability of Voting Across Combined Three Treatment Groups . . . . .	107
4.3	Cultural/Behavioral Outgroup Affect and Voting for a Hypothetical Candidate . . . . .	111
4.4	Political Orientations and Voting for a Hypothetical Candidate . . . . .	114
4.5	Authoritarianism and Voting for a Hypothetical Candidate . . . . .	117
4.6	Religious Traditionalism and Voting for a Hypothetical Candidate . . . . .	120
5.1	Misperception Over Time . . . . .	125
5.2	Two Party Presidential Vote Choice among White Voters (Source: 2008-2009 ANES Panel Data) . . . . .	130
5.3	Misperception and Vote Choice (Source: 2008-2009 ANES Panel Data) . . . . .	134
5.4	Explaining the Misperception and Band of Others . . . . .	140
5.5	Vote Choice Model (Source: 2008-2009 ANES Panel Data) . . . . .	143
5.6	Band of Others and Vote Choice (Source: 2008-2009 ANES Panel Data) . . . . .	146
5.7	Voting Turnout and Misperception (Source: 2008-2009 ANES Panel Data) . . . . .	151
5.8	Political Participation and Misperception . . . . .	152
5.9	Multivariate Analysis of Political Participation and Misperception . . . . .	155
6.1	Outgroup Affect and American Identification (Pew 2007 Muslim American Survey) . . . . .	178
6.2	Outgroup Affect and Fluency in English . . . . .	180
6.3	Outgroup Affect and Willingness to Accept American Customs . . . . .	181

6.4 Outgroup Affect and Assimilation Factor Score . . . . . 182

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Journey of Muslim Americans

This is a study of prejudice toward Muslim Americans and its implications for American public opinion. I attempt to show that dislike of Muslim Americans is part of a larger syndrome of prejudice in American public opinion. I name this generalized prejudice the “Band of Others.” The band refers to the overall image of minority groups in American minds. It highly benefits from the theory of ethnocentrism that identifies prejudice as a broad process of simultaneously targeting all groups rather than specific minorities. People who feel warmer toward blacks, Latinos, Asians, Jews, homosexuals, illegal immigrants, people on welfare, and feminists also feel less prejudiced toward Muslims. Dislike of Muslims goes hand in hand with racism, Anti-semitism, xenophobia and homophobia. So, what matters the most in explaining prejudice toward Muslim Americans is the presence or absence of a welcoming attitude toward all minorities, or the band of others.

There are many important theoretical and empirical reasons to study attitudes toward Muslim Americans. First, arguably the most dramatic terrorist attack on United States' soil was carried out by radical Islamists on September 11, 2001. To many, it was such a turning point in history that nothing would be the same afterwards. Immediately and unexpectedly, attention on Muslim Americans was everywhere in the media. A Lexis-Nexis search revealed that there have been only a handful stories in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* without the word "Muslim" since September 11, 2001. Within the same time period, there have been at least nine issues of *Time*, *Newsweek*, and the *Economist* (combined) that studied Muslim Americans as the cover stories. This unmatched attention of the media indicates the growing salience and presence of Muslims in American public opinion. This study aims to empirically examine the structure of these highly visible attitudes toward Muslim Americans both before and after the attacks.

Second, most of the United States' foreign policy issues concern areas of the world where Muslims constitute the majority of the population. For example, following the terrorist attacks, the United States declared a "War on Terrorism," and the declaration mainly targeted countries like Afghanistan and Iraq. The most recent wars fought by the United States were against countries with predominantly Muslim populations. Additionally, the frequent involvement of the United States in the Middle East conflict between Palestine and Israel is another foreign policy area through which Muslims became highly salient in American public opinion. This one particular minority group has been a major component of the United States' foreign affairs, particularly since the September 11 terrorist attacks. As a result, it may be

essential to understand attitudes toward Muslims whose place in American foreign policy is truly pivotal.

Third, Muslim Americans represent higher levels of assimilation into mainstream society both among minorities in America and other Muslim minorities in Europe. As *Newsweek* magazine (July 30, 2007, 3) claims, “Islam in America” is a “success story.” What helps this assimilation the most is Muslim Americans’ socio-demographic characteristics. According to the 2007 Pew Muslim American Survey, one in four Muslim Americans, like the general American public, has a college or advanced degree. Twenty-six percent of them earn more than \$75,000 annually, and forty-two percent of Muslim Americans think that their personal financial situation is either excellent or good. These percentages look very similar to the ones for the general American public. Muslim Americans’ integration can be better understood if we compare, for example, the income disparities in Europe. According to the 2006 Pew surveys in advanced democracies, sixty-one percent of British Muslims make less than £20,000 whereas it is only forty percent among the British general public. Similarly, while three in four Spanish Muslims make less than €14,500, only one in two among the mainstream Spanish population make this little. The most striking income disparities between Muslim minorities and mainstream populations are in Germany and France. More than one in two German Muslims make less than €18,000 whereas it is less than one in three mainstream Germans that make this little. Similarly, according to the 2006 Pew survey in France, almost half of French Muslims live under the poverty line but it is only twenty-five percent of the mainstream French population that falls below the poverty line. Unlike these income



disparities in Europe, Muslim Americans and the American general public have almost identical income distributions. In other words, Muslims in America mirror the general public in terms of annual income. So, Muslim Americans have some distinguishing socio-demographic characteristics when compared to many other recent immigrant groups in America (such as Latinos). As the 2007 Pew Report suggest, Muslim Americans are mostly middle class and mainstream. Therefore, studying prejudice toward a more mainstream looking minority may unveil whether having middle class features can help Muslims eventually assimilate into mainstream American society.

Another important reason to study Muslim Americans is their increasing presence in the American political system. America elected her first Muslim Congressman Keith Ellison from Minnesota in 2006. His election was not without controversy. In fact, there were many conservative politicians and media hosts that found him taking his oath of office on the Koran that was once owned by Thomas Jefferson unacceptable. For example, Virginia Rep. Virgil Goode called this a threat to American values. Shortly after, André Carson was the second Muslim representative elected to serve in the House. He won the Democratic nomination in a special election to succeed his late grandmother, Congresswoman Julia Carson, in 2008. Then in the 2008 election, he was re-elected to serve his first full term in Congress. Unlike Ellison's case, Carson's faith was not a central focus during the campaign or after his election. In addition to two national office Muslim politicians, according to the American Muslim Alliance report, there were around 10 state level Muslim American politicians serving or re-running in 2008. Three Muslim Americans are

now serving as mayors in Prospect Park and Irvington (New Jersey), and Wayne (Michigan). There are several more Muslim Americans serving at the city level. According to the American Muslim Alliance, the number of Muslim American candidates running for state and city level positions is increasing every year. In other words, Muslim Americans are trying to become a part of American political system, and prejudice toward them may play a substantial role in this endeavor.

The 2008 presidential election also showed how important it is to study attitudes toward Muslims in America. The United States elected her first African American president, Barack Obama. It was a great success for a country that has been divided along racial lines. Even though the most salient minority aspect of Barack Obama was his racial status, his religious affiliation and a lie or rumor about him being a Muslim was a much more important debate during his campaign<sup>1</sup>. A non-trivial portion of the American public believed (and is still believing) that he was a Muslim. It was a smear campaign to portray Obama as un-American or a foreigner. By associating him with Islam, conservative talk show hosts tried to indicate that he was not American enough to become the president. Nothing could do a better job than the frames of “Islam” and “Muslim” to de-Americanize a political figure. Thus, studying the sources and structure of the negative image of this faith, which was highly controversial in the most recent presidential election, is essential.

Finally, Muslim Americans are growing in numbers. Even though scholars and

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<sup>1</sup>It may be argued that social norms prevented Americans who were racist from using his racial minority status as a reason to claim he is unfit for office. Therefore, they used his religion as a proxy. This will be addressed in chapter 5.)

research centers cannot agree on a single number, many believe that Muslims constitute between 0.6 and 1.1 percent of the U.S. adult population. Muslim immigrants in the United States comprise a diverse community that includes people from 68 different countries, all races, many ethnicities, and varying generations. According to the 2007 Pew Muslim American Survey, more than one third of Muslim Americans were born in the United States, and the rest (around 67 percent) are non-U.S. born. Twenty-four and eighteen percent of first-generation Muslim immigrants come from Arabic regions and South Asia, respectively. Ten percent comes from Iran, and the rest from Europe and Africa. Many immigrated to America for educational purposes (26%), economic opportunities (24%), or family reasons (24%). Forty and twenty-six percent of Muslim Americans identify themselves as whites and blacks, respectively. One in five calls himself/herself Asian, and only four percent identify as Hispanic. They are a young community with males (54%) slightly more populous than females. And, despite such a diverse nature and a heavy presence of first-generation immigrants, more than sixty-five percent of non-U.S. born Muslim Americans were naturalized American citizens in 2007.

Muslim Americans are trying to become an integral part of mainstream American society but its minority image is not very favorable in the eyes of many Americans. Such a clash may have many normative, and mostly unfavorable, implications for the participatory theory of democracy. The United States has been a successful example of being a welcoming country for many immigrants from different ethnic, racial, and religious background. Muslim Americans' experience will be the most contemporary test of how welcoming American democracy really is. And, this dis-

sertation will attempt to answer many empirical questions regarding this experience from the perspective of mainstream American society.

The dissertation is comprised of five substantive chapters and a conclusion. The following chapter elaborates the theory of band of others in its relation to ethnocentrism. After briefly defining ethnocentrism, I develop the idea of the band of others as ethnocentrism among mainstream Americans. What I mean by “mainstream” is also explained both from theoretical and historical points of view in this chapter. This chapter, in other words, provides the theoretical core for the dissertation’s overall theme regarding generalized prejudice or attitudes toward the band of others. The third chapter is the foundational chapter of the dissertation that expands on the empirical test of the band of others and attitudes toward Muslim Americans. The discussion starts with the multidimensional nature of the band, and how it relates to prejudice toward Muslims both in 2004 and 2008. Briefly, the findings support the idea that the main determinant of prejudice toward Muslims is prejudice toward other outgroups like, blacks, Latinos, Jews, Asians, homosexuals, illegal immigrants, welfare recipients, Hindus, and feminists. Mainstream Americans’ political orientations, or a sense of threat, play a minimal role in shaping these attitudes. What matters primarily is what they think about all minorities across the board. The same chapter also examines the persistence of an ethnocentric structure of Muslim affect before and after the terrorist attacks. The empirical models show that the terrorist attacks did not change the ethnocentric structure that influences dislike of Muslims. The band of others has always been influential. The chapter ends with a discussion about how familiarity or contact may influence

dislike of Muslims. I show that contact may play a substantial role in decreasing negative evaluations of Muslims in America.

The fourth and fifth chapters concern how the theory of band of others shapes American public opinion and behavior in general. The former probes the likelihood of voting for a hypothetical Muslim or Arab candidate by using a unique experimental survey. It shows that mainstream Americans become more likely to vote for a Muslim or an Arab candidate as they become less prejudiced toward the band of others. The major conditioning factor in voting for a Muslim candidate is how people feel about outgroups, rather than political orientations, authoritarianism, or religious traditionalism. The fifth chapter has a thorough analysis of the 2008 presidential election. The main focus is the misperception during the campaign that Obama is a Muslim, what shaped this rumor, and whether it was electorally consequential or not. By using the 2008-2009 American National Election Studies Panel Data, I show that attitudes toward the band of others play an important role in believing this rumor, and how this rumor, in return, decreased the likelihood of voting for Obama with fully-specified vote choice models. I also examined the impact of this rumor on turnout and other forms of political participation.

The last empirical chapter distinguishes itself from the rest of the dissertation on the grounds that it studies the level of ethnocentrism among Muslim Americans, and how it potentially shapes their willingness to become integrated into mainstream American society. I show that Muslim Americans' opinions about the band of others have a substantive influence on whether they want to adopt American values and customs, call themselves primarily American rather than Muslim, and speak

English predominantly. As they become less prejudiced toward gays and lesbians, non-Muslims, and have diverse friendship networks, they become more assimilated into mainstream American society. The conclusion chapter tries to outline the normative implications of the empirical findings of the dissertation along with some expectations regarding Muslim Americans' journey in the future.

## **Chapter 2**

# **Ethnocentrism and Mainstream Americans**

### **2.1 Prejudice in America**

The complex and long history of immigration to the United States has always been at the heart of political science research. Most of the attention in these studies has been on prejudice toward blacks. It should be duly noted that the history of African Americans is very unique and crucial when compared to the other minorities' experiences in this country. They experienced involuntary immigration and, as a result, slavery. The most visible political, economic, and social discriminations were against them but they were, mostly, able to overcome these unfortunate experiences through the civil rights movement and successful achievements in sports, arts, and politics. Most recently, an African American person has become the president of the United States.

These great achievements by blacks, however, do not mean that racial prejudice is over in this country. Bigots are still bigots. They hold prejudiced attitudes toward blacks. The question is whether their dislike is only toward one particular minority, like blacks, or is a generalized attitude toward all minorities, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, and behavioral strangeness. Do people form their opinions or affect specifically for each minority group, or, do they have a general sense of how they feel about all minorities? More importantly, do people distinguish Muslims from other minorities? Do they hold distinctive attitudes toward them? Or, are they primarily perceived as a part of a generalized syndrome of minority attitudes?

I argue that minority attitudes in the United States primarily follow a generalized pattern in which individuals categorize people into “us vs. them” labels. Or, as Sumner (2002) named it, prejudice in America is mostly caused by ethnocentrism. Prejudice toward Muslims is no exception to this. In this chapter, I will lay out the theoretical foundations of ethnocentrism and its significance for American public opinion. Then, I will incorporate a historical background of minorities in the United States in order to define who mainstream and minority Americans are. This part is very essential because ethnocentrism is defined by a distinction between in-group and outgroup. Before I get into any empirical tests of my hypotheses, I need to establish who counts as American. The following chapter, where I introduce and empirically test the theory of “band of others”, will apply ethnocentrism and the definition of mainstream Americans to the case of prejudice toward Muslims in contemporary American society.



## 2.2 Ethnocentrism Defined

At the beginning of the twentieth century, William Graham Sumner proposed the term ethnocentrism to explain a mental process that tries to divide people into ingroups and outgroups. It is a habit of assigning all unfavorable qualities to outgroups, and associating all desirable qualities with ingroups. The outcome of attachment to ethnocentrism is “a mutually exclusive division into “us” versus “them”, we who belong and they who do not, ingroup versus outgroup” (Sniderman et al. 2000, 144). It refers to the ingroup being the center of everything. It involves exaggerating and intensifying everything related to the ingroup so that all others become different, or outgroups (Sumner 2002). Outgroups, on the other hand, may be any group that does not look, believe, talk, or behave like “us”. If a person belongs to the ingroup then she is “friendly, cooperative, trustworthy, safe, and more”; if not, then she is “unfriendly, uncooperative, unworthy of trust, dangerous, and more” (Kinder and Kam 2009, 8). If there is any line between “us” and “them”, then the content of that line does not matter. It may be a religious, ethnic, or behavioral boundary as well as a racial divide.

It is a consistent and readily available frame of mind regardless of time and space because “no age or society seems wholly free from unfavorable opinions on outsiders” (Higham 1981, 3). Since it has deep socio-psychological roots, individuals, societies, countries or any other groups (like country clubs) can be ethnocentric. However, it should be noted that ethnocentrism is not a dichotomous phenomenon. It is, instead, a continuum that ranges from completely ethnocentric to completely

non-ethnocentric (Kinder and Kam 2009). People will erect ethnocentric boundaries on varying levels. Those who are less ethnocentric will be more welcoming of outsiders, and those who are not will hold more negative opinions of outgroups. This is why ethnocentrism is “not a sickness” but “a ‘natural’ way to look upon the social world” (Kinder and Kam 2009, 8). As nations become ethnically, religiously, racially, and behaviorally more diverse, categorization of people into ingroups and outgroups becomes inevitable. Ethnocentrism plays a great role in this categorization.

Probably, the most important aspect of ethnocentrism is its across-the-board approach to intergroup attitudes. In other words, ethnocentric evaluations target all outgroups or minorities. This is why (Adorno et al. 1950, 102) defines ethnocentrism as “prejudice, broadly conceived.” Empirical research finds support for this generalized attitude toward minorities. For example, white Americans’ attitudes toward blacks are closely related to their attitudes toward other minorities. (Sniderman and Piazza 1993, 53) find that prejudice against blacks is “a blind and irrational reaction... because it has nothing to do with blacks and may just as well manifest itself against Jews, or Asians, or any of many outgroups.” Similarly, Kinder and Kam (2009) find that ethnocentrism among white Americans is a strong predictor of approval on policies targeting not only blacks but also Latinos and Asians. Those who are against job training and affirmative action policies favoring blacks, are also against the same policies designed for Latinos and Asians. They are also against same sex marriage and increased level of immigration. Therefore, it would not be wrong to expect that ethnocentric evaluations will also determine attitudes toward Muslims. People who have thin boundaries between ingroups and outgroups will

be more likely than those who have thicker boundaries to hold positive attitudes toward Muslims in the United States.

### **2.2.1 Potential Causes of Ethnocentrism**

Kinder and Kam (2009) analyze four theoretical perspectives to understand the causes of ethnocentrism. The first one comes from realistic group conflict which focuses on the rational basis of prejudice. Prejudice, in this framework, is a result of rational calculations of groups that compete for scarce resources. Prejudice against immigrants or strangers occurs as a result of actual conflict, mostly economic. Every additional group threatens the existing economic prosperity of the other groups. According to Hooghe (2008), realistic group conflict theory assumes that ethnocentrism is “triggered by a real or perceived conflict between various ethnic groups competing” for limited supplies in society. The newly emerging or arriving groups will be evaluated as competitors in the market so that originally dominant groups will develop hostility against these new immigrants (Hooghe 1993).

The idea of “ ‘they’ have more ‘we’ have less” (Sniderman and Hagendoorn 2007, 77) is at the heart of realistic group conflict. Prejudice is a function of the severity of competition. The higher the stakes, the more negative the attitudes are. Even though a relaxed version of this highly economic version of realistic group conflict theory expands the scope of benefit to social status (Bobo 1999), conflict is usually defined in terms of material resources like wealth, housing, university positions, and jobs (Sidanius and Pratto 1993). If an ingroup begins to lose its dominant

position in the eyes of minority groups, its attitudes toward the threatening outgroup become more negative.

In American politics, the most significant instance of realistic group conflict was observed in the American South during the middle of the twentieth century. In a seminal study, Key (1949) argues that most of the racial conflict of those times happened around fertile soil which is important for agriculture and economy in the South. This region, or black belt, was highly populated by black people so that the economic prosperity of whites was challenged. Group conflict between whites and blacks in the black belt had economic and rational roots. Racial conflict between whites and blacks appeared in an economic form in the South. A recent test of this racial threat hypothesis is conducted by Giles and Buckner (1993) who find its persistent influence on voting behavior in the South (but see Voss (1996) for a serious methodological criticism of this article).<sup>1</sup>

The problem with realistic group conflict, as is also acknowledged by Kinder and Kam (2009), is its little relevance for ethnocentrism. Take Key's black belt analysis. The conflict is economic, and the competition is over scarce resources. But, there are only two groups, which have vested interest in this conflict, namely

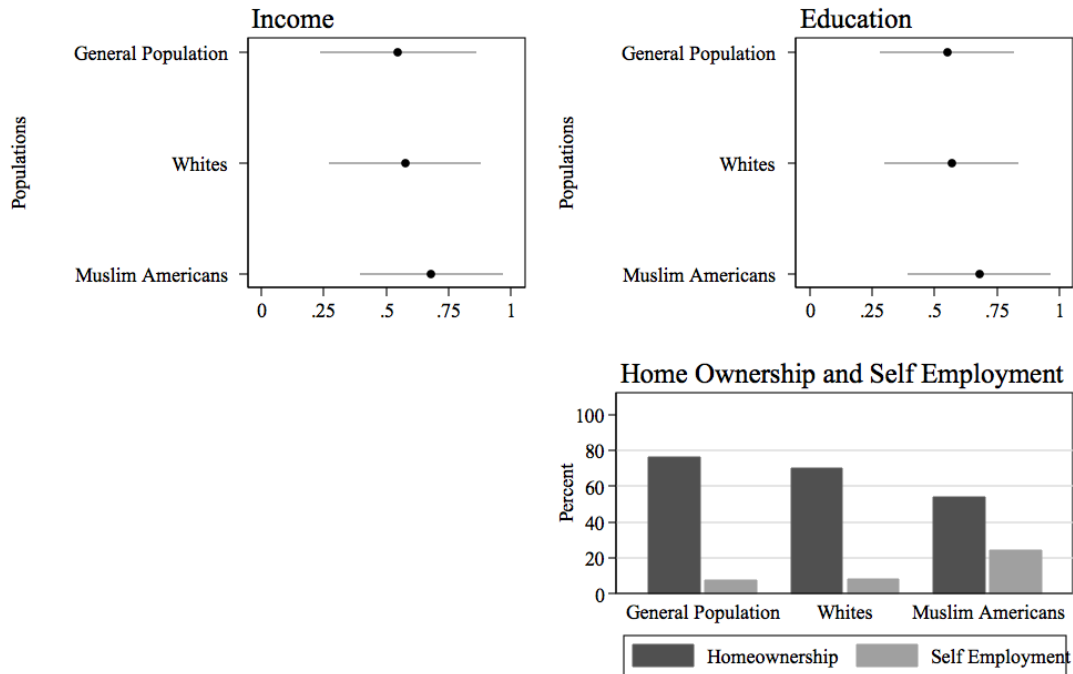
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<sup>1</sup>An alternative interpretation of the intergroup attitudes in the South in the 1950s focuses on the importance of elites' efforts to keep their superior positions in politics. Instead of an economic conflict, it was white Southern elites who tried to prevent a coalition of white poor class and blacks. The black-belt elites wanted to protect their political and economic power because the political mobilization of white working class and poor farming blacks threatened the political hegemony of the current black belt elites. The race card was used to keep the white poor and working class people from flocking to the Populists.

whites and blacks. The former does not want to lose its economic prosperity (or political hegemony as an alternative view), and the latter lives on fertile soils. So, the nature of conflict is far from being ethnocentric, but group-specific. Why would whites become angry and prejudiced against, let's say Asians, due to an economic challenge posed by blacks? Realistic group conflict does not suggest a generalized prejudice toward all outgroups. Rather, it "takes up pairs of opposing groups" (Kinder and Kam 2009, 11). If the number of these pairs increases, then realistic group conflict may turn into ethnocentrism. However, in its initial form, economic competition between two groups is not a sufficient condition for across-the-board hostility.

Specifically for the case of Muslims, the question is whether they are economically threatening to white Americans. Figure 2.1 compares the socio-economic status of Muslims with whites and the general population in America. I used income, education, homeownership, and self-employment as indicators of economic well-being. Income and education are recoded so that they range from 0 to 1. Muslims have slightly higher income and education levels when compared with both the general population and whites. But, the difference is not substantively significant. They are mostly middle class, maybe a little bit more affluent, people. The difference in homeownership levels, on the other hand, is both statistically and significantly different. Muslims rent more than mainstream society. Homeownership among Muslims who are born in the U.S. (forty-five percent) is less than among those who are foreign-born (fifty-seven percent). Another important indicator is self-employment level. The figure shows that more than one quarter of Muslim Americans are self-

employed. In contrast, the overwhelming majority of the general population and white Americans are not self-employed.



Source: 2004 ANES, 2007 PEW Muslim Americans, Bureau of Labor Statistics (<http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2004/07/art2full.pdf>)  
 Horizontal bars represent 1 standard deviation above and below the mean.  
 Income and Education are coded to range from 0 to 1 (minimum to maximum).

Figure 2.1: Comparison of Socio-Economic Status of Muslims, Whites, and General Population

What do these tell us about the potential relevance of the realistic group conflict in terms of attitudes toward Muslims? Are negative attitudes toward Muslims economically rational? On the one hand, Muslims have mainstream socio-economic features preventing them from being cheap labor in the market. They are not creating wage competition because they are a highly educated labor force. If it is economically threatening, it is against the upper-middle and upper classes. On the

other hand, higher self-employment rates may impose competitiveness among small and medium scale business owners. Their presence may threaten already existing businesses. However, given that seventy-five percent of Muslim Americans are not self-employed, the threat may be minimal. So, it appears that realistic group conflict theory may not capture the underlying reasons behind the negative attitudes toward Muslims.

The second theoretical framework for ethnocentrism in Kinder and Kam (2009) concerns the idea of an authoritarian personality which was first coined by Adorno et al. (1950), in a seminal book called *The Authoritarian Personality*, to explain the dynamics of anti-democratic ideas in the post World War II era. They chose to study anti-Semitism as an example of these anti-democratic tendencies. Their major motive is investigating the psychological, or personality related, causes of anti-Semitism. But, then, they expanded the scope of their study to other forms of prejudice, and they found a general predisposition behind all of these anti-democratic ideas. People who are anti-Semitic are also likely to think that blacks should be kept in their place, and authorities should control Japanese Americans and foreign ideas. Like Sumner, Adorno et al. (1950) named this general predisposition as ethnocentrism. It is because of this consistency in attitudes toward outgroups that they urge us to explain this ethnocentric ideology, rather than prejudice against a single group (Adorno et al. 1950, 122). According to them, all of these ethnocentric negative attitudes toward minorities emerge out of authoritarian personality. Kinder and Kam (2009, 14,18) summarize an authoritarian personality as “rigid adherence to traditional values, moralistic condemnation of those who violate convention,

readiness to capitulate to established authorities, preoccupation with strength and power, disdain for imagination and generosity, cynicism toward human nature, and a conviction that wild and dangerous things go on in the world.” These qualifications define authoritarian personality that triggers ethnocentric attitudes or “a relatively consistent frame of mind concerning ‘aliens’ generally.” Since authoritarians place a high value on conformity, sameness, and convention, and display an aversion to individuals and groups who are different from them, this translates readily into intolerance and hostility toward and distrust of those groups who have not been part of the conventional racial, ethnic, religious, and cultural mainstreams in American society (Uslaner 2004, Stenner 2005).

A number of scholars recently have revived the significance of authoritarian personality in the study of tolerance and public opinion. For example, Stenner (2005), in her book *The Authoritarian Dynamic*, finds that authoritarian personality is one of the strongest explanations of political intolerance. Obviously, political intolerance and prejudice are not the same things but they are related (see also Barker and Tinnick (2006) and Mockabee (2007)). Hetherington and Weiler (2009) show that the polarization we are experiencing today in America is mostly due to disagreements on normative matters, like what is good and bad, right and wrong. At the core of these debates, according to them, are authoritarian tendencies. The polarization between authoritarian and democratic personalities cuts across race, religion, ethnicity, and political predispositions in contemporary American society. Even though authoritarianism reduces ethnocentrism entirely to personality (Kinder and Kam 2009), its influence on prejudice toward minorities and contemporary



public opinion is important. This is why I will incorporate individuals' authoritarian tendencies in empirical models to assess the structure of Muslim attitudes.

The third theoretical framework comes from social identity theory, and it attempts to explain the contextual causes of ethnocentrism. It was first developed by Tajfel (1981) to test whether intergroup conflict is based on an economic reason, as proposed by realistic group conflict. For example, in a series of experiments, the participants are shown several slides with dots on them, and are asked to guess the number of dots on these slides. Then, they are told that they are divided into two groups based on their answers. Two groups are created based on completely trivial and non-economic grounds without any history of hostility or threat. This is why these experiments are called "minimal group experiments". After the split, each participant is asked to allocate points to other participants in the experiment. Tajfel (1981) found that a great majority of the participants reward their own group relative to other groups. His main conclusion is that ingroup favoritism does not always require an economic conflict, unlike realistic group conflict suggests. And, this "tendency to put distance between their [own] group and the other group between "us" and "them" is impressive" and replicable across several other studies (Kinder and Kam 2009, 20). We see the preliminary forms of ethnocentrism in these minimal group experiments. Social categorizations cause ingroup favoritism and outgroup hostility easily without any rational grounds of conflict. They are natural outcomes (Brewer 1979, Hammond and Axelrod 2006).

The question is whether this ingroup favoritism is associated with outgroup hostility or derogation. For example, the Nazis' celebration of "the Aryan race",

and intense derogation of the Jewish population through anti-semitism need not be highly correlated (Sears et al. 1997). They may occur independently of each other in modern democracies. Outgroup dislike may also be contextual rather than an automatic outcome of ingroup affect. For example, Brewer (1999) argues that “when intergroup attitudes are not conflict-based, attitudes toward the ingroup and prejudice toward the outgroup are essentially independent” (436).

In a more recent study, Brewer (2007), again, finds that these two processes are not closely related to each other. However, as long as the scenario includes some sort of categorizing, conceivably unimportant and minimal conditions will be enough to “induce a bias in favor of one’s own group at the expense of the other” (Sniderman and Hagendoorn 2007, 75). The self-categorization process may assign anything positive to the ingroup, and anything negative to outgroups. Individuals may tend to see the positive characteristics of their own groups, and the negative ones of outgroups without any necessary differentiation among them.

This minimal group approach defines the social aspects of ethnocentrism (Kinder and Kam 2009). In a way, social identity theory views prejudice against one minority group as part of a tendency to denigrate outgroups more generally due to any reason, not just economic (Stouffer 1955, Adorno et al. 1950). As Tajfel (1982) argues, “one of the principal features... of intergroup behavior and attitudes [is] the tendency shown by the members of an ingroup to consider members of outgroups in a relatively uniform manner, as ‘undifferentiated items in a unified social category’” (22). Individuals tend to generalize feelings of contempt and denigration not to specific outgroups, but across-the-board. Thus, prejudice is likely to be “a

dislike not of a particular minority but of minorities in general” (Sniderman and Hagendoorn 2007, 56), and ethnocentrism is prejudice broadly conceived.

If ethnocentrism has a social dimension, as social identity theory suggests, and this social dimension creates a generalized prejudice toward outgroups, then we would expect that attitudes toward Muslims will be part of this ethnocentric syndrome in the United States. That is, people will perceive Muslims as just another member of the band of others which includes already existing minorities. The best predictor of Muslim feelings will be feelings about blacks, Asian Americans, Latinos, Jews, illegal immigrants, welfare recipients, gays and lesbians, and other outgroups. Or, as I name this theoretical expectation, prejudice about Muslims will be associated with attitudes toward the “band of others.”<sup>2</sup>

The final aspect of ethnocentrism, according to Kinder and Kam (2009), is its potential genetic source. Ethnocentrism may have a hereditary component that makes it part of human nature. Evolution “would have favored motivational dispositions furthering group life” so that eventually, genetic “mutations furthering the capacity for ingroup loyalty and outgroup hostility might have spread through the population” (Kinder and Kam 2009, 25). Therefore, ethnocentric attachments may have a genetic component that is transmitted from one generation to another. One important implication of a potential biological component of ethnocentrism, that Kinder and Kam (2009) do not elaborate in detail, concerns its persistence over time and space. Ethnocentric evaluations already reflect highly stable psychological

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<sup>2</sup>The multi-dimensional nature of band of others, and Muslims’ unique position within this framework, are discussed in the following chapter theoretically and empirically.

and social orientations as we see from authoritarian personality and social identity theories. Adding genetic codes into the list of causes will make ethnocentric attitudes even more stable because evolution is a very slow process. This may be why stereotypes are very hard to change, the definition of who counts as mainstream and minority is stable, and individuals' prejudices toward minorities do not change abruptly due to dramatic events. We would not expect, for example, the September 11 terrorist attacks to change the overall ethnocentric structure of Muslim attitudes. Since Muslims have always been considered an outgroup, stereotypes about them will not be affected by the terrorist attacks. Psychological, social, and maybe even genetic roots of ethnocentrism may keep prejudice toward Muslims relatively stable.<sup>3</sup>

Briefly put, ethnocentrism is a mental behavior to categorize individuals into ingroup and outgroups. It is readily available, quick, and easy. The reason for outgroup hostility can be anything, not just economic or competition. People may favor members of the ingroup over those belonging to an outgroup based on a minimal reason, like a disagreement on the number of dots. So, if I want to measure attitudes toward Muslims, first, I have to determine whose attitudes I need to study. Whites only? Christians? Then, what about Catholics or Christian Fundamentalists? Are mainstream Americans only white Protestants? Or, can we say seculars are part of this mainstream? In other words, who counts as the prototypical or mainstream American? In the next section of this chapter, I will try to answer these questions with the help of both a historical background of immigration in the United States

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<sup>3</sup>In the next chapter, I empirically show that familiarity and contact may help people have more favorable opinions of Muslims.

and a very recent empirical study by Theiss-Morse (2009) on mainstream Americans.

## 2.3 Who is mainstream?

A test of ethnocentrism's influence on prejudice toward Muslim Americans or any other public opinion research requires defining ingroup in the United States with somewhat clear boundaries. Ethnocentrism is a mental habit of associating all good qualities with ingroup, and all bad qualities, like negative stereotypes or dislike, with outgroups. Ingroup membership is arguably the core component of ethnocentrism. Even though ingroup membership does not necessarily cause outgroup hostility, we need to determine who is a mainstream American. My main interest is to see how these mainstream Americans perceive Muslim Americans, and what kind of a role ethnocentric attachments play in this attitude formation.

The most important question, then, is who is the mainstream in general and in the United States? How do we define it in general, and how does this generalized theoretical definition of the mainstream apply to the American case? Alba and Nee (2005, 12) define the mainstream as "that part of the society *within* which ethnic and racial origins have at most minor impacts on life chances or opportunities" (emphasis in original). They argue that simply being the most crowded group in a society may define the mainstream. Historical presence also plays a role to define the mainstream. The longer a group lives in country, the more likely it will be part of the mainstream. There also economic conditions but Alba and Nee (2005) think that they may not play a significant role. The mainstream, according to them, is

beyond economic distinctions. For the mainstream, having a comfortable life is a function of hard work, and members of it think that it is not impeded by their racial, ethnic, or religious identifiers.

This perceptual definition offers an insightful framework for defining the mainstream in United States which has always had a very fluid and dynamic population structure. Lots of immigration waves occurred throughout its short history, which invited many immigrants from different races, ethnicities, and religions. Some of them were initially subject to condemnation, prejudice, and even slavery but then made their way out of these unfortunate circumstances. But, even afterwards, several minorities think of themselves more of marginalized Americans while some others think they reflect prototypical or mainstream Americans. History plays a role but perception about who is mainstream has a final say, as the general definition of the mainstream suggests. This is why, first, I will talk about historical component of minorities becoming mainstream, and then examine the perceptual backgrounds of it.

### **2.3.1 Immigrants Becoming Mainstream: Historical Overview**

America has always been a country with flows of immigrants from a variety of races, ethnicities, and religions. People of different origins come together, integrate, and become Americans. It may not be wrong to conclude, like (Handlin 1951, 3), that “the immigrants were American history.” And, it is a relatively successful immigration history. Unlike European cases, “the country did not suffer from deep

class cleavages which immigration might aggravate” because the social structure of America “combined an underlying cohesion with a remarkable degree of individual mobility” (Higham 1956, 214). Immigrants came to America with great hopes, suffered initially, and then integrated into its social structure. This sequence may sound as if all immigrants were able to integrate into American society easily. In contrast, it was a long and somewhat painful process for many groups of people like Jews, Irish and Italian Catholics, Asians, and Latinos. The result of this fluid structure of American immigration history is that the definition of being a “mainstream American” may change (Kazal 1995). Therefore, an overview of minorities in general, Catholic and Jewish immigrants in particular, and their integration into mainstream society will help us define who mainstream is today, and speculate about Muslims’ likelihood of being perceived as mainstream in the future.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Before getting into the details of the immigration history of certain minorities, I would like to mention that my focus here will be on non-English people who came to America voluntarily. This means that I will exclude two important of minorities from my analysis, namely African Americans and Native Americans. The legacy of slavery and the Civil Rights Movements make the case of African Americans particularly important in the progressive history of the United States. Several studies showed that racism is still prevalent today through either a symbolic (Sears, Hensler and Speer 1979) or an explicit form (Sniderman and Piazza 1993). They are the most readily and easily identifiable minority group in America. But, the unique historical background of blacks may not be an appropriate source to speculate about Muslim immigrants’ integration. There are three reasons for that. First, Muslims’ immigration is mostly voluntary, as we saw in the previous chapter. They come here for education, business, or family reunion. Second, unlike the case of blacks, Muslims’ socio-economic background is similar to that of mainstream Americans. Most of them are either self-employed or high-skilled workers. Last, unlike blacks’ long history of presence

Historians analyze immigration flows into the United States under five chronological eras. The first one concerns the colonial era, during which the majority of immigrants was European Protestants. They were mostly Puritans and Pilgrims who made the most significant contributions to the development of the United States through emphasizing “the importance of the Protestant faith, diligent application to work, and individual accomplishment” (Dinnerstein and Reimers 1999, 5). There were few Jewish and Catholic immigrants at these times, and they became subject to negative stereotyping immediately. Neither Catholics nor Jews always enjoyed the right to vote, for example, in colonial America, and “Jews in particular were proscribed from becoming physicians and attorneys in some places” (Dinnerstein and Reimers 1999, 14). Protestant skepticism toward Catholics and Jews during the colonial era determined the standards for future minorities in the United States. The colonists welcomed the cheap supply of labor provided by the immigrants but “expected them to absorb existing customs while shedding their own [like their attachment to cultures and faiths prevalent in the Old World] as quickly as possible” (Dinnerstein and Reimers 1999, 15). So, the standards were a two step process: first, minorities were expected to assimilate into the existing mores and traditions of the New World. But, this was not enough. They were expected to try hard to

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in the United States, the history of Muslims is fairly recent. Muslim immigration looks more similar to Jewish, Irish, Italian, and Asian immigration than to African American immigration. This is why the historical overview will focus on the success story of these immigrants, not of blacks in the United States. The case of blacks will be important when we examine the perceptual grounds of mainstream Americans in the next part of this chapter.



abandon any cultural and behavioral customs belonging to the Old World. Minorities who were able to meet both of these Colonial era standards at the same time were eventually welcomed into mainstream society.

The second wave of immigrants was between 1789 and the 1890s. Most of them were initially Asians and Latin Americans but they were few in numbers. Then, toward the end of the nineteenth century, the country attracted many Irish immigrants who “were often treated as inferior races . . . , and charged with polluting and degrading the purity of Anglo-Saxon stock” (Halter 2006, 169). Prejudice toward Irish immigrants started as a result of Protestant skepticism toward Catholicism. Having faith connections to an outside source, namely the Vatican, reminded most Protestants of their unfortunate history in the Old World due to religious conflicts between them and the Vatican. However, economics is considered to play just as significant a role as religious skepticism in this era just before the Civil War. Irish immigrants were mostly poverty-stricken refugees who came to the United States with hopes of better jobs. Having too many poor people increased the sense of fear among Americans because unskilled labor “would depress wages and the American standard of living” (Dinnerstein and Reimers 1999, 41). These economic and religious fears eventually transformed into a political organization. Know Nothings (or eventually, the American Party) became the center of anti-Catholic sentiments, and gained popularity in 1854 and 1855 with a dozen governorships, more than 100 Congressional races, and around 1000 legislative seats (Anbinder 2006, 179).

Anti-Catholic prejudice was the main axis of minority politics in the nineteenth century, and it continued in the third wave of immigration between 1890 and the

1920s, besides anti-black prejudice. Italians outnumbered all other European immigrants of the twentieth century, and they were one of the most disliked minorities (Dinnerstein and Reimers 1999). They were associated with negative stereotypes and treated as racially inferior (Guglielmo 2003). Like Irish immigrants, they came from poor areas and rural backgrounds so that they were mostly unskilled workers. As opposed to the expectations from immigrants to integrate into the New World, for Italian immigrants “success meant bringing something home, not achieving status in the United States” so that after working for some time, they would go back to Italy (Dinnerstein and Reimers 1999, 165). They did not have the chance to experience social mobility.

Jews were the second largest immigrant group of the third wave between 1890 and the 1920s. When they arrived, they became subject to the same negative stereotypes and prejudice that Catholics experienced. Unlike the clash between Protestantism and Catholicism, the religious tension was somewhat less important in the case of negative attitudes toward Jews. There was agreement on some key issues, and “Jews found it easier than did some others to accept the American stress upon individual achievement and mobility” (Dinnerstein and Reimers 1999, 165). They committed to ideas of hard work and individual success. During this time, Jews became famous for their philanthropic activities which are considered to be necessary activities in the Jewish community to seek honor and respect (Dinnerstein and Reimers 1999). They appreciated higher education, and as an outcome, they “made up 85 percent of the student body at New York’s free but renowned City College, one fifth of those attending New York University, and one sixth of the

students at Columbia” (Dinnerstein and Reimers 1999, 67). Their success in high skilled jobs, such as the legal profession, was recognized by everyone.

However, these growing positive attitudes toward Jews diminished due to anti-Catholic sentiments in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Religious skepticism toward Catholics caused hostility toward immigration as a whole (Higham 1981). This generalized anti-foreign sentiment of the post World War I era has been labeled “nativism.” Nativism, according to Higham (1981), is a generalized ideological structure which emphasizes absolute differences between white Americans from people of other colors. It is a special form of ethnocentrism directed specifically at foreigners, aliens, or immigrants. It is an ethnocentric zeal to destroy groups that challenge the existing American way of life (Higham 1981). There may be several reasons for the rise of nativism but scholars mostly agree on the economic one (Higham 1981). Increased flows of immigrants threatened employment opportunities for workers, which caused them to strike frequently. These strikes also made employers oppose immigration because they started losing a lot of working days (Dinnerstein and Reimers 1999). People’s prejudice against immigrants surged so quickly that “ethnocentrism and xenophobia ran wild”; the Ku Klux Klan gained 4 million members around the nation by 1920, and anti-Semitism peaked by the 1930s (Dinnerstein and Reimers 1999, 84). It was not very pleasant for all immigrants to be in the United States during these years.

The rising trend of nativism subsided with the beginning of the Second World War. Unlike the destruction in Europe, the end of the war brought enormous economic prosperity to the United States. Americans found themselves in a bourgeon-

ing economy with a lot of great opportunities both in the manufacturing and finance industries. This economic prosperity also affected intergroup relations in America. “[P]ostwar public opinion polls,” for example, “indicated that fewer Christians believed Jews to be greedy, dishonest, or unscrupulous; and overt anti-Semitism became less frequent and less respectable” (Dinnerstein and Reimers 1999, 9798). Even though there was still bigotry against Jews, it became less apparent after the war. Similarly, anti-Catholic prejudice also decreased during this period. It was not as fast as the decline of anti-Semitism because there were still conflicts about “aid to parochial schools, a proposed American ambassador to the Vatican, the relations of church and state, publicly sponsored birth control clinics, and abortion” (Dinnerstein and Reimers 1999, 98). Even if there were heated debates on the topics, the level of anti-Catholic hostility was visibly lower than during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The historical overview of immigration flows shows that there are two essential factors shaping the integration of groups that previously suffered from prejudice into mainstream society. The first one concerns the economic circumstances, both at the group and country levels. If the immigrant group came to the United States with a middle class background like not all but most of the Jewish immigrants, then their acceptance into the mainstream society was relatively easier. They posed less challenge to the existing employment structure of the country. In contrast, poor immigrant groups, like Irish and Italian immigrants, had much more difficult times in integrating into mainstream society. In the end, both Jews and Catholics were accepted as Americans (Theiss-Morse 2009) but the process was relatively harder

for the latter than for the former. If the socio-economic background of immigrants plays a great role, then we can expect that Muslim Americans may have a similar experience to Jews in the United States. As I talked about in the previous chapter, their income and education levels are slightly higher than the mainstream levels, and they engage in either self-employment or high-skilled jobs. Muslims may benefit from their middle class background during their integration. However, this positive feature of Muslim Americans may be adversely affected by the recent economic downturns. People's attitudes toward immigration and immigrants can be shaped by economic crises or booms (Higham 1981, Dinnerstein and Reimers 1999).

In addition to an economic explanation, time or familiarity plays a significant role in the integration of minority groups into American society. Historians agree that this process is very slow. The length of integration into American society is "tightly linked to the timing of arrival in the United States" (Devos and Banaji 2005, 448). Immigrant groups had long-lasting unfortunate experiences but, over time, these subsided. Increased familiarity played a prominent role in the upward mobility of these immigrants. Like everything else, "success came gradually and not spectacularly" for them (Dinnerstein and Reimers 1999, 166). It took quite a while to get to know these "strangers" and their behavioral and cultural differences (Higham 1981). Irish Americans, for example, "moved up the social scale slowly" (Dinnerstein and Reimers 1999, 151). Jews' success was relatively shorter but it still took almost half a century to earn their deserved respect in American society. Familiarity's impact mostly came from its power on relinquishing immigrants' Old World cultures and traditions (Dinnerstein and Reimers 1999). The longer they

live in the United States, the more likely they accept the American way of life. And, this long process is mostly “with indeterminate starting and ending points” (Melnick 2006, 266). One implication of familiarity is the growing presence of these immigrants in local and national politics (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1996). There have been many Catholics, Jews, Asians, and recently Latinos among presidential candidates, administration members, senators, representatives, governors, mayors, and other low profile elections.

It is too early to speculate about familiarity’s effect on prejudice toward Muslim Americans. Even though there were many Muslim immigrants in the twentieth century (Dinnerstein and Reimers 1999), they have not been a visible or salient minority group until the September 11 terrorist attacks (Jamal and Naber 2008). Muslim Americans are experiencing similar stereotyping and hostility that Catholics, Jews, and even Asians experienced in the past. The historical story of immigrants shows that their willingness to accept the American way of life and familiarity will be one of the major determinants of their potential success of becoming at least a not-disliked minority. Their higher socio-economic status will be of great importance in this long process. In the next chapter, I test whether knowing someone who is Muslim has any significant influence on favorability toward Muslims. The finding supports the historians’ perspective on integration: those who are familiar with Muslims become less prejudiced toward them.

### 2.3.2 Who is Mainstream in America Today? Perceptual Explanation

The historical overview of immigration flows suggests that almost all immigrant groups, Jews, Catholics, Asians, and early Latinos, were able to integrate into American society after a long and painful process. Does this mean that these groups are perceived as part of mainstream America? In other words, attitudes toward them may be less prejudiced and hostile but are they counted as American? The historical account of immigration falls short of answering these important questions that may help us define ingroup and outgroup (or minority) in the United States. We need to examine identity politics at a perceptual level which draws a generalized definition of the mainstream in any country, not just in the United States.

The national group is considered to be an imagined community (Anderson 1991). Normative citizenship through birth or naturalization may not capture the whole idea of being American. Perceptually, individuals “need to think they are a member of their national group, evaluate their national group positively, and feel attached to their national group” so that they become part of this imagined community (Theiss-Morse 2009, 8). Based on this perceptual definition, there may be some nominally American citizens who are thought of as not being American enough. They are considered to be minorities or marginalized groups by mainstream or prototypical Americans.

There are two major grounds of drawing distinctions between marginalized and prototypical members of a nation. The first comes from constructions of the

past (Theiss-Morse 2009). The historical background of intergroup relations we saw in the previous part will determine most of the contemporary perceptions about who counts as Americans. Although some groups immerse into the American nation, like Catholics and Jews, people may still hold negative attitudes toward them. Mainstream Americans, as the dominant group, will decide who is American and who is not there yet by relying on past ethno-cultural relationships (Theiss-Morse 2009). Thinking that Catholics and Jews are less mainstream than Protestants will reflect such historical baggage of historical intergroup conflicts. We observe such claims recently by Huntington (2004) in various normative studies. He argues that being American refers to being Anglo-Protestant or at least having attachment to that culture. They do not have to be Protestant but they have to acknowledge and practice its culture. This is a typical ethno-cultural explanation of who counts as Americans based on perceptions coming from historical conflicts between Catholics/Jews and Protestants. Recent scholarship shows that attachment to ethno-cultural values to define American identity is still at a notable level (Schildkraut 2007, 601).

The second explanation of putting boundaries between mainstream and minority concerns attachment to principles that created America, namely “the American Creed” (Theiss-Morse 2009). People may “come from anywhere and still become Americans by believing in the American Creed” (Theiss-Morse 2009, 19). Those who believe in hard-work, individual achievements, free enterprise, and liberalism are considered to be Americans. Another aspect of the principles that created America concerns egalitarianism: the belief that all races are equal. (McClosky and Zaller 1984, 69) show that half the American public in the 1950s “endorsed the proposi-



tion that when it comes to the things that count most, all races are certainly not equal.” In 1963, it decreased to 31 percent, and in 1978, it was only 15 percent. The 1978-79 Civil Liberties Survey, examined by the same authors, revealed that most Americans reject the idea of inherent inferiority of certain races. The idea of egalitarianism is now becoming more common than it has now been “extended to include blacks, women, Catholics, Jews, immigrants, and other groups traditionally subject to discrimination” (McClosky and Zaller 1984, 72). These minorities used to be subject to harsh prejudices but the spread of egalitarian ideals make them integrate into the mainstream society over time.

Theiss-Morse (2009) argues that the boundaries for mainstream Americans can be established by relying on both grounds of perceptions, i.e. ethno-cultural and principled. She calls it the social theory of national identity. Those who are considered to be “true Americans” enjoy all of the exclusive membership benefits like being helped by fellow Americans during hard times, getting fair share from resources, and being listened to (Theiss-Morse 2009, 3). My main interest in this theory is the “true American” part. By using a unique dataset coming from the 2002 Perceptions of the American People Survey, she examines who feels like a typical American. The dependent variable she uses is an index score out of four variables regarding the perceptual basis of being a typical American: “When I think of the American people, I think of people who are a lot like me,” “I would feel good if I were described as a typical American,” “On the important issues, I find I often agree with American people,” and “In many respects, I am different from most Americans” (Theiss-Morse 2009, 78). People responded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from

strongly agree to strongly disagree. She analyzes relationships between this index score and several ethno-cultural, demographic, and political variables. Her findings suggest that individualism and patriotism play a significant role. Egalitarianism does not make people feel typically more American. Ethno-culturally, Christians do not feel typically more or less American than non-Christians do. The same thing holds across different Christian denominations as well. Neither Protestants nor Catholics feel more typically American than other members of denominations do (Theiss-Morse 2009, 83). Unlike religious affiliations, race plays a significant role in feeling typically American. All races (blacks, Latinos, and others) feel less American than white Americans. Among these, only the difference between blacks and whites is statistically significant but substantively the relationship has the same direction across all races (Theiss-Morse 2009, 83). The case of blacks is also replicated in the focus group studies of Theiss-Morse (2009). African Americans were the ones in these focus groups who preferred to use “they” rather than “we” when it came to talk about who Americans were. Given the distinctive historical background of blacks in the United States, this finding is not surprising. A long history of involuntary immigration, the legacy of slavery, and long-lasting conflicts during the Civil Rights Movement always make the case of blacks truly unique and distinctive among all other minorities in the United States.

The finding that whites feel themselves typically American more than any other races is also replicated in other studies. For example, Devos and Banaji (2005) show, using implicit association tests in a series of experiments, that being Americans means to be white, or as they frame “American = White.” They find

that prototypical Americans are often associated with white people. They argue that “white Americans, as a group, have been immersed in American society for an extensive period of time and constitute the numerical majority” so “they are more likely to be thought of . . . [as] American than members of other ethnic groups” (Devos and Banaji 2005, 449). Again, the impact of time and familiarity comes into effect in the perception of whites being “true Americans.”

The category of whites is too broad, though. It includes several immigrant groups, such as Jews and Catholics, that used to be considered part of the minority but are now considered to be parts of the mainstream (Theiss-Morse 2009, Kinder and Kam 2009), as I showed earlier in this chapter. Does this mean that they are no longer considered to be minorities? Fiske (1993) has the most frequently cited definition of minority. According to her, the most important determinant of minority status is the persistence of negative stereotypes about a group. Its impact will be worse for those groups which have lower status and experienced discrimination in the past (Phinney 1996). Anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic sentiments can be found everywhere in the world, not just in the United States. However, they are not as common as they used to be in the past. As I mentioned earlier, they are subsiding as time passes.

Then, who is mainstream in America? Since I will be examining their attitudes toward Muslims, and its implications in public opinion, I have to be clear about how I define mainstream American society. Historical analysis shows that time and familiarity play an essential role in the integration process. It takes a long time to overcome prejudice and hostility. Jews and Catholics among non-Anglo

immigrants achieved to be part of this nation. In contrast, the perceptual basis of being American suggests that certain minorities can regard themselves as not being typical American, like blacks. And, minority status persists as long as negative stereotyping exists. Empirical research established that whites are considered to be the mainstream society. Being Christian is not that important but, on racial grounds, blacks do not feel themselves as typical Americans.

Since I argue that attitudes toward Muslims are part of a generalized syndrome of prejudice, namely ethnocentrism or band of others as an extension of ethnocentrism, I need to have a sample of mainstream America without any minority groups. On racial grounds, these people will be whites. But, this is not enough because there may be white Latinos, Catholics, Jews, and atheists/seculars. I excluded Latinos and Jews from the mainstream sample because there are still, unfortunately, negative stereotypes about these groups. Catholics, as expressed in Theiss-Morse (2009), consider themselves as typical Americans so they are included in the sample.<sup>5</sup> Atheists/seculars are also part of the mainstream because perceptually religious affiliation matters a lot less in contemporary America. But, I excluded respondents who belong to minority religions such as Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, etc. In sum, throughout the dissertation, I will define *mainstream as non-Latino, non-Asian, and non-Jewish whites who do not belong to any minority religion, unless otherwise noted in the text.*

In the next chapter, I will elaborate on the structure of Muslim attitudes

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<sup>5</sup>I should note that they are excluded from the sample when I examine the structure of minority attitudes, including anti-Catholic sentiments, as a whole at the beginning of the next chapter.

both theoretically and empirically. The theory of band of others, as an extension of ethnocentrism, will be introduced as a multi-dimensional structure of minority attitudes in the United States. Several empirical tests will suggest that attitudes toward band of others will be strongly related to people's level of prejudice against Muslims. This will be persistent both before and after the terrorist attacks. And, for Muslims to be part of mainstream, time and familiarity will play a crucial role. The next chapter with these findings will present the core component of my dissertation.

## Chapter 3

# A Theory of Band of Others

### 3.1 Attitudes Toward Muslim Americans: An Extension of Ethnocentrism

When I was a graduate student, I spent most of my summers as a teaching assistant at the Inter-Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) Summer Program on Quantitative Methods in Ann Arbor. Ann Arbor is a small college town but its population is very diverse in terms of race, ethnic and religious background, sexual orientation, income status, and political orientations due to the presence of one of the most prestigious universities in the world, namely the University of Michigan. You can sense this diversity everywhere around the town, in restaurants, cafes, and classrooms. One great way to get a feeling of this beautiful feature of Ann Arbor is during the 4th of July parades. Since I subleased apartments in downtown, I had a lot of opportunities to watch them. After the politicians, the Jaycees, twirlers,

preschools, jugglers, clowns, antique cars, and public safety officials, it is always time for local business people and non-profit organizations. There are African American groups, Asian American local business people and student groups, an LGBT society, Latino Student Association, and Arab Americans. They all celebrate America's Independence while waving American flags, and Ann Arbor is welcoming them as warmly as they do the previous parade groups. It is this moment that triggered me to think that Americans' attitudes toward minorities may be shaped by the level of their warmth toward all minorities, regardless of the name of the minority group. It is a question of welcoming outsiders or strangers. The order of the Ann Arbor parade groups, even, reflects this. All of these non-mainstream groups or minorities were clustered together for their turn. They were organized as if they were a big band in this parade, a "band of others".

I argue that Muslim Americans are also member of this band of others, and this membership determines mainstream Americans' attitudes toward them, rather than the September 11 terrorist attacks or political orientations. The idea of "band of others" is an extension of the theory of ethnocentrism, the details of which I discussed in the previous chapter. Its effect on shaping people's minority attitudes is much deeper and persistent than a one-time instance, like terrorist attacks, or relatively fluid political orientations. People tend to form their affect toward non-mainstream groups early in their socializations, and it stands relatively independent of political orientations and unique events.

This, of course, does not mean that the September 11 terrorist attacks did not have any influence on American public opinion. In several polls conducted

after the attacks, a large minority of Americans expressed that they were prejudiced toward Muslims (to exemplify a few of them, please see USA Today/Gallup Poll 2006, Newsweek 2007 Poll). A similar amount of respondents also mentioned that Muslims in the United States should be required to carry special identification cards or undergo extra screening at the airports (Theiss-Morse 2009, 2). Even though President George W. Bush and a fair number of political elites of the time tried to convince the American public that Islam is a religion of peace, and Muslims are another component of the richness of American diversity, people formed or reinforced negative attitudes toward Muslims.

There are two important issues concerning the impact of the September 11 terrorist attacks on Americans' attitudes toward Muslims. First, if theory of "band of others" holds, then we may expect to find similar prejudiced attitudes toward other minorities as well. Those who think that FBI should wiretap mosques would also think that illegal immigrants should be deported, gays and lesbians should not be allowed in the military, African Americans are all lazy, and more. The reasons behind these attitudes may be different. People may be prejudiced against gays and lesbians because they may find them behaviorally unacceptable. Attitudes toward African Americans may be an outcome of racial stereotypes. And, people may dislike Muslims because they are all Arabs (which is empirically not true, please see the first chapter) and they are not in cultural conformity with the Judeo-Christian tradition of America.<sup>1</sup> The general tendency to welcome or dislike minorities will

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<sup>1</sup>I will elaborate on the multi-dimensional feature of "band of others" later in this chapter.



hold. This is why, I argue, public opinion surveys which report prejudice toward one minority do not show us the big picture. It is obviously an empirical question but if the USA Today/Gallup and Newsweek polls had asked about people's opinion of other minorities, I predict we would have found very similar levels of dislike and prejudice toward those minorities as well.

Second, these post-September 11 surveys may deceive us into thinking that Americans became prejudiced toward Muslims after the terrorist attacks: They used to hold positive attitudes but this traumatic event caused them to dislike Muslims. I argue that this view may not be true due to several reasons. Muslims have seldom been a focus of actual political or social debates in American memories. Except several suicide bombings against the U.S. Navy and embassies in the Middle East, Islam has been mostly unknown, and Muslims have been mostly invisible to the American public (Jamal and Naber 2008). Unlike the case of Muslims, African Americans have been the most important element of progressive American political and social history, Asian Americans were subject to detentions and relocations after the Pearl Harbor attacks, attitudes toward gays and lesbians have always been a central part of heated debates especially since the beginning of the early 1990s, and Latinos are probably the most salient minority group of the most recent times. Muslims, on the other hand, had become salient only after the terrorist attacks. So, the American public had not held well-defined attitudes toward Muslims before the planes hit the towers and the Pentagon. We can see this by looking at the levels of item non-responses to the questions about minorities in the polls conducted before September 11, 2001. Unfortunately, for that period, the availability of data that

include several minorities along with Muslims is severely limited. I was able to find two Pew datasets that asked questions about the favorability ratings of only religious minorities like, Jews, atheists, Buddhists, and Muslims. In the 2000 Pew Campaign Typology survey among mainstream Americans, only 8 and 12 percent of the respondents mentioned that they “haven’t heard of” or “can’t rate” Jews and atheists, respectively. In the same survey, however, almost one quarter (23 percent) of the respondents could not map their opinions about Muslims. A similar picture also appears in the 2001 Pew Religion in American Public Life Survey (that was conducted prior to the September 11 attack). Almost 30 percent of mainstream Americans could not rate Muslims whereas it was 14 and 11 percent for Jews and atheists.<sup>2</sup> We see how Muslims become salient by comparing these percentages to the ones from the polls conducted after the attacks. While the rates for Jews and atheists remain at 10 percent levels, the number of people who haven’t heard of or can’t rate Muslims dropped almost in half (15 percent).

Another argument for why the September 11 terrorist attacks may not be the reason for Americans’ prejudice toward Muslims is that those who have enough level of knowledge about Muslims may already have had negative attitudes even before the attacks. Or, in line with the theory of “Band of Others”, the ethnocentric structure that explains Americans’ attitudes toward Muslims has always been prevalent, and independent of this one time shock. I will elaborate on the details of this argument toward the end of this chapter.

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<sup>2</sup>The only religious minority that has more item non-responses is Buddhists who have never been salient to the American public, at least until the times of these surveys.

This chapter represents the core of my dissertation, and will be organized as follows. First, I provide a theoretical frame, which outlines the view of “Band of Others” as an extension of the theory of ethnocentrism. The main argument will concern definitions and measurement of the concepts so even though it is a theoretical introduction, it will include some preliminary empirical evidence from factor analytic techniques. Then, I will examine the impact of this theory of generalized attitude toward minorities on Muslim evaluations in series of multivariate analyses. The next empirical part of the chapter will test whether the September 11 terrorist attacks changed the structure of attitudes toward Muslims. In the conclusion of the chapter, I will focus on the implications of the theory of “band of others” for future intergroup relations in the US, with a particular focus on the relationship between familiarity and affect toward Muslim Americans.

## **3.2 Structure of Minority Attitudes and Ethnocentrism**

The history of the United States is relatively short when compared to other countries, especially those in Western Europe. Its people come from many different territories, cultures, religions, and ethnicities. America is a nation of immigrants. All of these features of this country make it really difficult to study intergroup attitudes because boundaries across groups are not very well defined. As I discussed in the previous chapter, there were immigrants, like Irish and Italian Americans, who

were not considered as Americans but they are, now, an integral part of this nation. Jews, who were not initially welcomed either, are, now, one of the most successful groups. Blacks, arguably the most important minority group in the United States, used to be slaves but they have been moving up in the ladder, rated pretty high by whites on favorability scales, and the country has recently elected her first black President in 2008. We can find other success stories for other minorities as well, like immigrants from India.

It is especially difficult to determine who is considered to be mainstream or ingroup, and who minorities are. In the past, it was relatively easier to examine intergroup attitudes because the most visible minority group was blacks. A race and ethnicity literature that studied attitudes toward blacks specifically and their implications flourished in political science. Some people argued that recent racism is no longer explicit, and it is more symbolic or aversive now (Sears, Hensler and Speer 1979, Sears et al. 1980, Kinder and Sears 1981). Others oppose this idea on the grounds that people are still explicit in their expression of negative stereotypes about blacks and all other minorities (Sniderman and Piazza 1993, Sniderman and Carmines 1997, Sniderman and Piazza 2002). There has been a huge debate between these two camps, mostly, based on the measurement of racial attitudes.

The limitation of this literature is that the American minority panorama has become so complex that studying only anti-black prejudice and focusing on its impact on certain policy attitudes may not capture the complex intergroup dynamics of this country. For example, the symbolic racism and principled conservatism literatures may not be helpful in studying attitudes toward Latinos, who are, nowadays,

one of the most salient minorities, and Muslims, who have been at center of political debates since the terrorist attacks in 2001. The same argument can, also, be extended for homosexual attitudes.

We need a more comprehensive understanding of intergroup attitudes. The theory of ethnocentrism can, as I argued in the previous chapter, provide a much more thorough framework studies of attitudes toward minorities. Ethnocentrism, or “prejudice broadly defined”, is a useful and flexible theory. It is useful because it goes beyond time and place limitations. Unlike group-specific evaluations, ethnocentrism will be prevalent regardless of time and space. Ethnocentric attachments can determine prejudice toward one outgroup at one time in one place but it can also influence dislike of another group at another time in another place. The ethnocentric structure that impacts prejudice stays the same.

The flexibility of ethnocentrism refers to its definition. Each individual can define herself with a lot of group attachments, like nationality, race, religion, ethnicity, gender, even from time to time football teams, or a combination of these. By doing this, she also defines who are not like her. If she is ethnocentric, then she will dislike all who are not like her. If not, then she will be at least neutral, if not welcoming, them. Ethnocentrism can let us go beyond the boundaries of the existing study of race and ethnicity literature. In fact, as we saw earlier, Kinder and Kam (2009) showed that ethnocentric evaluations are one of the most important, but long-forgotten, aspects of American public opinion.

### 3.2.1 Measurement of Ethnocentrism

Kinder and Kam (2009) addressed this important measurement problem by limiting their ethnocentrism measure to negative stereotype questions in the American National Election Studies. The questions ask respondents to put whites, blacks, Asian Americans, and Latinos on a scale that ranges from lazy to hard-working, from untrustworthy to trustworthy, and from unintelligent to intelligent. Kinder and Kam (2009) measure ethnocentrism as the summation of differences between ingroup score on one trait and average outgroup trait score on the same trait. For example, whites rate themselves and three other minorities on laziness, trustworthiness, and intelligence scores. For each trait, the average scores for blacks, Asian Americans, and Latinos, are subtracted from their ingroup trait score, and these distance measures are added up, and divided into three (Kinder and Kam 2009, 55). They also replicate the same method with feeling thermometers, and both yield very similar conclusions throughout their study.

With this brilliant approach, the flexibility of ethnocentrism is maximized. Each ethnic and racial minority has its own ethnocentrism score. Whites will have one, so will blacks, Asians, and Latinos. With this approach, each individual belonging to these ethnic and racial groups will have an ethnocentrism score so that a model can be estimated with only dichotomous control variables for these groups. For example, then Kinder and Kam (2009) study ethnocentrism and support for the war on terrorism, they estimated a model with an ethnocentrism score with controls for black, Asian American, and Latino respondents. They do this for all of their

models throughout the book. This is a very flexible and innovative approach to measure ethnocentrism.

Even though this approach is flexible, meaning that everyone can be ethnocentric –not just the mainstream—it may not be an inclusive way to measure ethnocentrism. Remember that ethnocentrism is briefly defined as “prejudice broadly defined”. Kinder and Kam’s (2009) method estimates an ethnocentrism score out of negative stereotypes (or feeling thermometers) toward whites, blacks, Asian Americans, and Latinos. As I discussed earlier, these are not the only outgroups Americans formerly stereotyped or are still stereotyping. Catholics, Jews, gays and lesbians, illegal immigrants, feminists, and, of course, Muslims among all other minorities, do not have a well-defined ethnic or racial definitions.

To acknowledge, Kinder and Kam’s measure strongly predicts prejudice toward these minorities, as shown in the book. But, we need a broader ethnocentrism measure, which can capture prejudice not only toward blacks, Asian Americans, and Latinos, but also other minorities. I argue that a factor analytic technique may be a better approach to measure ethnocentrism. Factor analysis was initially developed in psychology, and has recently been very influential and common in political science research as well. The idea is straightforward. We try to measure an unobserved variable through observed variables. It may not be a good strategy to ask people whether they are ethnocentric or not. There may be a lot of people who do not know what the term means because it is too jargon-loaded. Instead, we can ask people about their evaluations of minorities either through feeling thermometers, negative stereotypes, or other related questions. We theorize that these evaluations are result

of ethnocentrism, which is not directly observed. Factor analysis enables us to get at this theoretically underlying phenomenon behind these minority evaluations. It is also a data reduction technique so we can observe a lot of variation among these variables with a minimum number of dimensions. In other words, factor analysis minimizes, given all assumptions are satisfied, the curse of dimensionality. “Band of Others” uses factor analysis to measure ethnocentrism, and to study the dimensional structure of minority attitudes, which will predict attitudes toward Muslim Americans. It is a broader conceptualization of already existing measures of ethnocentrism. I use the 2004 and 2008 American National Election Studies (ANES) to conduct the factor analysis for all available marginalized or minority groups. The available groups do not change that much from one year to another. In both years, the analysis will include blacks, Latinos, Asian Americans, Catholics, Jews, welfare recipients, gays and lesbians, illegal immigrants, feminists, Christian fundamentalists, and Muslims. The 2008 ANES also asked about Hindus and atheists.

The choice of these groups is not arbitrary. I included blacks because they have a unique history by being the most important minority in the United States. Starting from the era of slavery to the Civil Rights Movement, and recently, to the election of President Obama, blacks have been at the heart of the American experience. Explicitly (Sniderman and Piazza 1993) or symbolically (Sears et al. 1980), anti-black racism is still prevalent, and has a powerful impact on social welfare attitudes. They, as Theiss-Morse (2009, 61) finds, “have been frequently been reminded of their marginal status as Americans across U.S. history” so that they “put some distance between themselves and this national group to which they belong.” A



study on minorities in the United States cannot be complete, if not wrong, without incorporating prejudice toward blacks.

Although blacks have been the most populous minority in the United States, there are several studies done by the Census Bureau, showing that by 2050, one in four of the American population will be from Hispanic origin, and they already outnumbered blacks. People's attitudes toward Latinos and illegal immigration are very much related. According to the 2008 ANES, more than nine out of ten people think that controlling illegal immigration is very or somewhat important with a weighted sample. This ratio increases to almost 95 percent among the mainstream population. Studies on attitudes toward immigration is becoming very common in both political science and sociology (Hood and Morris 1997, Welch and Sigelman 2000).

Scholars have also been studying anti-Asian attitudes. The most recent research on Asian Americans concluded that they are envied and highly stereotyped people (Lin et al. 2005). In a seminal study, Gilens (2000) empirically showed the importance of whites' racial attitudes in shaping opposition to welfare policies. People on welfare are among one of the least liked groups in both the 2004 and 2008 ANES data.

Even though several studies show that Americans are more comfortable with homosexuality than they used to be (Wilcox and Norrandner 2002, Brewer 2003), Overby and Barth (2002), in a recent study, find that anti-homosexual attitudes are highly dependent on contact and familiarity with gays and lesbians. The size of the local gay population is one of the most important predictors of anti-gay attitudes.

Anti-Christian Fundamentalists was a major focus of two studies by Bolce and De Maio (1999*a,b*). They find that anti-fundamentalist attitudes have become increasingly a strong predictor of partisanship and vote choice. Its impact on electoral outcome is stronger than that of ideology. Since, in the previous chapter, we establish the fact that mainstream Americans are mostly non-Latino, non-Asian, and non-Jewish whites who do not belong to any minority religion, whether anti-fundamentalism is part of band of others is an empirical question. And, I'll try to address that in the next part.

Several scholars acknowledge the fact that anti-Catholic attitudes used to be very negative but, now, they are part of American society as a non-marginalized group of people. Perceptually, at least, there is no statistically significant difference between Protestants and Catholics concerning feeling like prototypical Americans (Theiss-Morse 2009). Even though they may be counted as Americans, stereotypes and prejudice about them may not change as quickly over time. Therefore, I decided to include them as part of this initial factor analysis.

The story of Jews in America is very similar to Irish and Italian Catholics, too. As we see in the previous chapter, they used to be subject to harsh stereotyping and discrimination but they are very well integrated into American society. However, anti-semitism has been, unfortunately, one of the most important, and partly still existing, form of prejudice. Since the seminal study of Adorno et al. (1950) on anti-semitism, recent studies have documented that prejudice and stereotypes about Jews are still an important part of American public opinion (Selznick and Steinberg 1979, Sniderman and Piazza 1993).

Finally, Muslims are part of this factor analysis because they are one of the least liked groups in the United States (Gibson 2008, Kalkan, Layman and Usulaner 2009). Edgell, Gerteis and Hartmann (2006) showed, for example, that many Americans are not sure whether Muslims agree with their vision of American society. Similarly, Sides and Gross (2007) display that Muslims are rated very negatively on some stereotype questions whereas other minority groups have slightly better ratings. If the theory of “band of others” holds in terms of its impact on Muslim attitudes, then Muslims have to be in this analysis to see where they belong in relation to other minority groups in America.

### **3.2.2 Dimensional Analysis of Minority Attitudes**

The factor analysis will be conducted among mainstream Americans (non-Latino, non-Asian, and non-Jewish whites who do not belong to any minority religion). Since Catholics and Muslims are part of this analysis, I also excluded all Catholic and non-Judeo Christian respondents from the sample. This way the remaining respondents will look approximately the way Theiss-Morse (2009) defines the mainstream American. All of the minority attitudes are measured by feeling thermometers, which are positivity biased-corrected.<sup>3</sup> Again, the analyses will be computed for both the 2004 and 2008 ANES.

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<sup>3</sup>Following Wilcox, Sigelman and Cook (1989), I computed a mean rating out of responses given to all feeling thermometer questions. Then, I subtracted this mean feeling thermometer rating from the minority feeling thermometers for each respondent. I applied this to all of the feeling thermometers I used in this and the following chapters using the ANES datasets.

I used the method of principal components factor analysis to estimate the loadings and scores. Since I expect a correlation among the factor dimensions, I prefer oblique rotation to get a simpler structure. The initial results suggest a three-factor solution with three eigenvalues greater than 1, following Kaiser's rule. However, even though retaining factors using this rule makes technical sense, it is somewhat arbitrary. The most important drawback is the potential to retain a smaller number of factors than theoretically necessary. Recent developments in the field of measurement show preference for Horn's parallel analysis, which runs factor analysis in a randomly generated dataset with similar distributional properties. Then, we compare the eigenvalues of the factor analysis out of this randomly generated dataset with our dataset. We retain the number of factors, which have higher eigenvalues than the ones in the simulated case. It is similar to the bootstrapping procedure. Horn's parallel analysis suggests that we can express our data in a two-dimensional plot, or with two factors.

Rather than presenting the factor loadings in a table, I will display attitudes toward groups in a two-dimensional plot. The loadings from the first factor will be depicted on the x-axis, and the second one will be on y-axis. Figures 3.1 and 3.2 show the structures of minority attitudes in 2004 and 2008, respectively.<sup>4</sup> In 2004, there are three clear clusters of minorities. Asian Americans, Latinos, and blacks are one cluster, and it is highly correlated with the second dimension. Muslims, gays and lesbians, illegal immigrants, and feminists (although feminists are a little bit

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<sup>4</sup>Even though I use oblique rotation, I presented them in an orthogonal display for visual reasons. The substantive story does not change in the non-orthogonal display.

farther from the visible cluster) are another cluster but these are highly correlated with the first dimension. The final group of minorities is clustered in between these two groups. It includes Jews, Catholics, and welfare recipients, and this cluster correlates with both dimensions. The only group that does not cluster with any group is Christian Fundamentalists. It shows that mainstream Americans' attitudes toward this group are fairly independent of their attitudes toward other minorities. This does not mean that people's prejudice toward these minority groups do not have a significant impact on attitudes toward Christian Fundamentalist. It is an empirical question that goes beyond the scope of my dissertation.

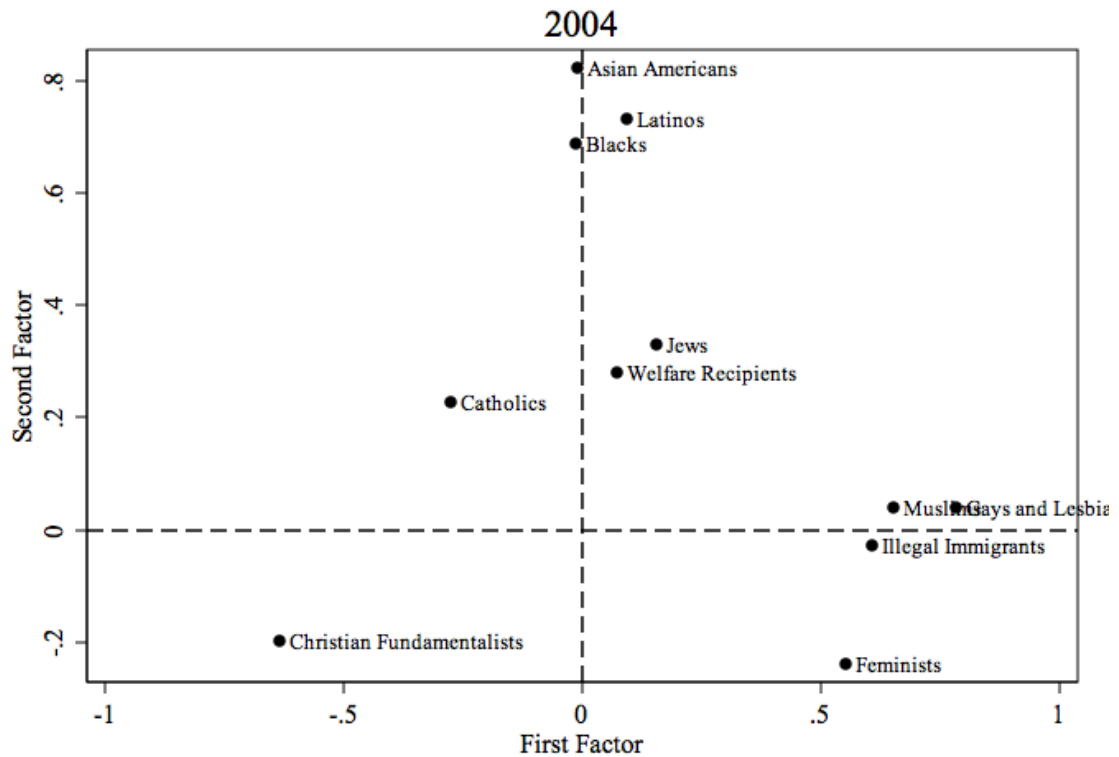


Figure 3.1: Structure of Minority Attitudes in 2004

Substantively speaking, it seems that American attitudes toward minorities are multi-dimensional, meaning that there are “bands of others”, rather than a single monolithic cluster that explains everything. The correlation between these two factors are above .38 which suggests a relatively strong correlation between two dimensions. On the one hand, we see ethnic and racial minorities who have been in the United States for a long time (like blacks and Asian Americans), or highly salient (like Latinos). These minorities can be considered as the ones that are benefiting from the long history of familiarity with mainstream Americans. On the other hand, we observe that feelings toward behaviorally or culturally strange outgroups are together. Muslims, gays and lesbians, and illegal immigrants are still highly stereotyped and disliked minorities. Muslims (by belonging to a non-Judeo Christian tradition), gays and lesbians (by challenging the “traditional” definitions of marriage), and illegal immigrants (by not respecting the immigration laws) are behaviorally or culturally strangers.

The cluster between these two clearly structured minority clusters can be named as the ones who are relatively more mainstream groups when compared to other two structures. Jews and Catholics, as I discussed in an earlier chapter, used to be stereotyped in the past but have been becoming more and more mainstream over time. We can see this theoretical claim by looking at the figure. Attitudes toward them are equally distant from attitudes toward both the racial and ethnic, and cultural and behavioral, minorities. The only anomaly in this picture may be prejudice toward welfare recipients but, given the not uncommon perception concerning close association of them with being blacks, I think it may be considered

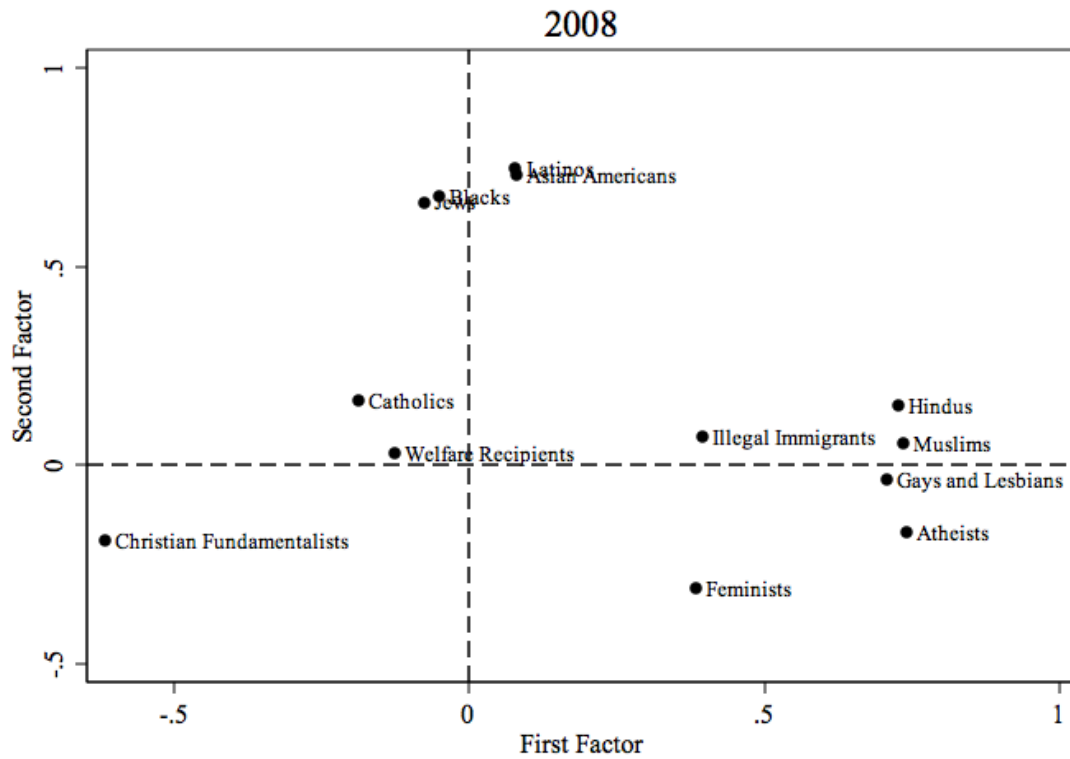


Figure 3.2: Structure of Minority Attitudes in 2008

as a proxy for black attitudes.

We see a very similar picture in the 2008 analysis in figure 3.2 as well. This analysis includes attitudes toward Hindus and atheists in addition. Again, we observe three main clusters, with Christian Fundamentalists being clearly distinctive like we see in 2004. The racial and ethnic minority attitudes are very closely related to each other. People tend to form their evaluations of Asian Americans, Latinos, and Blacks within a single band. This time, unlike 2004, this cluster includes evaluations of Jews as well. I do not think that this is a drastic change from what we saw in 2004. Previously, they were closer to Catholics, who have been a familiar

minority for a long time, now, they are closer to other familiar minorities.

More consistently than these two structures, band of culturally or behaviorally “strange” minorities include the same groups in 2008, too. It is clearly seen in the figure that prejudice toward Muslims, illegal immigrants, gays and lesbians, and feminists tend to go together, along with dislike of Hindus and atheists. Mainstream Americans hardly distinguishes these minorities from each other when they express their feelings toward them. The structure persists from 2004 to 2008 without almost any change with this band of minorities.

The bigger picture these figures show us is that ethnocentric evaluations of Americans are multi-dimensional. There is clearly a band of racial and ethnic minorities, a band of culturally and behaviorally marginalized groups, and a band of more mainstream groups, like Catholics. *Based on this empirical fact and substantive expectations, the theory of band of others refers to this multi-dimensional picture we see in figure 3.1 and 3.2.*

I argue that the most important factor behind dislike of Muslims is this multi-dimensional nature of band of others. People who welcome Hindus, illegal immigrants, gays and lesbians, atheists, feminists, Jews, blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans tend to welcome Muslims as well. And, this structure, as the theory of ethnocentrism suggests, will be independent of short-term political predispositions and some minority related issue attitudes. It is deeper than these, and it is more of a psychological attachment to bigotry or not. Even though it is only a four-year period, we see almost no dramatic change in the structure of band of others. So, this attachment persists.



In the next part of the chapter, I will examine Muslim attitudes in a multivariate analysis, and compare the persistence of band of others in the pre and post September 11 attacks eras. Then, I will talk about the importance of contact and familiarity for minority attitudes, with specific attention on Muslim attitudes, in the United States.

### 3.3 Band of Others and Muslim Attitudes

What is the most important factor that makes people dislike Muslims? If it is this ethnocentric attachment, or “band of others”, then is the effect independent of other competing explanations, like political orientations, religious traditionalism, or perceived threat from terrorism after the September 11 terrorist attacks? These are the essential research questions of this multivariate analysis, which will use the same datasets, the 2004 and 2008 ANES.

A factor analysis, presented in table 3.1, *among only minority groups in both datasets for comparable analysis*, suggests a two-factor solution where feeling thermometers for blacks, Jews, Asian Americans, and Latinos load on one, and those for illegal immigrants, gays and lesbians, welfare recipients, and feminists load on another factor.<sup>5</sup> The second factor also includes atheists and Hindus in the 2008

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<sup>5</sup>Given the factor analyses in the previous section and the theoretical framework about who the mainstream American is, I decided to exclude Christian fundamentalists and Catholics from the factor analysis. If whites are perceived as the core mainstream group of American society, and if Catholics have been known to be an integral part of this mainstream, then my decision to omit those groups from the rest of the analysis is not arbitrary, but theoretically and empirically

dataset. By looking at the composition of these factors, we can name the first one as "ethnic/racial minority affect" because it includes mostly positively rated and familiar minorities, like blacks, Asian Americans, and Jews. The second one, on the other hand, is composed of groups that do not fit into the Judeo-Christian nature of American society, like atheists, and Hindus, or do not fit into mainstream behavioral patterns like gays and lesbians. This is why I call this second part of band of others as "cultural/behavioral outgroup affect."<sup>6</sup>

As I expressed in the previous chapter, I expect to find that these two measures of band of others will be the most important determinant of attitudes toward Muslims both in 2004 and 2008. Those who have positive attitudes toward blacks, Jews, Asian Americans, and Latinos will also have positive feelings toward Muslims. Similarly, if a person is not prejudiced toward cultural/behavioral outgroups, she will welcome Muslims as well. People's attitudes toward Muslims will follow this ethnocentric pattern.

Even though I anticipate this social psychological aspect of minority attitudes to be a major factor, there may be some other alternative explanations either from the same literature or other theoretical frames. Authoritarian personality can be supported. Also, since the dependent variable is Muslim feeling thermometer, it is not included in this factor analysis

<sup>6</sup>Instead of estimating a factor score for each respondent, I take the average of these feeling thermometers so that we can keep as many cases as possible. The scale reliability coefficients are .65 and .55 in 2004, and .67 and .58 in 2008, for ethnic/racial minority and cultural/behavioral minority affect indices, respectively.

Table 3.1: Multi-Dimensional Structure of Band of Others in 2004 and 2008

Feeling Thermometers	2004		2008	
	Ethnic/Racial Minority Factor	Cultural/Behavioral Outgroup Factor	Ethnic/Racial Minority Factor	Cultural/Behavioral Outgroup Factor
Latinos	.74	.05	.71	.15
Jews	.62	-.15	.67	-.14
Asian Americans	.78	.02	.75	.04
Blacks	.64	.05	.65	-.03
Feminists	-.31	.65	-.36	.38
Welfare Recipients	-.01	.47	-.21	.19
Gays and Lesbians	.19	.68	-.06	.70
Illegal Immigrants	-.01	.69	-.03	.58
Hindus	–	–	.28	.64
Atheists	–	–	-.16	.71
Muslims	.28	.54	.11	.73
eigenvalues	2.18	1.95	2.53	2.26
N	677		892	

Source: 2004 and 2008 ANES (among mainstream Americans).

Notes: Factors are retained using principal component factor method with oblique rotation.

an essential component of prejudice toward minorities. The theory of authoritarian personality suggests that people may have strong attachments to conformity, conventional life styles, and sameness, and this attachment translates into intolerance of marginalized groups like Muslims (Adorno et al. 1950, Altemeyer 1996). It is recently shown that the gap between authoritarian and democratic personalities has significant impact on American public opinion, and party polarization in the United States (Hetherington and Weiler 2009). Our model measures the tendency to have authoritarian personality through questions about desirable child qualities. The respondents pick one of the two, or voluntarily express “both”, options: independence or respect for elders; obedience or self-reliance; curiosity or good manners; being considerate or well-behaved. In both the 2004 and 2008 datasets, I coded the authoritarian responses as 1, the democratic choices as 0, and voluntarily expressed responses of “both” as 0.5. For each respondent, I take the average of her responses

to these questions. The higher the rating, the more authoritarian a person is, and, in turn, the more prejudiced toward Muslims she should be.

Another way of measuring dislike of minorities is through negative stereotypes about certain minorities (Sniderman and Piazza 1993, Kuklinski et al. N.d.). As I showed earlier, a recent study by Kinder and Kam (2009) also uses these negative stereotype questions to construct an ethnocentrism scale for all respondents. It may seem problematic to have both feeling thermometers and negative stereotypes in the same model. However, several researchers documented that prejudice and stereotypes are two different processes. The former refers to more affect or emotional based evaluations of minorities whereas the latter is more of cognitive attribution of certain features- like laziness, violent, disgusting etc. - to minorities (Stangor 2004, Cuddy, Fiske and Glick 2007). Also, Gilens (2000) shows that stereotypes about blacks have much stronger effect on welfare attitudes than affective feeling thermometers.

Negative stereotype questions are asked about three minority groups, namely blacks, Asian Americans, and Latinos. In both datasets, respondents are asked to rate each of these groups on three scales, ranging from lazy to hardworking, from unintelligent to intelligent, and from untrustworthy to trustworthy. I created an index of negative stereotypes by taking the average of these variables for each respondent. The scale reliability coefficient is .86. The higher the ratings, the more stereotyped a person is, and the more prejudiced toward Muslims.

The September 11 terrorist attacks by radical Muslims heightened the sense of threat from terrorism in American public opinion. People became willing to restrict

the civil liberties of Muslims after the attacks (Davis 2007), and their ethnocentric evaluations determined the level of support for anti-terrorism policies (Kam and Kinder 2007). Since perceived threat from terrorism has a theoretically expected influence on Muslim attitudes, I constructed an index score out of two variables in the 2004 and 2008 ANES datasets. The first one is a question about the level of federal spending on fighting terrorism, and the second one concerns the importance of combating international terrorism as a U.S. foreign policy goal. The higher the average scores on these variables, the higher the level of perceived threat from terrorism, which, in turn may influence Muslim attitudes. However, as (Davis 2007, 207) finds, “whites were fairly uniform in their negative feelings toward Islamic fundamentalists and Arabs, regardless of threat”. Therefore, I do not expect a statistically significant effect of perceived threat on Muslim attitudes. People’s opinion of bands of others will be the key determinant.

Since it may be related to the level of perceived threat, I also take the level of patriotism into account. The September 11 terrorist attacks created a patriotic atmosphere that almost all Americans were willing to express how much they like the flag, the country, and freedom. This is why it is necessary to consider patriotic values when studying attitudes toward Muslims. Unfortunately, the 2008 ANES did not ask questions about patriotism so this variable is included in only the 2004 analysis. It is a composite score of five variables: how much the U.S. flag makes the respondent feel good, how much she loves her country, how important it is to be an American, whether American makes her ashamed or angry. The index score is the average ratings of responses to these questions, and the scale reliability coefficient is

.67. Similarly, given the strength of ethnocentric evaluations, I do not expect that patriotism will have statistically significant effect on Muslim evaluations.

In addition to these alternative explanations, people who are more religious or traditionalist may hold negative attitudes toward Muslims. For example, Altemeyer (2003) finds that religious traditionalists hold aversive negative attitudes toward groups with unfamiliar characteristics, behaviors, or cultural practices. Similarly, white Evangelical Protestants, who are among one of the most religiously traditionalist groups in the United States, may not view Muslims positively. Their strong support for Israel may translate into dislike against Muslims. To measure religious traditionalism, I used four variables, namely the frequency of church attendance and prayer, the view of the Bible and the level of guidance from religion in general. An average score is computed for each respondent, and the scale's reliability coefficient is around .84 in both datasets. I also included a dummy for Evangelical Christians, and the coding scheme for this variable comes from Layman and Green (2006).

Probably the most important alternative explanation of Americans' attitudes toward Muslims focuses on the political orientations of individuals. The common perception is that conservatives or Republicans will be more likely than liberals or Democrats to hold prejudiced views of Muslims. In the literature, several scholars showed a significant relationship between ideology and affect toward minority groups (Huddy et al. 2005, McClosky and Zaller 1984, Sidanius, Pratto and Bobo 1996). As opposed to this finding, Edgell, Gerteis and Hartmann (2006), Sniderman et al. (1989) found that ideology has little or no impact on minority attitudes. In terms of the political debates after the September 11 terrorist attacks, neither Democratic

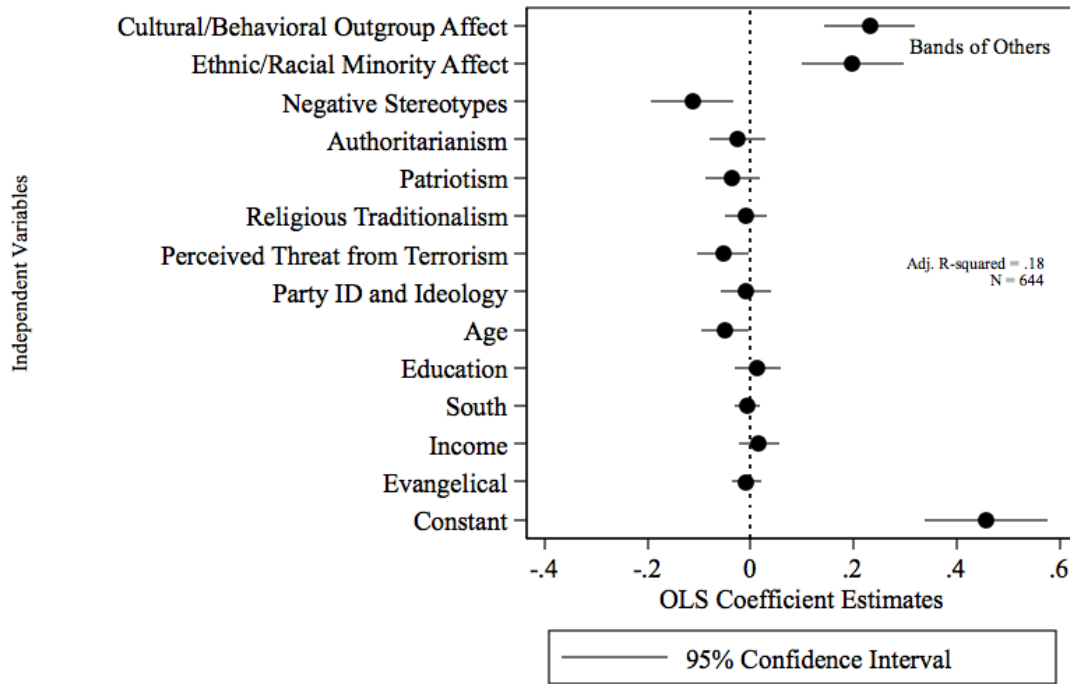
nor Republican elites put blame on Muslims or Islam. For example, President Bush made efforts to distinguish radical terrorists from ordinary Muslim citizens who have been living in this country peacefully. There were, on the other hand, Republican foreign policies, which targeted Islamic nations, like Afghanistan and Iraq. Democratic elites mostly supported the war on terrorism, and initially approved the war in Iraq. So, there was not a clear demarcation between Democratic and Republican elites in terms of their foreign policy preferences at that time. People were exposed to mixed cues from elites, and as Zaller (1992) would suggest, they may not be able to sort out their political predispositions with their attitudes toward Muslims. I measured political orientations by combining the seven point party identification and ideological placement variables. It ranges from strong Democrat/extremely liberal to strong Republican/extremely conservative.<sup>7</sup> Finally, the models will include several socio-demographic controls such as age, education, region of residence, and personal income.

Since the dependent variable (positivity bias corrected Muslim feeling thermometer) is a continuous measure, I estimate an Ordinary Least Squares regression among mainstream Americans (non-Latino, non-Asian, and non-Jewish whites who do not belong to any minority religion) in both the 2004 and 2008 ANES. All of the independent variables are coded to range from 0 to 1 so that I can compare the relative effect of each variable on Muslim attitudes. The results for the 2004 and

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<sup>7</sup>Item non responses (“don’t know” or “haven’t thought much about it”) are coded to “the middle of the road” category in the ideological orientation variable before creating the composite score.

2008 models are depicted in figures 3.3 and 3.4, respectively.



Source: 2004 ANES

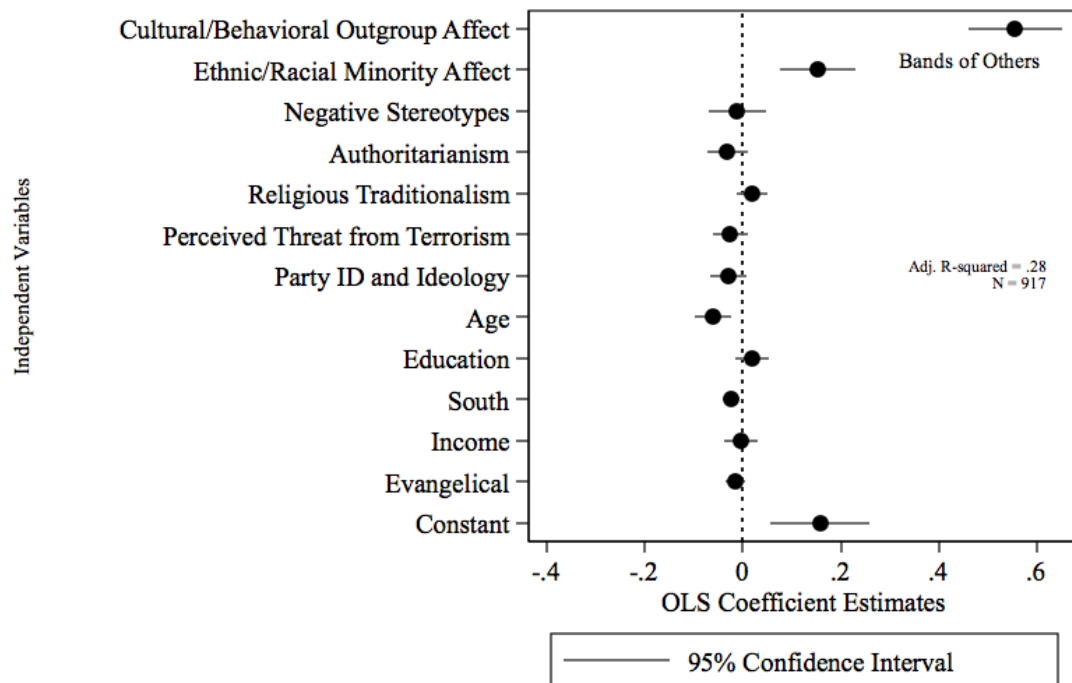
Notes: The dependent variable is Muslim feeling thermometer. All variables in the model are coded to range from 0 to 1. The model is estimated among non-Latino, non-Jewish and non-Muslim white respondents.

Figure 3.3: Band of Others and Muslim Attitudes in 2004

Both models suggest that Muslims are perceived as members of two bands of others. Individuals form their attitudes toward Muslims based on their already existing attitudes toward blacks, Asian Americans, Jews, Latinos, welfare recipients, feminists, illegal immigrants, gays and lesbians, Hindus, and atheists. The impact of both ethnic/racial minority affect and cultural/behavioral outgroup attitudes are both statistically and substantively significant. Among all other theoretically competing variables, ethnocentric evaluations of Americans toward minorities determine the nature of Muslim evaluations. If a person welcomes these minorities, then she



will welcome Muslims as well. In a more substantive way, other things being equal, if we just increase these band of others variables from their minimum to maximum levels, the increase in Muslim feeling thermometer will be around .2 or .3 units in 2004, and .2 and .6 units in 2008. Under both scenarios, the increase in warmer feelings is convincingly large on a 0 to 1 scale variable.



Source: 2008 ANES  
 Notes: The dependent variable is Muslim feeling thermometer. All variables in the model are coded to range from 0 to 1. The model is estimated among non-Latino, non-Jewish and non-Muslim white respondents.

Figure 3.4: Band of Others and Muslim Attitudes in 2008

Among other variables, negative stereotypes about blacks, Asian Americans, and Latinos had some influence on Muslim attitudes in 2004, but not in 2008. Authoritarian values also have some effect but it is not easily distinguishable from zero. Interestingly enough religious traditionalism has a sign flip but given its coef-

ficient estimate is really close to zero, this change does not have a significant impact. We see that there was a significant, although substantively very small, association between perceived threat from terrorism and Muslim attitudes in 2004. The link disappears in 2008. People's attitudes toward Muslims are no longer a function of their sense of threat seven years after the terrorist attacks.

Political orientations, as expected, do not have statistically significant effect on prejudice toward Muslims. Conservatives or Republicans are no more or less likely than liberals or Democrats to hold prejudice toward Muslims, on average. Dislike of minorities is more of a psychological, as I discussed earlier, than a political process. Among socio-demographic variables, only the age of respondents have some effect on Muslim evaluations in both years. The older the person, the more likely she is to be prejudiced. Southern residents are barely more negative than non-Southerners toward Muslims in 2008 but not in 2004. Evangelicals' attitudes are also very similar to those of Southerners, slightly negative but not very distinguishable from zero.

There are two important implications of these multivariate models. First, Americans perceive minorities as members of band of others, in a multi-dimensional way. Outgroups that are more familiar to mainstream society are in one dimension, and minorities that are less familiar and behaviorally more different from prototypical Americans are in another dimension. No matter how these bands are constructed, people's level of prejudice toward them is the major determinant of Muslim attitudes.

Second, the obvious explanations, such as political orientations or level of threat, have either very small or no effect on attitudes toward Muslims. Individuals'

attachments to ethnocentric evaluations are relatively independent of political events or predispositions. The level of perceived threat in the post September 11 era does not play that important a role in terms of Muslim attitudes. Nevertheless, my analysis, so far, has not answered an important question concerning whether the terrorist attacks changed this ethnocentric structure of Muslim attitudes. Is band of others persistent over time? Does its structure change after an important event that is closely related to a minority? In the next section of this chapter, I will try to answer these questions by comparing the pre and post September 11 models.

### **3.3.1 Persistence of the Band of Others**

Prejudice toward the band of others is a psychological outcome, which is unlikely to change quickly. There may be ups and downs for some minorities at certain times but the general pattern, ethnocentric structure, should stay the same. People may have held much more negative attitudes toward Muslims right after the terrorist attacks. However, the most crucial determinant of this dislike may still be dislike of blacks, Asians, Latinos, Jews, feminists, gays and lesbians, atheists, and illegal immigrants. One way to test this claim is through comparing similar models in the pre and post September 11 datasets. I expect to find that the influence of generalized outgroup affect has always been the strongest predictor of Muslim attitudes. In other words, even before the attacks, Muslims were perceived as members of this persistent ethnocentric structure.

I use four datasets, two of which were conducted before September 11, 2001.

They come from the 2000 Pew Campaign Typology and the 2001, 2002, and 2007 Pew Religion in American Public Life Surveys. The dependent variable for all of these models is a four-category Muslim favorability rating that ranges from “very unfavorable” to “very favorable”. There are four main independent variables. The first one is the religious outgroup affect, which is similar to the band of others variables in the ANES models. For each year, I tried to construct a variable which can tap into the minority attitudes. It is an average rating of all of the non-Muslim religious minority groups that the respondent evaluated. All of these groups include favorability of Jews and atheists<sup>8</sup> in all years, with Buddhists added in 2001 and Mormons added in 2007. I expect these variables to have the strongest positive relationship with attitudes toward Muslims. Those who rate Jews and atheists high on these scales will rate Muslims high as well.

In line with my argument about the competing explanations in the previous section, I control the model for political orientations (mean rating of party identification and ideology), a dichotomous variable for born-again Evangelicals, and church attendance; along with socio-demographic controls such as age, education, and region of residence. All of these variables follow the same coding scheme I used in the ANES models, and the model variables are coded to range from 0 to 1.

Since the dependent variable is categorical, I use ordered logit to estimate the coefficients. The estimation sample includes only mainstream Americans. The results of the models are presented in table 3.2. Since it is a non-linear model, there

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<sup>8</sup>The wording is “non-religious people” in 2001

is no straightforward substantive interpretation of the raw coefficients. However, we can still interpret the direction and statistical significance. The positive and statistically significant coefficient estimates on religious outgroup affect clearly support my expectations. Both pre and post September 11, the most important mechanism that explains Muslim attitudes is people's dislike of other religious minorities. If they welcome Jews, atheists, Buddhists, and Mormons, then they have no problems with Muslims either. Prejudice toward these religious minorities goes hand in hand with dislike of Muslims regardless of the time frame we use, before or after the attacks. Political predispositions may pick up their effects. Born-again Christians are less likely than those who are not to evaluate Muslims positively. The level of church attendance, on the other hand, has no statistically significant relationship with Muslim prejudice.

A more substantive interpretation of these non-linear model coefficients is possible through predicted probabilities. I computed the change in predicted probabilities of having "very favorable" ratings of Muslims when we move from the minimum to maximum value on the independent variables. There are other ways to compute these changes, such as assigning one standard deviation below and above the mean, but I choose the minimum to maximum approach to be able to compare relative impact of the independent variables. Equally important, I assigned the observed sample values to all variables other than the variable of interest. For example, while calculating the influence of religious outgroup affect, I assigned observed values to political orientations, born again Evangelicals, church attendance, age, education, and region of residence variables. Therefore, the predicted probabilities reflect the

Table 3.2: Structure of Muslim Attitudes Before and After September 11, 2001

	Pre 9/11		Post 9/11	
	2000	2001	2002	2007
Religious Outgroup Affect	5.75 (.51)	8.21 (.50)	4.80 (.54)	5.86 (.48)
Political Orientations	-.31 (.37)	-.70 (.28)	-.89 (.34)	-1.61 (.30)
Born Again Christians	-.10 (.21)	-.50 (.18)	-.45 (.20)	-.51 (.17)
Worship Attendance	.46 (.36)	.29 (.31)	-.05 (.36)	-.32 (.30)
South	-.28 (.20)	-.03 (.16)	-.46 (.19)	-.11 (.16)
Age	-1.40 (.46)	-1.47 (.35)	-.61 (.41)	-1.48 (.36)
Education	.23 (.37)	-.49 (.32)	1.17 (.38)	.44 (.29)
$\tau_1$	-.09 (.49)	-.11 (.38)	.01 (.49)	-.72 (.41)
$\tau_2$	1.74 (.48)	2.07 (.38)	1.60 (.48)	1.45 (.41)
$\tau_3$	5.26 (.54)	6.49 (.45)	5.51 (.55)	5.06 (.45)
$N$	472	782	529	743
pseudo $R^2$	.16	.26	.11	.18
<i>EPCP</i>	.13	.14	.10	.18

Source: 2000 Pew Campaign Typology; 2001, 2002, and 2007

Pew Religion in American Public Life Surveys.

Notes: The cell entries are ordered logit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. The entries in italics reflect the change in predicted probability of having “very favorable ratings of Muslims as you move from the minimum to maximum value of the independent variable, while holding all other independent variables at their observed sample values.

The models are estimated among non-Latino whites who are Christians. The dependent variable is a four-category favorability rating of Muslims, ranging from very unfavorable to very favorable. All independent variables are coded to range from 0 to 1.

average effect of a change in one independent variable across the whole sample. This is both theoretically and empirically better than setting the variables to their sample

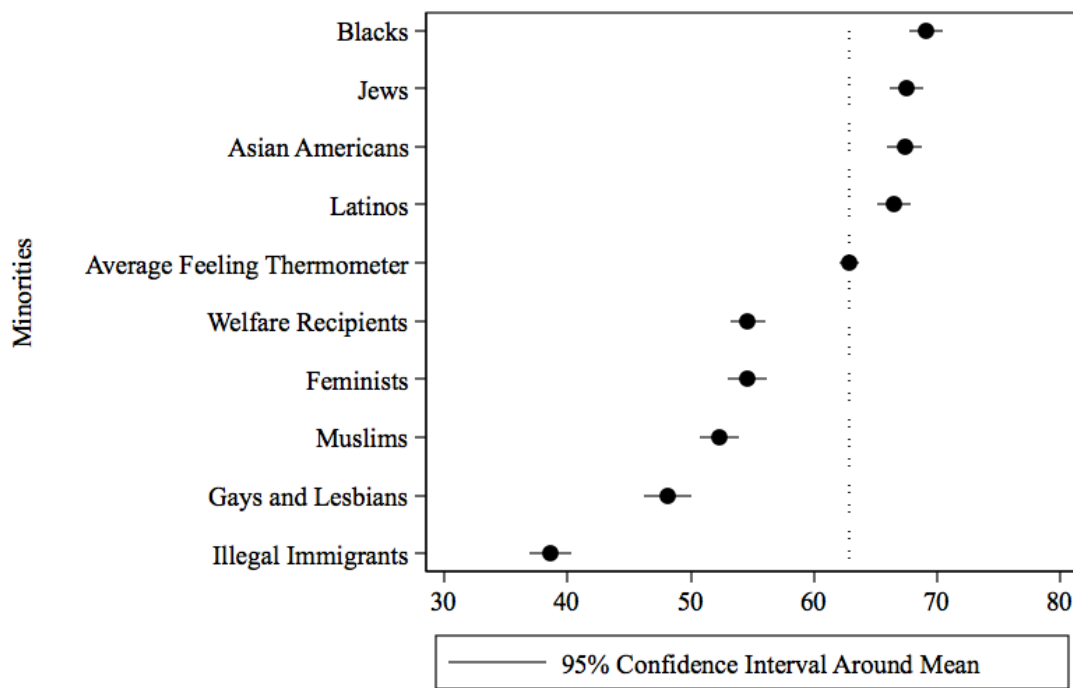
means or modes.

The biggest substantive change in the predicted probabilities of having a “very favorable” rating of Muslims comes from, as expected, people’s favorability of religious minorities. A move from true dislike of Jews, atheists, Buddhists, and Mormons to the warmest evaluations of them, increased the predicted probability of having very favorable opinions about Muslims by 52, 61, 25, and 29 percentage points in 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2007, respectively. The magnitudes of the other independent variables are nowhere close to these numbers. The association between band of others and Muslim attitudes is both statistically and substantively strong. And, this effect is relatively immune to dramatic events like terrorist attacks. We see a powerful influence of ethnocentric evaluations on Muslim attitudes both before and after the terrorist attacks. The strength of band of others structure in explaining Muslim attitudes in contemporary America has been persistent. Hence, based on the empirical evidence from this over time analysis, it may not be wrong to conclude that the September 11 terrorist attacks made very small or no change to how Americans perceive Muslims.

### **3.4 Muslims, Familiarity, and Band of Others**

As I expressed earlier, theory of “band of others” refers to a multi-dimensional structure of minority attitudes in the United States. It consists of two major clusters, namely ethnic/racial and cultural/behavioral outgroups. The former includes blacks, Asian Americans, Jews, and Latinos, and the latter has Muslims, illegal

immigrants, gays and lesbians, feminists, welfare recipients, Hindus, and atheists. One of the most important features of this two-dimensional minority attitudes is, as can be seen in figures 3.5 and 3.6, that the racial/ethnic minorities have clearly higher favorability ratings than the cultural/behavioral outgroups in 2004 and 2008. Blacks, Asian Americans, Jews, and Latinos are relatively liked minorities because they are rated above the average feeling thermometer. In contrast, other minorities such as Muslims, are consistently rated below the average.



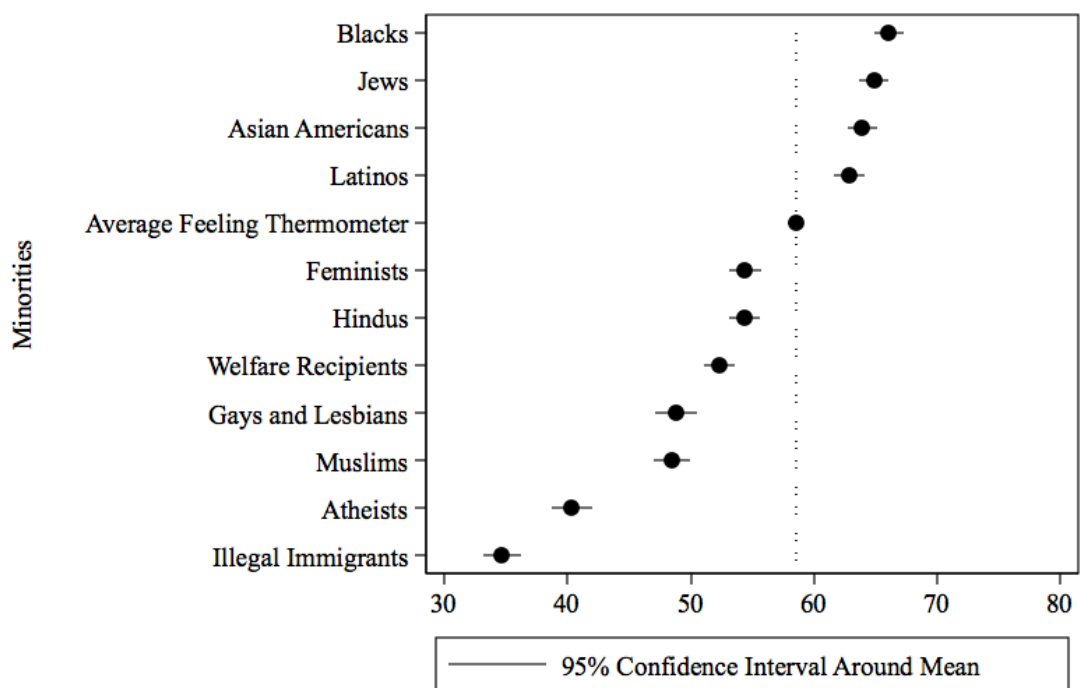
Source: 2004 ANES  
 The circles refer to average feeling thermometer score with 95% confidence interval.  
 Among non-Latino, non-Jewish, and non-Muslim white population.

Figure 3.5: Feeling Thermometer Ratings of Minorities in 2004

One distinct thing about Muslims, among others, concerns that prejudice toward them can be explained by both dimensions of band of others. In 2004, Muslim



attitudes load both on the racial/ethnic minority and cultural/behavioral minority factors (please see table 3.1). The reason for why Muslim attitudes load highly on both factors may be due to the ethnic composition of Muslim Americans. They are mostly foreign born, and American public associates Muslims with Arab Americans perceptually (please see the first chapter). In addition to a behaviorally “strange” religion, Muslim Americans have also this ethnic minority feature.



Source: 2008 ANES  
 The circles refer to average feeling thermometer score with 95% confidence interval.  
 Among non-Latino, non-Jewish, and non-Muslim white population.

Figure 3.6: Feeling Thermometer Ratings of Minorities in 2008

Given the relatively more positive ratings of ethnic/racial minorities and the multi-dimensional nature of Muslim attitudes, can we say that people’s attitudes toward Muslims might grow more favorable as mainstream Americans’ familiarity

with them increases? In other words, can we observe Muslim attitudes becoming more and more aligned with attitudes toward blacks, Asian Americans, Latinos, and Jews after 2004?

A way of looking at whether Muslim attitudes can change in the future is through incorporating the contact hypothesis. According to Adorno et al. (1950, 149), an ethnocentric person “is prepared to reject groups with which he has never had contact” so that a “new group can easily become an outgroup”. The contact hypothesis suggests increased contact among social groups may lead to a decline in the level of prejudice against outgroups. Contact among different social categories will eventually reduce negative attitudes and stereotypes about the groups that are contacted (Stangor 2004). It is a peaceful progression model (Allport 1954, 261). This is not an unconditional expectation, though. The contacting groups must hold equal status, the prejudiced outgroup must show signs of acceptable behavior to the ingroup, both parties must be in an interdependent environment, broader culture must promote norms concerning tolerance, and finally, “it is important that enough time be allowed for the changes to take effect” (Stangor 2004, 324). Learning about others can combat stereotypes of outgroups (Kawakami et al. 2000), eliminate uncertainty about outgroups (Crosby, Bromley and Saxe 1980), and increase cultural sensitivity (Dovidio et al. 2002).

Empirical support for the contact hypothesis presents mixed findings. Studies using the meta-analysis method to survey the existing literature, (Pettigrew and Topp 2000), however, find that contact per se works for reducing the prejudice and improving outgroup attitudes. Since, Muslims introduce a “strange,” or at least

*not-widely known*, religious preferences and teachings into mainstream American culture (Jamal and Naber 2008, 120–121), attitudes toward Muslims can arise from a lack of familiarity or contact. If people get to know Muslims, this behavioral or cultural “strangeness” may fade away.

I use the 2007 Pew Religion and Public Life dataset, which has a question about whether the respondents had contact with Muslims. 41 percent of mainstream Americans know someone who is Muslim. They tend to be male, young, more affluent, and highly educated. The findings are presented in tables 3.3 and 3.4, for Muslims and Mormons, respectively. Those who do not know any Muslim tend to hold very or mostly unfavorable ratings of Muslims. More than 60 percent of them are in either one of these categories. In contrast, we see the same number of people who hold mostly or very favorable ratings of Muslims, among those who know someone who is Muslim. There is a clear pattern between familiarity, or lack thereof, and dislike of Muslims. As you become more familiar with Muslims, there is a potential to become less prejudiced toward them. The strong chi-squared test statistics (37.06,  $df = 3$ ) also verifies this association.

Table 3.3: The Impact of Familiarity on Muslim Favorability

Muslim Favorability	Know Anyone Who is Muslim?	
	No	Yes
Very Unfavorable	22%	13%
Somewhat Unfavorable	39	26
Somewhat Favorable	34	54
Very Favorable	5	7
Total	100% (N=413)	100% (N=370)
	$\chi^2$ , $df = 37.06, 3$	

Source: 2007 Pew Religion in American Public Life Survey  
Among mainstream Americans.

The visibility and salience of Muslims, on the other hand, is very recent (please see Jamal and Naber (2008)). This is why knowing someone Muslim may still work to reduce prejudice toward them. The perceived differences between the mainstream American culture and Islamic practices may erode over time, and Muslims may become one of mostly-liked minorities like blacks, Jews, Asian Americans, and Latinos. The 2008 ANES data do not suggest a very promising story in terms of Muslims' place in the multi-dimensional picture of band of others. They are aligned more with the mostly-disliked cultural/behavioral outgroups like feminists, illegal immigrants, gays and lesbians, welfare recipients, Hindus, and atheists. On the other hand, the 2007 Pew data are telling us a more positive story. As the familiarity between mainstream Americans and Muslims increases, the likelihood of having more favorable ratings of Muslims may increase. Muslims may experience what Jews, Irish and Italian Americans experienced in the past. Initially disliked, they became an integral part of mainstream society. However, as the 2008 data show, it is not going to be easy for Muslims, or happen in the near future.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I elaborated on the theory of the band of others. It expands the scope of ethnocentrism by incorporating prejudice toward all possible minorities. An empirical look at the minority attitudes revealed that Americans evaluate minorities on two major dimensions, an ethnic/racial and cultural/behavioral outgroup affect. The former includes mostly-liked groups such as blacks, Asian Americans,

Jews, and Latinos. The latter is composed of mostly-disliked minorities like feminists, welfare recipients, illegal immigrants, gays and lesbians, atheists, Hindus, and Muslims. I argue that this multi-dimensional structure of minority attitudes is the most important predictor of prejudice toward Muslims. They are perceived as another member of this band of others so mainstream Americans will evaluate them with respect to their feelings toward other minorities. In other words, if an individual welcomes these minorities, she will welcome Muslims as well. Since this is mostly a psychological orientation, the structure that explains Muslim feelings will not change due to political orientations or traumatic events like terrorist attacks.

By using the 2004 and 2008 ANES data, I find support for my expectation that attitudes toward Muslims are mostly determined by attitudes towards the band of others. And, a longitudinal analysis by using the pre and post September 11 data (Pew Data), I show that the structure that explains Muslim feelings is persistent. It is not affected by the terrorist attacks.

In the final part of the chapter, I tried to answer whether prejudice toward Muslims have some distinct features. Particularly, in 2004, we observe that Muslims are perceived as both ethnic/racial and cultural/behavioral minorities. The former is due to a common perception about Muslims being Arabs, and the latter is due to their non-Judeo Christian practices. The 2008 data show that Muslims become increasingly perceived as part of the latter, rather than the former. Positively rated minority groups are in the ethnic/racial minority dimension, not in the cultural/behavioral one. The 2007 Pew data showed that mainstream Americans who know someone who is Muslim are more likely than others who do not know

a Muslim to hold more positive attitudes toward Muslims. It looks like familiarity will be the key factor in determining their long term place in American society. They may climb up in the societal ladder and become a part of the “melting pot” of the United States as they interact with mainstream Americans more. It will take some time but the higher socio-economic status of Muslims and their willingness to become active members of the political paradigm in this country may hasten this process.

## Chapter 4

# Voting for a Hypothetical Muslim Candidate

### 4.1 Muslims in Politics

Keith Maurice Ellison became the first Muslim to be elected to the United States Congress from Minnesota in 2006. He was also the first African American elected to the House of Representatives from Minnesota but debates around his candidacy and campaign were predominantly about him being a Muslim. He converted to Islam from Catholicism during his college years at Wayne State University. After graduating from the University of Minnesota Law school, he became an active political figure in Minnesota politics. When Rep. Martin Sabo (D-MN) decided to retire in 2006, Ellison appeared as his successor in the primaries, and won 56 percent of the votes in the general election. After his election, there was a big controversy around his decision to be sworn in using a Quran, rather than the Bible. For ex-

ample, Rep. Virgin Goode (R-Va) just before the ceremony mentioned that “I fear that in the next century we will have many more Muslims in the United States if we do not adopt the strict immigration policies that I believe are necessary” (Shear and Craig 2006). This fear also showed itself in the November 14, 2006 edition of CNN Headline News. Keith Ellison was Glenn Beck’s guest after his first election to the House. Here is a brief transcript of their dialogue at the very beginning of the program:

BECK: OK. No offense, and I know Muslims. I like Muslims. I’ve been to mosques.

I really don’t believe that Islam is a religion of evil. I – you know, I think it’s being hijacked, quite frankly. With that being said, you are a Democrat. You are saying, “Let’s cut and run.” And I have to tell you, I have been nervous about this interview with you, because what I feel like saying is, “*Sir, prove to me that you are not working with our enemies.*”

And I know you’re not. I’m not accusing you of being an enemy, but that’s the way I feel, and I think *a lot of Americans will feel that way.*

ELLISON: Well, let me tell you, the people of the Fifth Congressional District know that I have a deep love and affection for my country. There’s no one who is more patriotic than I am. And so, you know, I don’t need to – need to prove my patriotic stripes.

What we see both in Beck’s and Rep. Goode’s reaction toward Rep. Ellison is fear or at least suspicion against those who are not like them. Rep. Goode emphasizes the importance of immigration laws to halt Muslim presence in the



United States, and Beck generalizes his suspicion about Rep. Ellison's religious background to *a lot of* Americans. The common denominator in both cases is a dislike of a minority group, which follows an ethnocentric path, a generalized dislike or fear of outgroups that are not like "us." It is quick and readily available. No evidence is needed to be able to ask a Muslim Congressman whether he is working with enemies. Ethnocentric evaluations are easily triggered by someone's minority status, like race, religion, ethnicity or even a "strange" sounding name.

In this chapter, I will examine the influence of ethnocentric evaluations and its the electoral importance in linking candidates' socio-demographic backgrounds to vote choice by analyzing experimental data on the impact of cues about the ethnic, religious, and cultural background of a hypothetical Muslim and Arab-American candidate. Does a Middle Eastern sounding name have any effect on this candidate's electoral chance? What if he is a Muslim or an Arab? What conditions people's vote choice when they hear about candidate's minority status? Is it mostly ethnocentrism? Or, do political predispositions, religious traditionalism, or authoritarianism play any role in this electoral decision making? I seek to expand the scope of research on the political consequences of candidates' socio-demographic characteristics to include candidates with Muslim and Arab religious and ethnic backgrounds. I find that the nature of the candidate's name is inconsequential for his appeal to voters, while information about the candidate's Muslim religious affiliation and cues about his Arab ethnic background have very similar effects on his electoral strength. There are virtually no differences in support between respondents who know that the candidate is Muslim, those who know that he was born in an Arab country,

and those who know both things. As expected, I also find strong support for the fact that people's attitudes toward the band of others, or their ethnocentric evaluations, are the major conditioning effect on the likelihood of voting for a Muslim or an Arab candidate. As they grow warmer toward cultural/behavioral outgroups, their tendency to vote for a minority candidate increases as well. Even though voting is mainly a political process, in the case of minorities, political predispositions, religious traditionalism, or authoritarianism do not play as important a role as ethnocentrism plays.

## 4.2 Stereotypes as Shortcuts and Voting

Classical democratic theory defines voting as a complex cognitive process that requires citizens' deep involvement in political debates and deliberations. However, as Schattschneider (1960) aptly argues, this is not a realistic expectation. Widespread political ignorance found among individuals is not necessarily a bad thing. It is democratic theory that fails to foresee politically unsophisticated people, not the practice (Schattschneider 1960). Even though people might only know a little bit about the political environment, they are still able to make sense of politics, and cast their vote accordingly. Lack of political knowledge does not prevent them from aligning their positions with their electoral preferences. In this process, rather than engaging in detailed analyses of elections or candidates, most citizens make political decisions on the basis of information heuristics such as party identification (generally the most readily accessible shortcut) (Campbell et al. 1960, Downs 1957,

Conover and Feldman 1982, 1989, McDermott 2009), incumbent/challenger status in congressional elections (Jacobson 1992, Herrnson 1995), and stereotypes about social groups (Brady and Sniderman 1985, Lau 1986, Fiske and Taylor 1991, Miller, Wlezien and Hildreth 1991). Voters use these cognitive heuristics as a way to act “rationally” under a low information environment, and one such shortcut is the demographic profile of the candidates in an election (Stokes and Miller 1962, Popkin 1994). Candidate characteristics provide low-cost information based on commonly-accepted social group stereotypes. Through early socialization in family and at school, past experiences, and stored knowledge, “voters can make reasonable assumptions about the ideology of a candidate based on associations with salient political or social groups” (McDermott 1997, 271).

Most of the research on the impact of candidates’ socio-demographic features has focused on the cases of female or African-American candidates, perhaps because of the history of gender and anti-black discrimination in American life and because gender and race may be the most salient stereotypes for low-information voters. As Lippmann (1922) argues, stereotypes are “pictures in our heads”, and these pictures enable citizens to simplify the complex political processes, like voting or issue formation. Stereotypes about groups act as cost-reducing tools by relying on pictures and generalizations about a particular group. For example, large numbers of voters use gender-based stereotypes to make inferences about candidates’ policy positions, issue attitudes, and personal traits (Sapiro 1983, Huddy and Terkildsen 1993, Koch 2000, Matland and King 2002). Stereotypes about women being more liberal, nurturing, and less hawkish stimulate these automatic generalizations about

a woman candidate. A woman candidate may be stereotyped to support social welfare policies, more money for schools, and less interventionist foreign policy. As Sanbonmatsu (2002, 20) finds, people tend to see male candidates as better at handling crime and foreign affairs, and female candidates as better at helping the poor and protecting women's rights', and these gender-based attributions affect voting behavior. Similarly, McDermott (1997) finds that, particularly in down-ticket races, voters stereotype women candidates as more liberal than men of the same party. Liberal voters are more likely to vote for a female Democrat than for a male Democratic candidate, and quite in the opposite direction among conservative candidates. Dolan (1998) reinforces these findings by showing that women, via gender-oriented issue attributions, are more likely to vote for a woman House candidate than are men.

Meanwhile, research on the impact of candidate race on voting behavior find a more varied impact than that of gender. In a seminal study, Sigelman et al. (1995) conclude that voters are no more or less likely to vote for black or Latino candidates than for Anglo (white) candidates. The race or ethnicity of candidates neither fosters nor dampens the likelihood of being elected. Moreover, there is no difference between white liberals, who are stereotypically in favor of ethnic or racial minorities, and white conservatives, who are stereotypically racist, in their attitudes toward black candidates (Sniderman, Brody and Tetlock 1991). Some scholars, on the other hand, find that the impact of candidates' race depends on contextual factors like candidate's personal traits, prior record, and campaign style (Citrin, Green and Sears 1990), or the level of black voter density at the local level

(Carsey 1995). Unlike these studies, Terkildsen (1993) finds that black candidates are penalized by white voters as a result of racial attitudes. Those with darker black skin are “evaluated much more harshly than [their] lighter skinned peer[s]” (Terkildsen 1993, 1048).

Despite the close and growing ties between religion and political behavior in the United States (Layman 2001, Green 2007, Wald and Calhoun-Brown 2006), few studies examine the influence of candidate’s religion on voting decisions, and those that do focus almost exclusively on Catholic (Converse et al. 1961, McDermott 2007) or Evangelical candidates (McDermott 2009). Like gender and race, candidate religious affiliation is another readily accessible information heuristic for politically unsophisticated voters (Bolce and De Maio 1999*a,b*, Campbell, Green and Layman 2007). Because certain religious groups are closely associated either with a particular party or with particular policy stands, candidate religion provides “voters with inferential information about candidates’ political positions” (McDermott 2007, 955), and a handful of studies have found candidate religion to be consequential for vote choice and for the impact of other orientations on the vote (Converse et al. 1961, McDermott 2007, Wilson 2007, Campbell, Green and Layman 2007). Most recent studies focus on evangelical candidates. For example, McDermott (2009, 352) concludes that voters perceive Evangelical candidates as being more conservative than other candidates but more trustworthy and competent at the same time, so being an Evangelical can be both an advantage or a disadvantage to the candidate.

Reliance on socio-demographic heuristics is especially likely when candidates are from highly stereotyped minority or politically underrepresented groups (Hamil-

ton 1981). If Muslim Americans have been one of the most highly stereotyped minority groups in the United States, as I showed in the previous chapter, we should anticipate that stereotypes or ethnocentric evaluations will play a great role in determining voting for a hypothetical Muslim candidate. In fact, the 2003 Pew Religion and Public Life Survey asks respondents whether they would vote for a Muslim who is nominated by their own party as a generally well-qualified person for president. While 60 percent said they would vote for a Muslim candidate, it was 92, 91, and 81 percent, respectively, said they would vote for a Catholic, Jewish, and Evangelical candidate.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, American public opinion is not very enthusiastic about a Muslim candidate, even though he is a well-qualified person who is nominated by one of the two major political parties.

There is also an important ethnic dimension to being Muslim in America. According to the 2007 Pew Muslim American survey 65 percent of Muslim Americans are foreign born, and 32 percent are from the Middle East (Arab region and Iran). Although 62 percent of Arab Americans are Christians (the 2003 Detroit Arab American Study), there is likely to be a very close association between Muslim religion and Arab ethnicity in the minds of most Americans.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, in addition to the impact of cues about a candidate's Muslim faith, I also need to assess the impact of

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<sup>1</sup>These percentages are computed among mainstream Americans. To be fair, I excluded Catholic and Evangelical respondents from the sample when I report the likelihood of voting for Catholic and Evangelical candidates.

<sup>2</sup>Not surprisingly, the correlation between Arab and Muslim feeling thermometer ratings, in our dataset, is .8 (by far the highest correlation between all pairs of minority group thermometers).

Arab and Middle Eastern ethnic identifiers, like Middle Eastern oriented name and origin, on the likelihood of supporting him.

### **4.3 Band of Others and Voting**

In the previous chapter, I showed that mainstream Americans' attitudes toward Muslims follow an ethnocentric pattern. Those who do not dislike other minority groups also feel warmer toward Muslims, and this was true both before and after the terrorist attacks in 2001. Political orientations, religious traditionalism, or authoritarianism have some or no influence on prejudice toward Muslims. Prejudice is a social psychological process rather than a political one. Democrats or liberals are no more or less likely than Republicans or conservatives to hold negative attitudes toward Muslims in contemporary American society. I argue that this non-political nature of Muslim attitudes will also be prevalent in terms of voting for a Muslim candidate. Party identification, ideology, authoritarianism, or religious traditionalism may still play a role, but not as strong as the role ethnocentric evaluations play in voting for a Muslim or Arab American candidate. People's feelings about cultural/behavioral outgroups, more so than their political preferences, will determine the likelihood of voting for this candidate.

There are two important reasons why political predispositions will play a lesser role in conditioning the likelihood of voting for a Muslim or Arab American candidate. First, Muslim Americans' salience in American public opinion is due to non-partisan reasons, like terrorist attacks, different lifestyles, the war on terrorism

and the Middle East. Their rising visibility in the United States mostly concerns stereotypes or prejudice against them. Social psychological dynamics play a much bigger role in debates around Muslim Americans and their place in American society. This is why I found that it is attitudes toward band of others that shapes Muslim attitudes in the previous chapter, and I expect to find a similar pattern when it comes to voting for a Muslim or an Arab American candidate. Second, mainstream Americans may not have a clear idea concerning Muslim Americans' party identification or ideology. They may think that Muslims are predominantly Democratic or liberal because of attitudes coming from Republican or conservative pundits after the post September 11 terrorist attacks. But, they may also think that Muslims are socially and morally conservative so they may be conservative. There are both liberal and conservative tendencies that may shape Muslim Americans' political preferences. This potential confusion about Muslim Americans' political predispositions is visible in our dataset (2007 CCES) where we asked about several groups' party identification, namely Evangelicals, gays and lesbians, and Muslims. More than 75 percent of the respondents thought that Evangelicals were mainly Republicans, which is also empirically documented by several scholars (Layman 2001). 20 percent thought they they are divided evenly between the Democratic and Republican Parties. We see a similar pattern for party identification of gays and lesbians as well. Almost 74 percent of Americans think that they are predominantly Democrats, and the rest think that they are divided evenly between the two parties. People have solid ideas about which party Evangelicals and gays and lesbians belong to. The story changes a little bit when it comes to Muslims' party identification. 60



percent of Americans think that Muslims are evenly divided between Democratic and Republican Parties, and 35 percent think that they are mostly Democrats. Actually, the huge cluster around the “evenly divided” category partly indicates the empirical reality about Muslims’ party identification. They used to be predominantly Republicans or at least not Democrats before the 2004 presidential election, and since then, they have been dealigning from the Republican Party, and slowly realigning themselves with the Democratic Party. For example, a recent empirical study by Barreto and Bozonelos (2009) shows that high levels of religiosity coupled with perceptions of discrimination against Muslims leads them to be independents with Democratic leanings rather than strong partisans. Muslim Americans, unlike Evangelicals (especially see Campbell, Green and Layman (2007) for the importance of party identification concerning Evangelical candidates) and gays and lesbians, do not belong to one of the parties in huge numbers, and this is mostly reflected in Americans’ perceptions about their partisan ties. Lack of loyal political ties to any major political party by Muslim Americans may decrease the influence of political predispositions on voting for a Muslim candidate.

Religious traditionalism may also be another rival explanation for a lack of willingness to vote for a Muslim candidate. Those people who think that the Bible is the word of God, are frequent church attenders, consider religion as an important part of their lives, and pray frequently may not want to vote for a Muslim candidate. As their adherence to the basic tenets of Christianity increases, they may not want to cast their ballot for a person with a Middle Eastern sounding name, or non-Judeo-Christian faith. The previous chapter showed that religious traditionalism did not

play a big role in determining the structure of Muslim attitudes. Those who are on the conservative side of this spectrum are no more or less likely than the ones on the liberal side to dislike Muslims. I expect to find the same thing with the voting analysis as well. Ethnocentric evaluations toward cultural/behavioral outgroups will trump all rival explanations like religious traditionalism.

One last important factor that may shape voting for a minority candidate is authoritarianism. Like ethnocentrism, it refers to a deep, social psychological process that develops at the early stages of socialization. Preferences for stability and conventional lifestyles over change may show itself in lack of willingness to vote for a Muslim or Arab American candidate. So, when people hear a candidate's Middle Eastern name, Arabic ethnicity or faith (Islam), their authoritarian tendencies may be triggered, which may in turn condition the likelihood of voting for her/him. Like in the previous chapter, I do not expect authoritarianism to appear as a strong predictor as affect toward cultural/behavioral outgroups.

## **4.4 Survey Experiment and Measurement**

A Muslim candidate may have the potential to exhibit several minority features to the electorate in addition to religious background. For example, a Muslim candidate may also be an Arab American who came to this country as an immigrant a long time ago. As I noted earlier, the belief that all Arab Americans are Muslims or vice versa is not an uncommon belief among mainstream Americans. Similarly, this candidate may have a non-Anglo or Middle Eastern sounding name. Ameri-

cans are exposed to these types of names especially after the September 11 terrorist attacks so they may lead to negative evaluations of a Muslim candidate as well.

In order to assess the separate effects of these three different but closely related (at least at the perceptual level) components of a potential Muslim candidate, I employ a 2X2X2 experimental design, where I manipulate the name, religious, and ethnicity backgrounds of the candidate. The analysis is based on a unique experiment, included in modules of CCES surveys constructed by several political scientists at the University of Maryland and the University of Akron and administered online to national samples of 1,000 respondents (each-the combined sample size of the Maryland and Akron surveys is 2,000) by Polimetrix in the fall of 2007. The experimental questions gauge respondents' levels of support for a hypothetical state legislative candidate and assess the impact of information about the candidate's religious background (whether or not he is identified as a Muslim), his ethnicity (whether or not he is identified as having emigrated from an Arab/Middle Eastern country), and his name (whether or not it is Middle Eastern). We randomly place respondents into eight experimental groups, with each group receiving a different combination of the two values of each of these three variables. This allows us to isolate the specific effects of the candidate's Muslim faith, his Middle Eastern ethnicity, and his name—in addition to the various combinations of those factors—on levels of support for him. The candidates' policy positions are designed to be neutral with regard to partisanship and ideology so that those factors should not influence the likelihood of supporting him. The baseline question which did not identify the candidate as Muslim, as having a Middle Eastern background, or as having a Middle

Eastern name, was worded as follows:

We would like to get your opinion about a candidate running for the state legislature in another state. Please read his description, and then tell us what you think about him.

“Michael Choudhary is a successful local businessman. He is forty-one years old, married, and has three children. He has long been active in his community and local politics. In a recent newspaper article, this is what he said when he was asked why he has entered the state legislative race <sup>3</sup>.”

“I am running for the state legislature because I want to see good wages, a strong economy, quality schools, and honest government.”

If you lived in this candidate’s district, how likely would you be to vote for him?

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<sup>3</sup>The name “Michael Choudhary” was chosen for the baseline (or Anglo) name condition because “Choudhary” is a relatively common last name among Arab-Americans. This fact is easily seen in Facebook profiles. Thus, the name may plausibly combine being Muslim and having a Middle Eastern background (in order to isolate the impact of these attributes from the impact of the degree to which the candidate’s name is Middle Eastern). In other words, being Muslim and having emigrated from the United Arab Emirates should seem less far-fetched to respondents for “Michael Choudhary” than it should for a more-typically-Anglo name such as “Bob Smith.”

Four response options are given to the respondent ranging from “not at all likely” to “very likely”. Keeping the candidate’s policy priorities and other biographical information intact, his biography is manipulated for seven treatment groups. In the first treatment group, his biography includes his Islamic background:

“Michael Choudhary is a successful local businessman and a *Muslim*. He is forty-one years old...”

The impact of Middle Eastern ethnicity is measured by the nationality of the candidate:

“Michael Choudhary is a successful local businessman. He immigrated to the United States from *the United Arab Emirates* and is a naturalized American citizen. He is forty-one years old...”

In order to see whether having both religion and ethnicity has a more negative effect on the likelihood of voting, the fourth treatment group is asked about the candidate who is a Muslim, and a Middle Eastern immigrant:

“Michael Choudhary is a successful local businessman and a *Muslim*. He immigrated to the United States from *the United Arab Emirates* and is a naturalized American citizen. He is forty-one years old...”

These questions are asked with the same set of manipulations (baseline, only Muslim, only UAE, or both) for a candidate with a Middle Eastern-sounding name, “Yousef Abdollah”. The respondents were randomly assigned to the control and treatment groups so that we do not need to control the model for confounding demographic variables such as education, gender, income, and education.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>I compared the eight experimental groups using Tukey’s Honestly Significant Difference test

The main independent variable concerns people's attitudes toward cultural/behavioral outgroups. A factor analysis of minority group feeling thermometers in the dataset reveals a two-dimensional structure, as I found in the previous chapter. The findings of the factor analysis are presented in table 4.1.<sup>5</sup> The multi-dimensional structure of band of others is prevalent in this dataset as well. Ethnocentrism among mainstream Americans has two dimensions, one for cultural/behavioral outgroups, and one for racial/ethnic minorities. The former band includes attitudes toward Muslims, Arabs, illegal immigrants, gays and lesbians, and welfare recipients whereas the latter band includes feelings about Jews and blacks. The cultural/behavioral dimension (1st factor) has a stronger eigenvalue than the ethnic/racial dimension (2nd factor). One reason for this may be the fact that I do not have other racial/ethnic minorities in this dataset, like Asian Americans and Latinos. This is why we may expect to find the prejudice toward cultural/behavioral minorities will have more power in conditioning the treatments' effect on voting for the hypothetical candidate. Another reason may also be the fact that attitudes toward Muslims and Arabs are closely related to cultural/behavioral outgroup affect, rather than the ethnic/racial minority attitudes. In order to keep as many cases as possible in the estimation sample, I computed mean of non-missing ratings of feeling thermometers in each

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on the basis of education, gender, income, and age found no statistically significant differences between them on these factors. Therefore, random assignment of respondents to control and treatment groups worked as expected.

<sup>5</sup>Since the University of Akron module did not include some of the minority feeling thermometers, the sample size decreases both in the factor analysis and the interactive model.

factor. So, respondents average ratings for illegal immigrants, gays and lesbians, and welfare recipients constitute the cultural/behavioral outgroup affect.<sup>6</sup> I replicated the same thing for feelings toward ethnic/racial minorities as well (average feeling thermometer for blacks and Jews). Both variables are coded to range from 0 to 1.

Table 4.1: Factor Analysis of Minority Attitudes in 2007

Groups	1st Factor Loadings	2nd Factor Loadings
Muslims	.85	.05
Arabs	.80	.06
Illegal Immigrants	.83	-.12
Gays and Lesbians	.72	-.04
Welfare Recipients	.65	.11
Blacks	.23	.78
Jews	-.11	.94
Eigenvalue	3.29	1.95
N	689	

Source: 2007 CCES.

Notes: Minority attitudes are measured on feeling thermometer that ranges from 0 to 100. The factor analysis is conducted among mainstream Americans using principal component factor method with oblique rotation.

I measure political orientations as a composite score of party identification and ideological orientations, as in the previous chapter. Party identification is measured as a 7 category variable, ranging from “Strong Democrat” to “Strong Republican”, and ideological self placement is a 5 category variable ranging from “Extremely Liberal” to “Extremely Conservative.” After recoding both variables to range from 0

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<sup>6</sup>Since the hypothetical candidate is a Muslim, an Arab, or both, I did not include Muslim and Arab feeling thermometers in this index variable.

to 1, I computed an average score out of these two variables (the bivariate correlation between them is .70 among mainstream Americans) for each respondent so that the minimum value represents those who are strong Democrat and extremely liberal, and the maximum value represents strong Republicans who are extremely conservative.

The other important variable concerns authoritarianism which may also condition the treatments' impact on voting likelihood for the hypothetical candidate. Following the same scheme from the previous chapter, I measured authoritarianism out of preference between pairs of child qualities, namely independent vs. respectful, curious vs. good manners, considerate vs. well-behaved, and self-reliant vs. obedient. Unlike the NES 2004 and 2008 data, respondents were not given the volunteered option of "both." After coding authoritarian responses to 1, and the others to 0, I took the average score of these four variables for each respondent. The higher values on this variable, the more authoritarian a person is.

The last important independent variable is religious traditionalism, which may pose an alternative rival explanation for our main hypothesis. I measured religious traditionalism the same way I did in the previous chapter. It is a composite average score on four variables, namely view of Bible, importance of religion, church attendance, and frequency of prayer. After coding all of these variables from 0 to 1, where higher scores refer to more traditionalist responses, I took the average score on them for each respondent ( $\alpha = .84$  among mainstream Americans).



## 4.5 Findings

The first set of findings concerns whether our treatments lead to lower likelihood of voting for our hypothetical candidate. Do people become less likely to vote for him when his name is Yousef Abdollah, rather than Michael Choudhary; he is a Muslim or an Arab American, or both? If ethnocentric evaluations play role in voting for a minority candidate, then any cue that refers to a minority status—name, religion, or ethnicity—should yield a lower probability of voting. That is, highly stereotyped religious and ethnic affiliations, like being Muslim or Arab, may make people not vote for such a candidate in an election. In order to test this claim, I estimated an ordered logit model among mainstream Americans with 7 treatment conditions as dichotomous variables.<sup>7</sup> The excluded category is the control group, namely Anglo name with no cues.

The ordered logit coefficient estimates are presented in table 4.2. All treatment conditions, regardless of the nature of the cue, generated lower likelihood of voting. A Muslim or Arab American candidate with an Anglo or Middle Eastern oriented name will be less likely than the candidate with no cue to win support among the mainstream electorate. That is, the candidate’s minority status acted as an informational shortcut and triggered already existing stereotypes about Muslims, Arabs, or both, and this, in turn, leads to lower level of support when compared to the candidate with no minority status. By looking at the size of the standard errors,

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<sup>7</sup>The ordered logit models estimated throughout this chapter do not violate the assumption of parallel regression.

it is seen that the ethnicity cue does not influence the vote choice as strong as the religious cue. Mainstream Americans do not differentiate the candidate who immigrated from the United Arab Emirates from the candidate with no minority status at statistically significant levels. This is true for the candidate with both Anglo and Middle Eastern oriented names. Another treatment that does not seem to generate statistically significant effects concerns the change in name only. Yousef Abdollah (with no other minority cues) is no more or less likely than Michael Choudhary (with no other minority cues) to gain votes from the mainstream Americans. This may be a surprising finding given the frequency of similar Middle Eastern oriented names on media sources, especially after the terrorist attacks. On the other hand, maybe Michael Choudhary is not an Anglo enough name to generate a good comparison category. Or, mainstream Americans may not be knowledgeable enough to associate Yousef Abdollah with Islamic or Arabic origins.

Of course, the better way to compare the effect of these seven treatments is through comparing predicted probabilities. I computed the predicted probability of “very likely” voting for the candidate in each experimental condition. These probabilities also have 95% confidence intervals which are generated through simulations. They are depicted in figure 4.1. The dotted line refers to the lower end of the confidence interval for the predicted probability of voting for the control group candidate. There are several important things to report about this figure. First, all treatment conditions generated lower levels of predicted probabilities; they are all to the left of the control group candidate’s level. So, regardless of the nature of the cue, the support is dampened. This is a verification of my band of others

Table 4.2: All Treatments and Likelihood of Voting for Hypothetical Candidate

Independent Variables	Coefficient Estimates
Anglo Name and Muslim	-.67 (.22)
Anglo Name and Ethnicity	-.36 (.19)
Anglo Name, Muslim, and Ethnicity	-.55 (.21)
Middle Eastern Name	-.27 (.18)
Middle Eastern Name and Muslim	-.65 (.20)
Middle Eastern Name and Ethnicity	-.43 (.22)
Middle Eastern Name, Muslim, and Ethnicity	-.59 (.21)
$\tau_1$	-2.54 (.14)
$\tau_2$	-1.40 (.13)
$\tau_3$	1.02 (.13)
$N$	1546
pseudo $R^2$	.01

Source: 2007 CCES.

Notes: The model is estimated among mainstream Americans.

The excluded category is the control group, Anglo name with no cues.

The cell entries are ordered logit coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses.

theory. Minority status is understood as a negative aspect in an ethnocentric way. Second, the biggest drop in predicted probability of ‘very likely’ occurs when the candidate is Muslim. The ethnicity cue alone decreases support but its influence is weaker when compared to the effect of the religious cue. Last, when compared to the predicted probability of ‘very likely’ voting for the control group candidate, mainstream Americans are less likely to vote for a Muslim candidate (with Anglo or Middle Eastern oriented name, Arab, or not) at statistically significant levels, as the non-overlapping confidence intervals suggest.

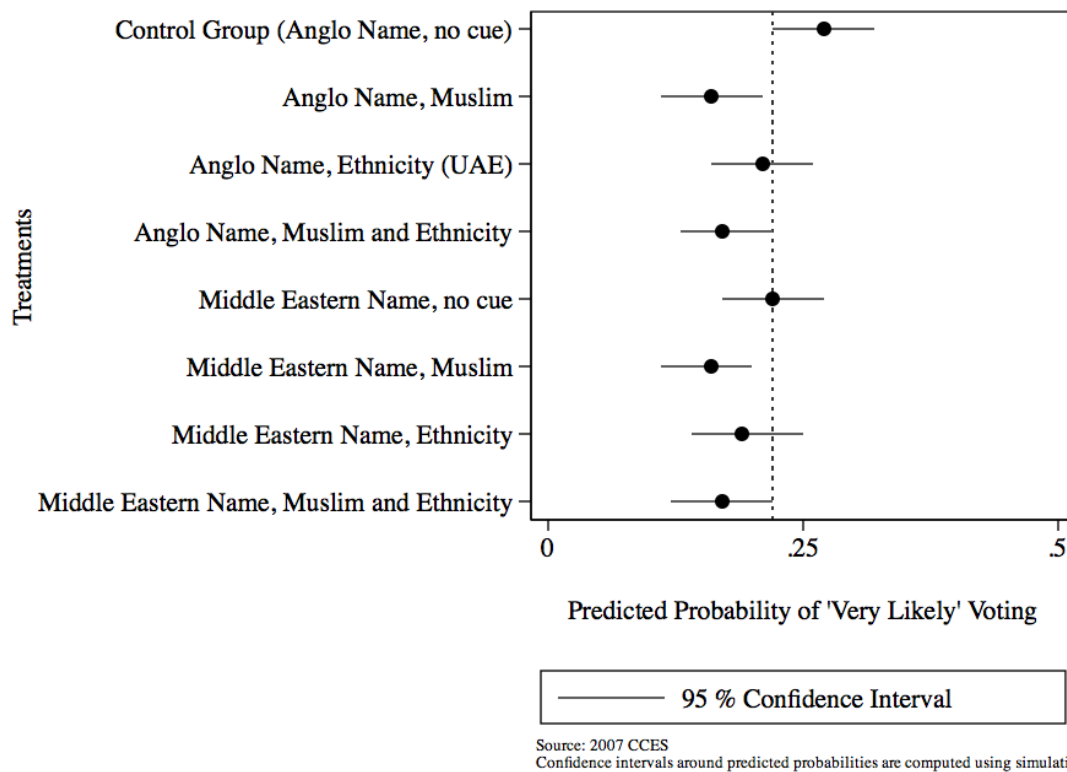


Figure 4.1: Predicted Probability of Candidate Support Across Seven Treatment Groups

Both the coefficient estimates and predicted probabilities show that mainstream Americans do not or cannot distinguish between Anglo and Middle Eastern oriented names. They are no more or less likely to vote for Michael Choudhary than Yousef Abdollah. In order to see whether the name treatment mattered for vote choice, I conducted a likelihood ratio test of equality in coefficients for treatment pairs. The findings of the test are presented in table 4.3. As the test of significance suggests, the name manipulation did not matter for any comparison pair. Since having an Anglo or Middle Eastern oriented name did not matter, I collapsed the seven treatments into three. The first category includes the treatment on religion, the second on ethnicity, and the third on both. That is, the first one refers to a Muslim candidate, the second to an Arab candidate, and the the last one to a Muslim and Arab candidate. These collapsed treatments cover both the Anglo and Middle Eastern oriented names. The control group stays the same, namely Anglo name with no religious or ethnic cues.<sup>8</sup>

In table 4.4, I presented the ordered logit model with these three combined treatments. Mainstream Americans are less supportive of a Muslim or an Arab American candidate. As the signs of the coefficients suggest, the likelihood of voting for these minority candidates is less than the control group candidate who does not have any minority status. In order to best assess the relative impact of these treatments, I computed predicted probabilities with 95% confidence intervals for ‘very likely’ voting. The findings are presented in figure 4.2. Following an ethnocen-

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<sup>8</sup>I excluded the Middle Eastern name with no cues to have a fair comparison to the first analysis with seven treatments.

Table 4.3: Test of Muslim, Ethnicity, and Name Effects on Likelihood of Voting for the Candidate

Comparison Pairs	$\chi^2$	p-value
<b>Muslim Effect</b>		
American Name, no cue vs. American Name and Muslim	9.18	.002
American Name and Ethnicity vs. American Name, Ethnicity, and Muslim	.71	.40
Middle Eastern Name, no cue vs. Middle Eastern Name and Muslim	3.31	.07
Middle Eastern Name, and Ethnicity vs. Middle Eastern Name, Ethnicity, and Muslim	.34	.56
<b>Ethnicity Effect</b>		
American Name, no cue vs. American Name and Ethnicity	3.43	.06
American Name and Muslim vs. American Name, Muslim, and Ethnicity	.22	.64
Middle Eastern Name, no cue vs. Middle Eastern Name and Ethnicity	.51	.48
Middle Eastern Name and Muslim vs. Middle Eastern Name, Muslim, and Ethnicity	.07	.79
<b>Name Effect</b>		
American Name, no cue vs. Middle Eastern Name	.10	.75
American Name and Ethnicity vs. Middle Eastern Name and Ethnicity	2.48	.74
American Name and Muslim vs. Middle Eastern Name and Muslim	.01	.93
American Name, Ethnicity, and Muslim vs. Middle Eastern Name, Ethnicity, and Muslim	.02	.89

Source: 2007 CCES.

Cell entries refer to likelihood test of equality.

tric pattern, all of these minority candidates find less support than the control group candidate among mainstream Americans. The predicted probability of ‘very likely’ voting for the Muslim or Arab candidate is less than that for the control group candidate. Similar to the previous case, it looks like religious affiliation mattered most and significantly when compared to the ethnicity cue. The difference in support for the Muslim candidate and for the baseline candidate is statistically significant. We observe the same effect for the candidate who is both Muslim and Arab American. The importance of religion appears once again in this combined treatment analysis. Nevertheless, the picture is very clear that regardless of the nature of the cue, the predicted probability of voting for minority candidates is less than that of voting for a baseline candidate. What we observe as a general tendency reflects mainstream ethnocentrism.

Table 4.4: Combined Treatments and Likelihood of Voting for Hypothetical Candidate

Independent Variables	Coefficient Estimates
Muslim Cue	-.52 (.15)
Ethnicity Cue (U.A.E)	-.25 (.15)
Both Muslim and Ethnicity Cue	-.42 (.15)
$\tau_1$	-2.40 (.12)
$\tau_2$	-1.26 (.10)
$\tau_3$	1.16 (.10)
$N$	1546
pseudo $R^2$	.01

Source: 2007 CCES.

Notes: The model is estimated among mainstream Americans.

The excluded category is the control group, Anglo name with no cues.

The cell entries are ordered logit coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses.

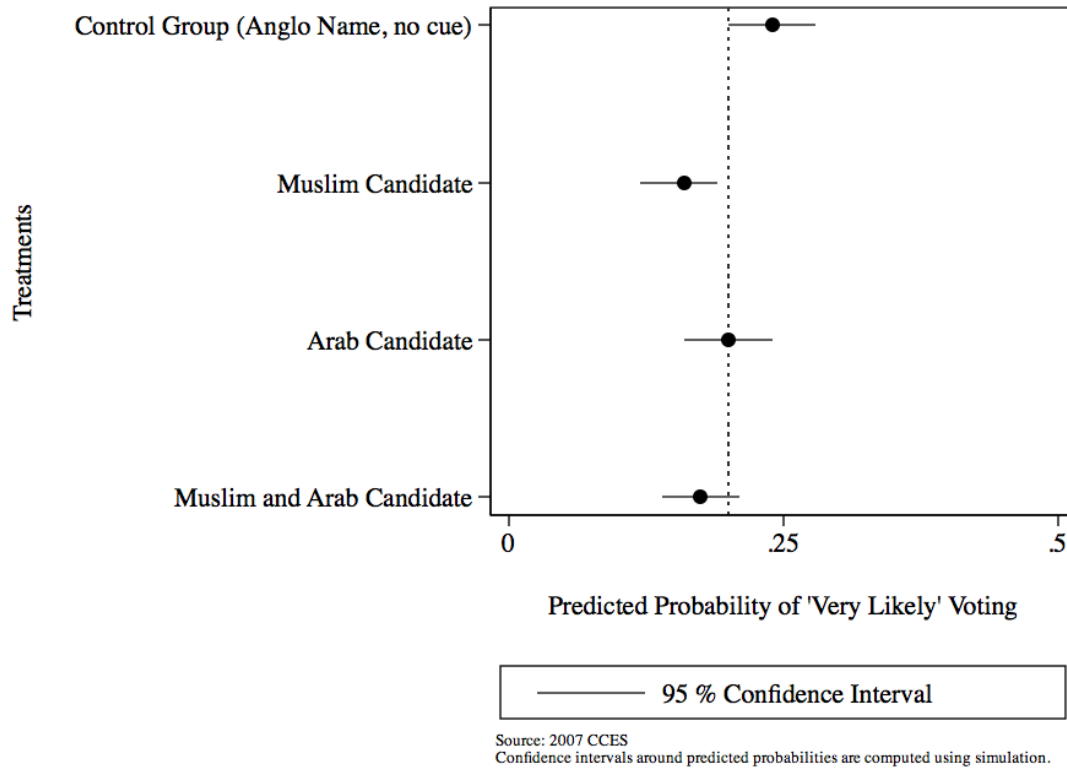


Figure 4.2: Predicted Probability of Voting Across Combined Three Treatment Groups

So far, the findings suggest that the experimental treatments make mainstream Americans less willing to support a Muslim or an Arab American candidate at statistically significant levels. A hypothetical Muslim or Arab American candidate will have a lower probability of getting elected when compared to a mainstream candidate without any minority features. I argue that the main reason for this lower level of support is primarily due to people's attachment to ethnocentrism. The more ethnocentric a person gets, the less likely she will vote for a Muslim or an Arab American candidate. In other words, our candidate's socio-demographic char-



acteristics will trigger individuals' attitudes toward band of others. Affect toward illegal immigrants, gays and lesbians, and welfare recipients, for example, will be the main conditioning effect on the probability of voting for a Muslim or an Arab American candidate. To test this hypothesis, I estimated a fully interactive ordered logit model where the treatments are interacted with cultural/behavioral outgroup affect. The coefficient estimates are presented in table 4.5.

Ordered logit is a nonlinear model so t-statistics will not be helpful to examine whether the interaction term is statistically significant or not (Ai and Norton 2003). But, we can still interpret the directions for both the constitutive and interactive terms. For example, those who really dislike cultural/behavioral outgroups are less likely to vote for a Muslim or an Arab American (or both Muslim and Arab American) candidate when compared to the mainstream candidate without any minority features. So, the treatment group candidates have lower levels of intercepts than the control group candidate. the sign on the cultural/behavioral outgroup affect term is negative but the sampling variability around it is so big. Based on that we would expect almost a flat predicted probability curve indicating no conditioning effect of cultural/behavioral affect on voting for the control group. All of the interactive terms have positive signs so that as attitudes toward cultural/behavioral outgroups become warmer, the likelihood of voting for a Muslim or an Arab American candidate increases as well. That is, when mainstream Americans hear about a candidate's minority background, their ethnocentric evaluations kick in, and condition their voting decisions.

The coefficient estimates are not very helpful in determining the relative impor-

Table 4.5: Cultural/Behavioral Outgroup Affect and Voting for Hypothetical Candidate

Independent Variables	Coefficient Estimates
Muslim Cue	-2.65 (.68)
Ethnicity Cue (U.A.E)	-2.14 (.69)
Both Muslim and Ethnicity Cue	-2.64 (.66)
Cultural/Behavioral Outgroup Affect	-.48 (.87)
Muslim Cue X Cultural/Behavioral Outgroup Affect	4.93 (1.27)
Ethnicity Cue X Cultural/Behavioral Outgroup Affect	3.97 (1.23)
Both Cues X Cultural/Behavioral Outgroup Affect	4.79 (1.24)
$\tau_1$	-3.02 (.54)
$\tau_2$	-1.97 (.53)
$\tau_3$	.87 (.52)
$N$	604
pseudo $R^2$	.07

Source: 2007 CCES.

Notes: Muslim cue refers to hypothetical candidate who is Muslim; ethnicity cue indicates candidate from the United Arab Emirates; both cues refer to candidate who is Muslim and from the United Arab Emirates.

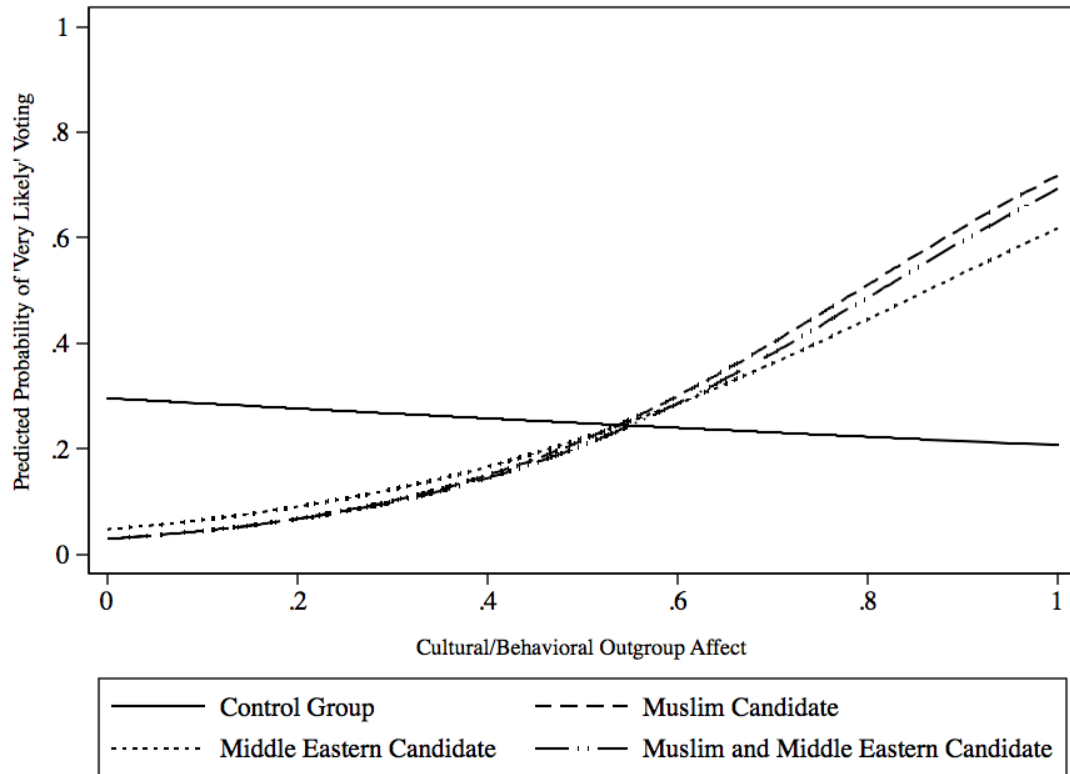
Cultural/Behavioral outgroup affect ranges from 0 to 1, higher values being warmer.

The model is estimated among mainstream Americans.

The cell entries are ordered logit coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses.

tance of ethnocentrism across treatment groups. Do we see a differentiation across treatments in terms of ethnocentrism's conditioning influence on vote choice? The best way to compare the relative effects in non-linear interactive models is through computing predicted probabilities for each scenario. I calculated the predicted probability of 'very likely' voting for the candidate, and depicted them in figure 4.3. There are a couple of important points about the figure. First, as expected, the curve for the control group candidate is almost flat. Ethnocentric evaluations have no conditioning effect on the likelihood of very likely voting for a mainstream candidate. Second, all other curves, regardless of the minority status, follow a similar pattern. That is, when mainstream Americans hear about a Muslim or an Arab candidate, they do not distinguish between them. They are members of the same band, band of others. Last, there is a clear conditioning effect of cultural/behavioral outgroup affect on voting likelihood across the treatment groups. As mainstream Americans' attitudes toward these minority groups grow warmer, they become more supportive of a Muslim or an Arab candidate. The predicted probability curves for the treatment groups start at lower levels than the control group curve, and end at much higher levels as attitudes toward cultural/behavioral outgroups grow more positive. To sum up, it may not be wrong to conclude that mainstream Americans' willingness to support a Muslim or an Arab American candidate is highly conditioned by their generalized attitudes toward cultural/behavioral outgroups.

Even though ethnocentric evaluations play a huge role in voting for a Muslim or an Arab American candidate, we need to test whether there may be other alternative explanations such as political orientations, authoritarianism, and religious



Source: 2007 CCES.

Figure 4.3: Cultural/Behavioral Outgroup Affect and Voting for a Hypothetical Candidate

traditionalism. Since voting is a political process, individuals' political preferences, such as party identification or ideology or both, may be triggered when it comes to voting for a minority candidate. For example, we would expect that Democrats and liberals are more likely than Republicans and conservatives to vote for a Muslim or an Arab American candidate. Even though political choices do not play a major role in predicting prejudice toward Muslim Americans (please see the previous chapter), they may kick in during voting. I estimated a fully interactive ordered logit model with the same set of treatments interacted with political orientations (average score on party identification and ideology) which range from Strong Democrat/extremely liberal to Strong Republican/extremely conservative. The coefficient estimates are in table 4.6. They suggest that mainstream strong Democrats/extremely liberals are more likely to vote for a Muslim and a Muslim/Arab American candidate when compared to a mainstream candidate. The negative coefficient on ethnicity cue may indicate less willing to vote for Arab American candidate among the same group of people but the standard error around it is quite large. As people get more Republican and conservative, their likelihood of voting for the mainstream candidate decreases. This is a surprising coefficient because the control group candidate is supposed to have neutral policy positions. All of the interactive terms suggest that as mainstream Americans become more Republican and conservative their likelihood of voting for a Muslim or an Arab American candidate decreases.

Since this is a nonlinear model, the relative impact of political orientation across treatment groups cannot be gathered by looking at the raw coefficients and their standard errors. This is why I computed predicted probability of 'very likely'

Table 4.6: Political Orientations and Voting for Hypothetical Candidate

Independent Variables	Coefficient Estimates
Muslim Cue	.92 (.37)
Ethnicity Cue (U.A.E)	-.03 (.36)
Both Muslim and Ethnicity Cue	.55 (.38)
Party Identification and Ideology	-1.13 (.48)
Muslim Cue X Party Identification and Ideology	-2.69 (.63)
Ethnicity Cue X Party Identification and Ideology	-.74 (.66)
Both Cues X Party Identification and Ideology	-1.97 (.64)
$\tau_1$	-3.34 (.30)
$\tau_2$	-2.16 (.29)
$\tau_3$	.57 (.28)
$N$	1305
pseudo $R^2$	.08

Source: 2007 CCES.

Notes: Muslim cue refers to hypothetical candidate who is Muslim; ethnicity cue indicates candidate from the United Arab Emirates; both cues refer to candidate who is Muslim and from the United Arab Emirates.

Political orientation refer to individuals' mean ratings on party identification and ideology. It ranges from 0 to 1, strong Democrat/very liberal to strong Republican/very conservative. The model is estimated among mainstream Americans.

The cell entries are ordered logit coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses.

voting for the hypothetical candidates for each treatment across the value of political orientations. They are in figure 4.4. The figure suggests that there is some conditioning effect of political orientations among mainstream strong Democrats and extremely liberals. They are willing to support a Muslim and an Arab/Muslim candidate more than they support a mainline candidate. But, the difference in predicted probability is around 20 and 15 percentage points, so the change is not as dramatic as we observe in the case of cultural/behavioral outgroup affect. There is some conditioning effect of political orientations but it is minimal.

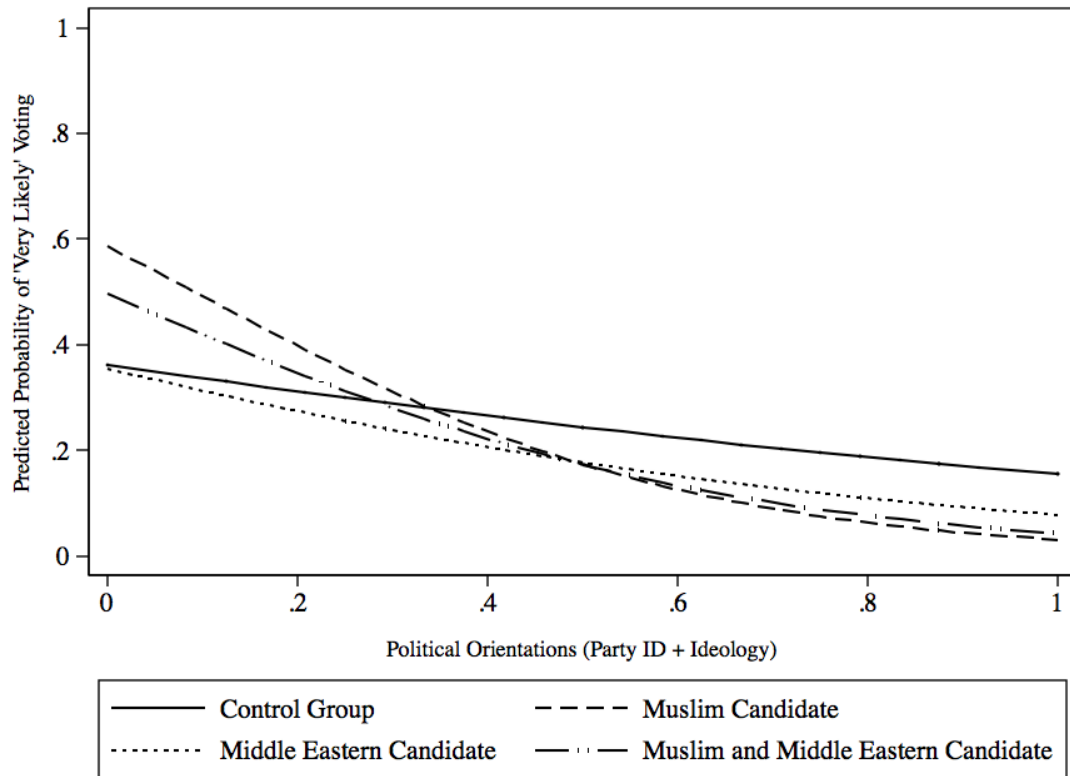


Figure 4.4: Political Orientations and Voting for a Hypothetical Candidate

One of the most important social psychological processes that may influence

people's willingness to vote for a minority candidate concerns authoritarian personalities. When mainstream Americans hear about a Muslim or an Arab American candidate, their authoritarian tendencies may be triggered, and as a result, they may become less supportive of such a candidate. In table 4.7, I present a fully interactive ordered logit model where I test the conditioning effect of authoritarianism on voting likelihood for a Muslim or an Arab American candidate. The least authoritarian mainstream Americans seem to be more supportive of such a candidate but the variability around the coefficients is a lot higher than the estimates. So, the effect is not statistically significant. As authoritarian tendencies increases, the likelihood of voting decreases for the control group candidate but this is also not a significant effect. In terms of interactive terms, the signs suggest that as mainstream Americans become more authoritarian, they become less likely to vote for a Muslim or an Arab American candidate.

In order to assess the conditioning effect of authoritarianism, I computed the predicted probability of 'very likely' voting across the treatment groups. They are presented in figure 4.5. We see some conditioning effect at the higher end of the authoritarianism scale. As mainstream Americans become more authoritarian, their probability of 'very likely' voting for a Muslim or an Arab American candidate decreases when compared to that for the control group candidate. The difference in predicted probability is less than 20 percentage points across all treatment groups. Like political orientations, the conditioning effect of authoritarianism is far weaker than that of attitudes toward cultural/behavioral outgroups.

One last important effect may be mainstream Americans' religious tradition-



Table 4.7: Authoritarianism and Voting for Hypothetical Candidate

Independent Variables	Coefficient Estimates
Muslim Cue	.16 (.47)
Ethnicity Cue (U.A.E)	.38 (.46)
Both Muslim and Ethnicity Cue	.07 (.43)
Authoritarianism	-.24 (.57)
Muslim Cue X Authoritarianism	-1.27 (.78)
Ethnicity Cue X Authoritarianism	-1.47 (.80)
Both Cues X Authoritarianism	-1.03 (.70)
$\tau_1$	-2.66 (.37)
$\tau_2$	-1.66 (.37)
$\tau_3$	.90 (.37)
$N$	664
pseudo $R^2$	.03

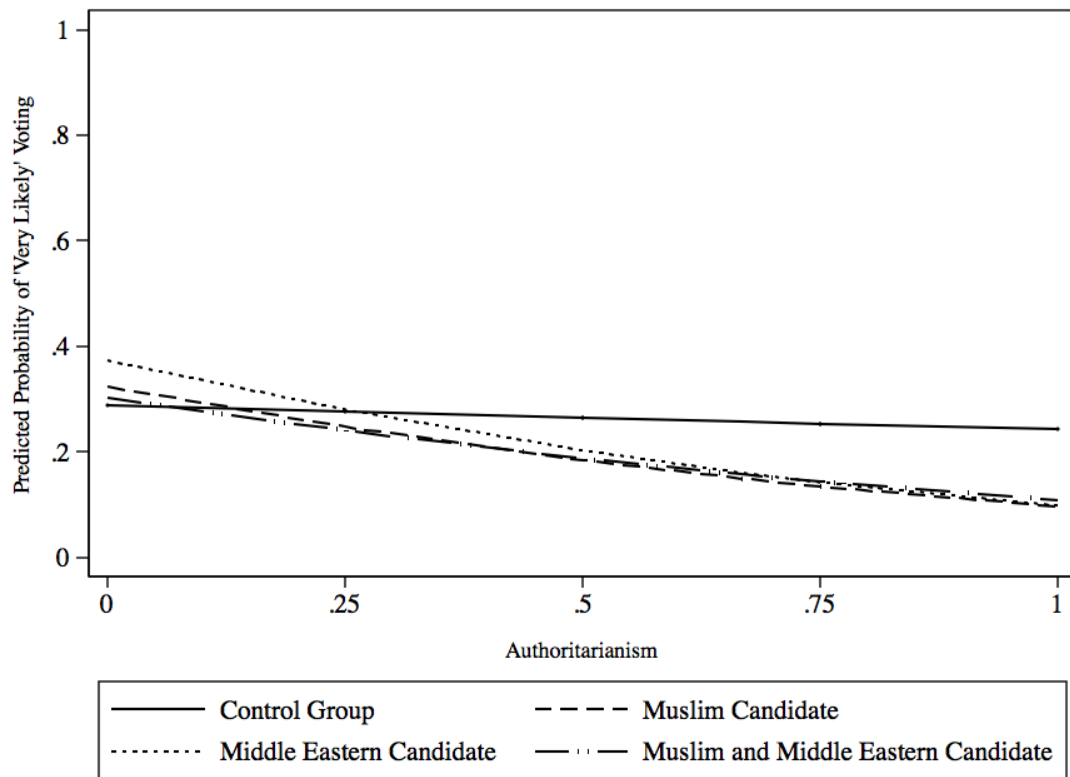
Source: 2007 CCES.

Notes: Muslim cue refers to hypothetical candidate who is Muslim; ethnicity cue indicates candidate from the United Arab Emirates; both cues refer to candidate who is Muslim and from the United Arab Emirates.

Authoritarianism ranges from 0 to 1, higher values being more authoritarian.

The model is estimated among mainstream Americans.

The cell entries are ordered logit coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses.



Source: 2007 CCES.

Figure 4.5: Authoritarianism and Voting for a Hypothetical Candidate

alism. As their level of traditionalism increases, they may be less likely to vote for a Muslim or Arab American candidate. Their view of Bible, importance of religion in their life, level of church attendance, and frequency of prayer may kick in when they hear about a candidate who is a Muslim. To test this hypothesis, I ran a fully interactive ordered logit model, and the coefficient estimates are presented in table 4.8. The constitutive terms indicate that those who are not religiously traditionalist are more likely to vote for a minority candidate. However, the standard errors around these estimates are quite large. The interactive terms indicate that as mainstream Americans grow more traditionalist, they become less likely to vote for a Muslim or an Arab American candidate. The best way to see the conditioning effect, as in the previous cases, is through a figure of predicted probability of ‘very likely’ voting, which is shown figure 4.6. As the figure suggests, there is some sort of conditioning effect among traditionalist people. They are less likely to vote for a candidate who is Muslim or an Arab or both. The difference in predicted probability of voting is around 10 percentage points. Like in the case of political orientations and authoritarianism, the conditioning effect of religious traditionalism is less stronger when compared to that of attitudes toward band of others.

Table 4.8: Religious Traditionalism and Voting for Hypothetical Candidate

Independent Variables	Coefficient Estimates
Muslim Cue	.02 (.25)
Ethnicity Cue (U.A.E)	.04 (.24)
Both Muslim and Ethnicity Cue	.01 (.24)
Religious Traditionalism	.24 (.33)
Muslim Cue X Religious Traditionalism	-1.55 (.45)
Ethnicity Cue X Religious Traditionalism	-1.06 (.48)
Both Cues X Religious Traditionalism	-1.25 (.44)
$\tau_1$	-2.42 (.19)
$\tau_2$	-1.33 (.18)
$\tau_3$	1.13 (.18)
$N$	1336
pseudo $R^2$	.02

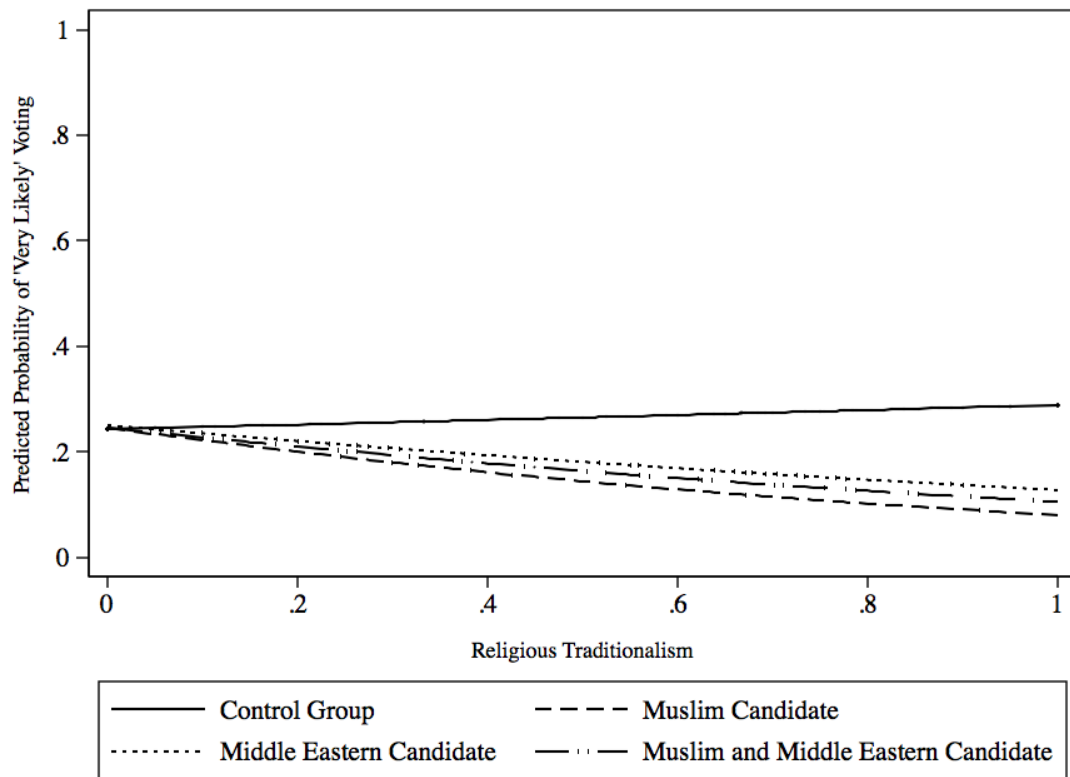
Source: 2007 CCES.

Notes: Muslim cue refers to hypothetical candidate who is Muslim; ethnicity cue indicates candidate from the United Arab Emirates; both cues refer to candidate who is Muslim and from the United Arab Emirates.

Religious Traditionalism ranges from 0 to 1, higher values being more traditionalist.

The model is estimated among mainstream Americans (non-Latino and non-Jewish whites).

The cell entries are ordered logit coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses.



Source: 2007 CCES.

Figure 4.6: Religious Traditionalism and Voting for a Hypothetical Candidate

## 4.6 Conclusion

Politically unsophisticated voters use many shortcuts to make sense of politics and vote accordingly. One of those shortcuts is a political candidate's socio-demographic characteristics, such as gender, race, and religion. Particularly, if a candidate belongs to a highly stereotyped minority group, then socio-demographic characteristics may play a bigger role. As I showed in the previous chapter, Muslims and Arabs are among one of the most disliked minorities in the United States. So, we would expect that a Muslim or an Arab American candidate may find it difficult to find support among mainstream Americans.

In this chapter, I showed that a Muslim or Arab American candidate will be less likely to be elected when compared to a candidate with no minority features. Mainstream Americans' attitudes toward the band of others have significant impacts on the likelihood of voting for a Muslim or an Arab American candidate. Belonging to a highly prejudiced religion or ethnicity, Islam and Arab, triggers mainstream Americans' ethnocentric evaluations which provide easily accessible heuristics in voting decisions. Those who feel warmer toward gays and lesbians, welfare recipients, and illegal immigrants are more likely to vote for a Muslim or an Arab American candidate when compared to a mainstream candidate. It is also possible that political orientations, authoritarianism, and religious traditionalism may play a significant role in voting for a Muslim or an Arab American candidate. My findings suggest that they have minimal or no conditioning effect on the likelihood of voting for a minority candidate. The major influence on voting decision for a Muslim or

an Arab American candidate comes from how mainstream Americans feel about the band of others.

# Chapter 5

## A Muslim President?

### 5.1 Rumor in Action

Sixty-seven year old Kathy Mayhugh who is a retired medical transcriber in Jacksonville, Florida said during a Tea Party protest that “I just feel he [Obama] is *getting away from what America is*. He’s a *socialist*. And to tell you the truth, I think he’s a *Muslim* and trying to head us in that direction, I don’t care what he says. He’s been in office over a year and can’t find a church to go to. That doesn’t say much for him” (Zernike and Thee-Brenan April 14, 2010, *emphasis added*). Even though the Tea Party demonstration in Florida was to protest taxation policy just before national tax day, Ms. Mayhugh chose to mention her anger toward President Obama rather than criticizing the out-of-control public spending and budget deficits in the U.S. For her, Obama is not only an anti-American socialist, but also a Muslim. Several polls also find that around 10 percent of Americans think he was not born in America, and another 12 percent are not sure (Research 2000, July 27).



So, almost one in four Americans do not think that he was born in America. It may not be wrong to say that Ms. Mayhugh's anger and the saliency of birthers are concrete examples of prevailing ethnocentric attitudes among mainstream Americans: Obama is an outsider; he is not American enough; he was not even born in America; he is a socialist; and, he is a Muslim. He plays many instruments in the "band of others".

Among all the negative evaluations of Obama, arguably the most persistent one concerns him being a Muslim. This misperception about his faith has always been salient. Polls conducted during and after the 2008 campaign show that a non-negligible portion of the American population think Obama is a Muslim. For example, the Pew pre- and post-election surveys show that between 10 and 15 percent of Americans believe this rumor. As figure 5.1 shows, belief in this rumor has been highly persistent as well. The most recent poll by Harris Interactive in April 2010 showed that the number of people believing this rumor has more than doubled. There may be several reasons for this huge jump. First, the rumor may have become highly salient since the end of the election. In fact, this pattern is very visible in the Pew data, too. Over time, Democrats are less likely while Republicans are more likely to say Obama is a Muslim. Second, the Harris Interactive and Pew polls use two radically different sampling techniques. Pew surveys use random digit dialing telephone surveys whereas Harris Interactive employs a voluntary opt-in method for online surveys. Even though the numbers do not agree across these two types of surveys, it is obvious that the saliency of this misperception is real and highly durable.

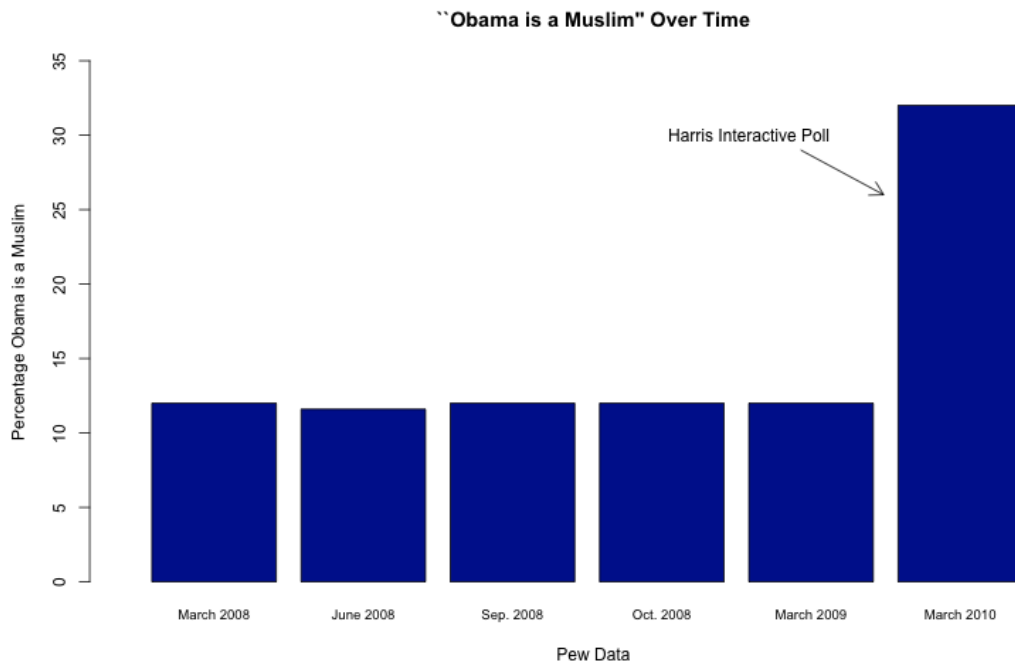


Figure 5.1: Misperception Over Time

This chapter attempts to answer two questions: first, investigating what factors determine who holds this misperception; second, whether this misperception had any electoral impact on the 2008 presidential election. The empirical analyses show that white Americans' attitudes about religious minorities shape the likelihood of associating Obama with Islam. Surprisingly, racial or ethnic minority attitudes play a minimal role in predicting individuals' tendency to believe that he is a Muslim. Electorally speaking, it would be logical to find that those who think Obama is a Muslim are less likely to vote for him due to the low favorability of Muslims in American public opinion, as the previous chapters show. In this chapter, by using the 2008-2009 American National Election Studies Panel Data, I show that the influence of this misperception is independent of many potential confounding

factors such as party identification, emotional reactions against Obama, black favorability, economic evaluations, foreign policy attitudes, thoughts on affirmative action, and the socio-demographic characteristics of non-Latino white Americans. In accordance with the broader claim of the chapter, I also examine the influence of attitudes toward the band of others on vote choice. The rumor is electorally consequential under any model specification. It also shapes the level of political participation among the same group of people. Those who thought Obama was a Muslim felt less enthusiastic about taking part in politics.

## 5.2 Racial Attitudes and the 2008 Elections

The 2008 Elections witnessed a hopeful and successful African American leader running for the highest political office in the United States. After a remarkable campaign, Barack Obama became the first African American president of the country. In a nation long divided by its struggle with race, his campaign rarely talked about race and race related topics. Obviously, the low level of attention to race did not mean that racial politics did not play a role in this election. In fact, racial prejudice may have been at the heart of the campaign. But, there was something more than race per se during Obama's campaign. He had to directly address rumors about being of Islamic faith. Kristof (March 9, 2008, 13) of the *New York Times* argued that "the most monstrous bigotry in this election isn't about... race... It's about religion", or, more specifically, the belief by a considerable number of Americans that Obama is, either secretly or openly, a Muslim. And, this misperception is, as

figure 5.1 suggests, quite enduring and not just a one-time rumor.

I argue that there has been an active campaign designed to continue this misperception and portray Obama as not being American enough. He has a middle name, *Hussein*, that is very common among Middle Eastern people. Both of his fathers, biological and legal, have close ties with Islam. He attended a school in Indonesia where most, if not all, of his friends were Muslims. Although the school he attended followed a secular curriculum, it was called a “*madrasah*” which triggered extremely negative reactions in American public opinion after programs, exclusively aired on Fox News, focused on this word.<sup>1</sup> Also, the belief that he was not even born in America was another mechanism used to reinforce this misperception after the election was over. In the end, many conservative elites attempted to show the non-American roots of Barack Obama rather than attacking him on racial grounds, which were observed, for example, during the Reagan campaign. It was more than him being black. Most of the minority related debates concerning Barack Obama referred to his “foreignness” or outsider features.

Given that Muslims are one of the most negatively evaluated minority groups in American (please see previous chapters, and Kalkan, Layman and Uslaner (2009)), there may not be a better way to de-Americanize a candidate than by associating him/her with Islam. By being a “closet Muslim,” Obama became a foreigner. Muslims are part of an unpopular band of others (please chapter 3) so labeling him as Muslim associates him with some real “others in American society. By calling

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<sup>1</sup>The word *madrasah*, in Arabic, means nothing but a place where learning and studying are done.

him a Muslim, he is implicitly associated with illegal immigrants, welfare recipients, atheists, homosexuals, and Latinos. So, this misperception was a clear implication of band of others.

Even though the most salient and visible socio-demographic feature of him was his racial identity, conservative elites preferred to show his lack of American roots rather than stereotype his racial background through spreading this misperception about his faith. Undeniably, race-specific attitudes played a huge, if not the biggest, role in terms of minority attitudes in this election—but it was not just about being black. This is why I also argue that this misperception, its non-trivial visibility among the American public and stability over time, is another form of mainstream Americans' ethnocentric attitudes. Or, as I try to develop throughout my dissertation, it is mostly about the band of others rather than one specific group.<sup>2</sup>

### 5.2.1 Prejudice and Political Behavior

Prejudice among white voters has been shown to be electorally consequential in terms of voting for a minority candidate. For example, Terkildsen (1993) and Moskowitz and Stroh (1994) find that white voters are less likely to vote for a hy-

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<sup>2</sup>It may also be argued that labeling him as a Muslim was an effort to talk about race without talking about race. Since talking about race is no longer acceptable in American politics, the Muslim charge may be used as a way to point out his “otherness without mentioning that he is black.

pothetical African American candidate as opposed to a white challenger.<sup>3</sup> A recent study by Piston (2010) concerning white voters' behavior in the 2008 presidential election finds that explicit racial stereotypes (particularly among Democratic white voters) conditioned the likelihood of voting for Obama. In other words, racial prejudice was a major determinant in this election. To illustrate this effect in a simpler way, a pie chart depicting the two-party presidential vote in the 2008-2009 ANES Panel Data clearly shows that John McCain would have been the winner of the election if the American public had been an all-white nation and the election was decided on popular vote rather than by the Electoral College.<sup>4</sup>

However, I argue this election was not just about the role of prejudice in terms of race—it was also about religion. In the previous chapter regarding voting for a hypothetical Muslim/Arab candidate, I showed the strong effect of generalized cultural/behavioral affect on voting decisions, along with other studies that measure the role of religious prejudice in public opinion (Converse et al. 1961, McDermott 2007, Wilson 2007, McDermott 2009). The highly durable and salient misperception about Obama's faith being Islam, then, is expected to have an impact on white Americans' electoral choices in addition to racial prejudice. Attitudes toward Islam may be considered another expression of attitudes toward the band of others

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<sup>3</sup>In contrast, there are other studies that show almost no or minimal effect of prejudice on voting for African American candidates (Sigelman et al. 1995, Highton 2004, Citrin, Green and Sears 1990).

<sup>4</sup>This finding is also confirmed by many other public opinion surveys such as the 2008 ANES Time Series and the 2008 CCES.

## 2008 Presidential Vote Choice

In both waves (pre and post) among white respondents

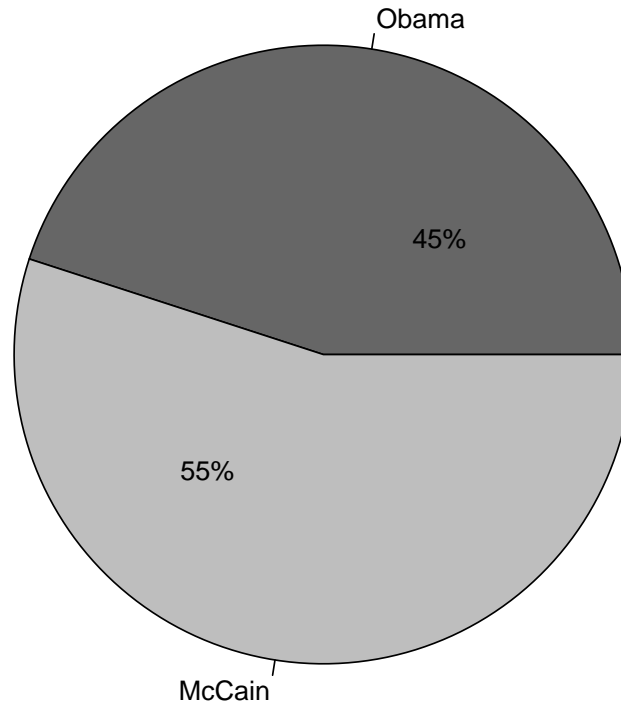


Figure 5.2: Two Party Presidential Vote Choice among White Voters (Source: 2008-2009 ANES Panel Data)

in addition to just anti-black prejudice. Therefore, it is closely associated with the ethnocentric predispositions of American public opinion, and this, like in the hypothetical candidate example, will shape electoral decisions.

## 5.2.2 Misperception and Political Implications

To examine the relationship between the misperception about Barack Obama’s faith, the band of others, and the political behavior of white<sup>5</sup> voters, I use the 2008 and 2009 ANES Panel Data. It is a telephone-recruited Internet panel with two cohorts. The cohorts were recruited in late 2007 and the summer of 2008 using random-digit-dialing (RDD). Knowledge Networks called each number to recruit for the panel through an extensive interview. Prospective respondents completed surveys on the Internet for 30 minutes each month for 21 months, from January 2008 through September 2009. To minimize panel attrition and conditioning effects, only 8 of the 21 monthly surveys were entirely about politics. Other surveys were about a variety of non-political topics, using questions not written by the ANES. The panelists answered political questions prepared by the ANES in January, February, June, September, October, and November 2008, and in May and July 2009.<sup>6</sup>

I chose this dataset because it includes close-ended questions about Obama’s and McCain’s religious affiliations. They appeared only on two waves—in September (pre-election) and November (post-election) 2008. The questions read as “What is Barack Obama’s (John McCain’s) religion?”, and the respondents are given five response options, namely Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, and not religious,

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<sup>5</sup>Throughout this chapter, the term “white” refers to non-Latino white respondents.

<sup>6</sup>So far, only the 2008 data have been released by the ANES. For a more detailed explanation of the sampling method and other details regarding the dataset, please see study page of the 2008-2009 ANES at [www.electionstudies.org](http://www.electionstudies.org)



along with a “don’t know” option.<sup>7</sup> Among everyone 23 (pre-election) and 22 percent (post-election) think that Obama is a Muslim. The proportions jump a little bit among white voters: one in four thinks that he is a Muslim.<sup>8</sup> Across the two waves, 66 percent of the white respondents hold the same belief that Obama is a Muslim. The pairwise correlation and tetrachoric rho ( $\rho$ ) between the two waves are .56 and .80, respectively.

The socio-demographic and political profile of whites who believe this rumor reveal some initial ideas about their potential voting behavior. For example, according to the pre-election survey, they are mostly middle aged (the median age is 48) high school graduates who make less than \$50,000 annually and are less likely to be from the West Coast as opposed to other regions. The misperception hits both genders equally, females being *slightly* more likely to think Obama is a Muslim. They identify themselves as independent leaning toward the Republican Party and slightly conservative, on average. This profile looks almost identical in the post-election survey as well.

We would expect individuals with these socio-demographic characteristics to vote for McCain as opposed to Obama even without knowing their idea on Obama’s

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<sup>7</sup>Well below 1 percent say Obama is Jewish or Buddhist, so they are excluded from the analysis. Respondent who think Obama is a Muslim are coded to 1, and those who think he is either Christian or atheist are to 0.

<sup>8</sup>There is clearly a racial component to this misperception because the percentages drop below 10 (and sometimes 5) percent among African American and Latino respondents. All percentages are weighted.

religion. The panel data asked vote choice in all panels. I use the one just before the election in October so the responses are not contaminated by the candidates' religious affiliation questions which were asked in September and November. By using the misperception question from an earlier panel and the vote choice question from a later panel, we can also assume that this misperception question may have acted as a treatment on vote choice. A mosaic plot between the misperception question from September and vote choice from October, in figure 5.3, confirms my expectation very clearly. Those who believe that Obama is a Muslim are more likely to vote for McCain. A test of association ( $\chi^2 = 60.61$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .0001$ ) and difference in proportion ( $p < .0001$ ) indicate that this relationship is statistically significant.

Even though the bivariate relationship is substantively strong, we cannot be sure whether the misperception picks up other potentially confounding dynamics like party identification, social welfare policy attitudes, emotional antipathy toward Obama, and more importantly, anti-black prejudice. Unfortunately, the ANES Panel Data did not ask the classical symbolic racism/racial resentment measures (Sears, Hensler and Speer 1979, Kinder and Sears 1981, Kinder and Sanders 1996) or explicit racial prejudice questions which are usually gauged through stereotype questions (Sniderman and Carmines 1997, Feldman and Huddy 2005). Instead, they asked three specific questions about prejudice toward blacks in the September wave in which they also asked about the misperception for the first time. The first two concern how often people have felt admiration and sympathy for blacks. The variables are 5-category ranging from "never" to "always." The third question is about

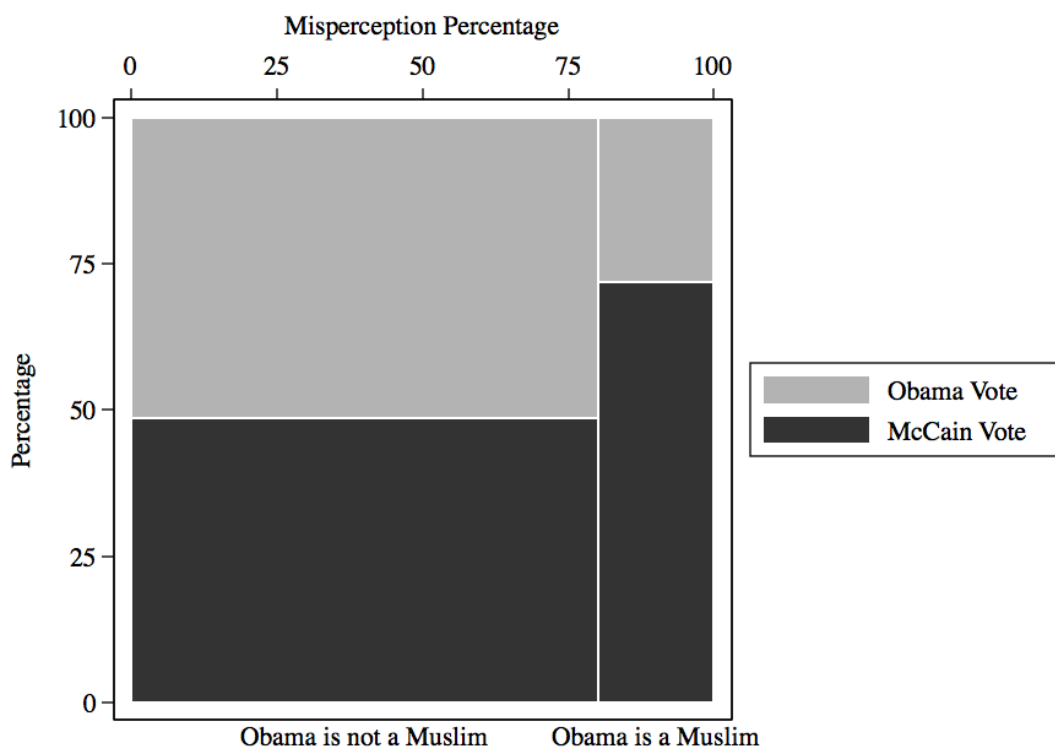


Figure 5.3: Misperception and Vote Choice (Source: 2008-2009 ANES Panel Data)

the idea of having a black president, and how much the respondents are pleased with this. It is also a 5-category variable that ranges from “not pleased at all” to “extremely pleased.” I conducted a factor analysis out of these three variables, and both the eigenvalue (2.09) and high factor loadings on all three indicators (.77 or higher) suggest a one factor solution. I estimated a factor score to measure black favorability that ranges from 0 to 1—higher scores referring to warmer feelings.

I also expect Muslim prejudice to shape voting behavior in the 2008 presidential election. If white Americans perceive minorities as multidimensional clusters rather than absolutely distinct entities, then ethnocentric evaluations about Mus-

lms may decrease the likelihood of voting for Obama. Also, the misperception about him being a Muslim may simply reflect anti-Muslim attitudes so in order to show an independent effect of this rumor, I also control the model for Muslim affect. It is, unlike the black prejudice factor score, a single variable that asks about the favorability of Muslims, and it is a 7-category variable ranging from extremely cold to extremely warm. In order to measure attitudes toward the band of others, I conducted factor analysis among attitudes toward Hindus, atheists, blacks, and Latinos which are measured with 7-category favorability scales.<sup>9</sup> The factor analysis with oblique rotation showed that, like in the third chapter, there are two dimensions in attitudes toward minorities. While affect toward Hindus and atheists load (.81 and .85, respectively) on one dimension (eigenvalue = 1.45), attitudes toward Latinos and blacks (.90 and .88, respectively) load on a second dimension (eigenvalue = 1.66) among white Americans. I called the first dimension as religious minority affect, and the second one as racial/ethnic minority affect. The structure is a very similar replication of the structure I found in the third chapter. Opinions about band of others are persistent and multidimensional.

It can also be argued that the misperception is a covert expression of emotional reactions against Obama. Emotions, according to many scholars, play a substantial

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<sup>9</sup>I did not include attitudes toward Muslims into this factor analysis due to high collinearity with the misperception. Inclusion of this variable into the specification creates highly inflated standard errors. Also, theoretically speaking, people who dislike Muslim may be more likely than others to think that Obama is a Muslim. This potential confounding relationship will pose endogeneity problems.

role in political evaluations because they may act as informational shortcuts for many people (please see Marcus (2000) for an extended review). For example, Marcus and MacKuen (1993) find that emotions provide efficient tools for uninformed people to engage in meaningful deliberations. Conover and Feldman (1986) find that emotional reactions hold a significant place in political evaluations, like attitudes toward the economy. Stangor, Sullivan and Ford (1991) find that emotional evaluations outperform cognitive measures, like stereotype questions, in predicting prejudice. Likewise, Jackson and Sullivan (1989) find that negative affect plays a crucial role in determining prejudice toward homosexuals. So, emotional reactions against a black presidential candidate may be expected to be a significant determinant of electoral decisions. The 2008-2009 ANES Panel Data asked four questions about how Obama elicits emotional reactions: “When you think about Barack Obama, how *angry/afraid/hopeful/proud* does he make you feel?” They are five-category variables ranging from positive to negative evaluations depending upon the question. A factor analysis out of these four measures yields an eigenvalue of 2.77 on the first factor which explains more than 77 percent of the variance among all of these variables. Thus, I created a factor score which ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating more antipathy toward Obama.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Factor scores measuring black prejudice and Obama unfavorability are highly correlated with each other (.38). A model that includes both of these variables will have artificially inflated standard errors due to multicollinearity, and, even, theoretically meaningless signs. In fact, when I run such a model with these two variables, I get high sampling variances and theoretically wrong signs. Therefore, there will be two separate models: one with black prejudice, and one with Obama

Since the dependent variable is vote choice, a model that tries to prove an independent effect of the rumor on the vote should take several theoretically necessary factors into account. Party identification is arguably the most crucial determinant of electoral decisions (Campbell et al. 1960, Bartels 2000), and it is measured as a 7-point scale ranging from strong Democrats to strong Republicans. I used the first wave party identification question to isolate any campaign effect over time. The model findings do not change with respect to the timing of party identification because the inter-wave correlation for party identification is above .88 among white respondents. I also included a measure of ideological self-identification (7-point scale ranging from extremely liberal to extremely conservative) into the model that explains the likelihood of believing Obama is a Muslim.

Among all other theoretically relevant variables for vote choice, economic evaluations may play an unquestionably important role, given the dramatic financial meltdown and concomitant fiscal crises starting in the summer of 2008 onwards. Either retrospectively (Fiorina 1978, 1981) or prospectively (MacKuen, Erikson and Stimson 1992, Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson 2002), the public may decide on a candidate based on the national (Kinder and Kiewiet 1981) (or personal (Downs 1957)) economic circumstances. This is why the vote models will include both retrospective and prospective national economic evaluations. Both are from the June panel so that they reflect evaluations at the time when the financial downturn started to be highly salient. Both range from 1 to 5, and higher scores denote higher unfavorability. Affect toward Muslims is included in the model with black favorability to have a fair comparison.

pessimism about the economy.

There are two important issue attitudes that the vote model predicting Obama support should have: opinions on affirmative action and the Iraq War. There is a common, but empirically wrong, belief that most of the people receiving welfare are African Americans. Therefore, opinions on affirmative action may shape the likelihood of voting for an African American leader. The 2008-2009 ANES panel asked a more specific question about affirmative action in university admissions: “Do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose allowing universities to increase the number of black students studying at their schools by considering race along with other factors when choosing students?” It is a 7-category variable ranging from strongly oppose to strongly favor, and it is recoded to range from 0 to 1. The Iraq war was another important campaign topic in the 2008 presidential election, and the candidates (Obama and McCain) differed radically on a schedule for withdrawal from Iraq. The ANES asked a specific question about this timeline for Iraq: “Do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose setting a deadline for withdrawing all U.S. troops from Iraq?” It is also a 7-category variable, ranging from strongly oppose to strongly favor, and it is recoded to range from 0 to 1.

Exit polls showed that Obama increased the Democratic vote margins when compared to the 2004 percentages everywhere except among Southern whites. Therefore, the vote model will also control for the regional effects through a binary variable for Southern residence. Among other socio-economic indicators gender and age of the respondent may also affect voting decisions. A majority of white females, according to the 2008-2009 ANES panel data, voted for McCain, and this relationship

is statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 5.42$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .02$ ). Income and education levels of the respondents are also included in the model.

### 5.3 Who Believes This Misperception?

Before getting into the electoral consequences of the misperception, an important question should be addressed comprehensively. What made white Americans believe this rumor that Obama was a Muslim? Was it purely partisan? Did racial attitudes play a role? Or, was it mostly due to religious minority affect? I argue that one dimension of the band of others, namely religious minority affect (a dimension that explains attitudes toward atheists and Hindus), played a substantial role in shaping white Americans' belief about Obama's religion. Since the misperception is itself about associating a prominent political figure with a highly stereotyped religion, this expectation should not be surprising. Racial and ethnic minority attitudes may find their impact in emotional reactions against Obama, which can be a strong control in a model that attempts to measure the impact of religious minority affect on the probability of believing Obama is a Muslim.

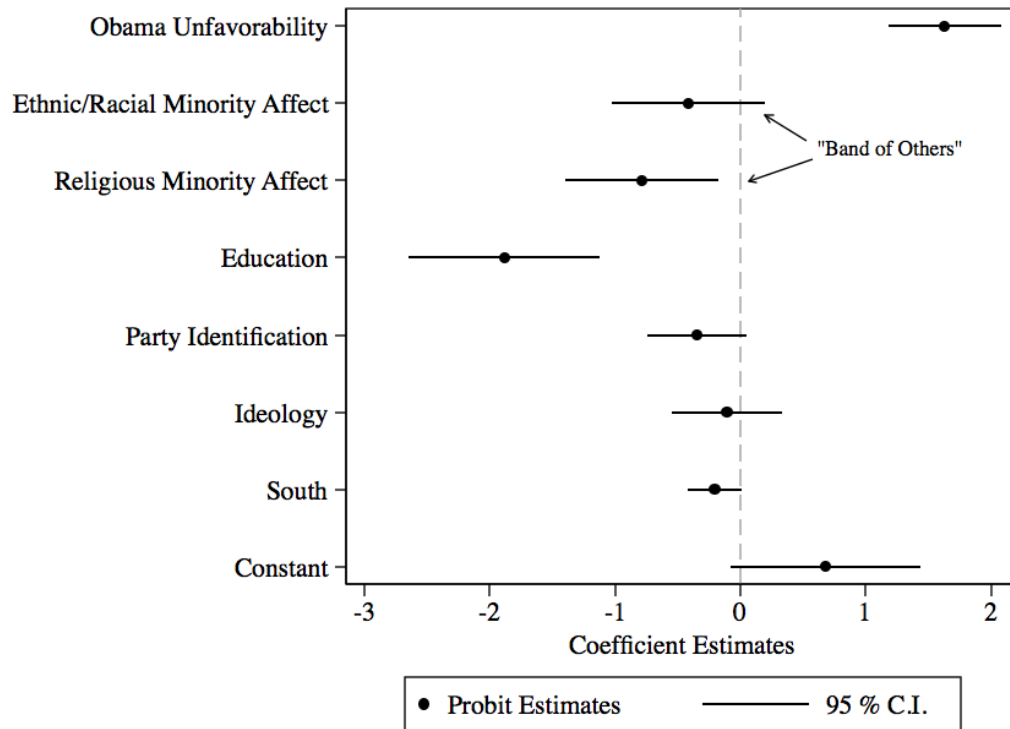
I estimated a probit model with the misperception as the dependent variable, and the findings are depicted in figure 5.4. Affect toward the band of others is measured with two dimensions estimated from factor analysis. Obama unfavorability indicates emotional evaluations of him. Since sophistication may play a crucial role in believing this rumor, I also included education as a control variable.<sup>11</sup> Re-

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<sup>11</sup>Unfortunately, the dataset does not include factual knowledge questions.



publicans and conservatives may be more likely than Democrats and liberals to associate Obama with Islam so the model has controls for political orientations as well. Regional effect is measured with a dichotomous variable in which Southern white Americans are coded to 1, and all else to 0. All variables in this model are coded from 0 to 1.



Source: 2008-2009 ANES Panel Data (non-Latino white respondents).

Figure 5.4: Explaining the Misperception and Band of Others

The model findings empirically support my expectations about the impact of the band of others on the likelihood of calling Obama a Muslim. Both dimensions of the band of others show that as the level of prejudice toward minorities, as a whole, increases, the probability of associating him with Islam increases after controlling

for emotional unfavorability against him, sophistication, political orientations, and region of residence among white Americans. In other words, the generalized nature of outgroup attitudes played a substantial role in determining who is more likely to believe this rumor. Ethnocentric bigotry was a major actor. Particularly, the religious minority dimension of the band of others played a considerable role when compared to the ethnic/racial dimension. That is, people's opinions about atheists and Hindus play a statistically significant role. However, a relatively wider sampling variance around racial/ethnic minority affect prevents it from exerting a statistically significant influence on the likelihood of calling Obama a Muslim. A thorough examination of the substantive impact of these variables on the rumor also confirms this picture. The change in the predicted probability of calling Obama a Muslim as you move from the most prejudiced to least prejudiced attitudes toward racial/ethnic minorities is 2 percentage points, holding all other variables at their observed values. The same move in religious minority affect, on the other hand, leads to a change of 10 percentage points in the likelihood of calling Obama a Muslim. The highest substantive effect comes from emotional reactions against Obama, and white Americans with the most unfavorable evaluations against him are 15 percentage points more likely than the ones with the least unfavorable reactions to call Obama a Muslim, when all other variables are held at their actual values. Interestingly, neither party identification nor ideological orientation of white Americans play a significant role when compared to the statistical and substantive significance of the opinions about the band of others.

These findings support the hypothesis that racial politics played a much bigger

role in the 2008 presidential election than most people thought. However, the nature of the prejudice was not just about historically important anti-black attitudes. It was mostly about religious and other behavioral minorities, and the Muslim misperception about Obama was largely shaped by this generalized attitude toward the band of others. The effect is robust even when strict controls, including candidate evaluations, political orientations, and sophistication, are taken into account. People who are prejudiced toward religious minorities, more so than toward ethnic and racial minorities, are the ones who are more likely to associate Obama with Islam.

## 5.4 Misperception and Obama Vote

The next test will examine the electoral consequences of this misperception under several specifications. The first test will examine the rumor's influence after controlling for emotional reactions against Obama. The following test will examine the effect of the misperception along with anti-black and anti-Muslim prejudice to compare the relative effects. The final specification will reveal a broader expectation regarding the relationship between the band of others, religious minority affect, and the vote choice in the 2008 presidential election.

The dependent variable is two party presidential vote choice in which Obama voters are coded to 1, and McCain voters to 0. As I mentioned, this is a vote intent question which was asked in October just after the wave when respondents were asked about the candidates' religious affiliations. Due to the binary nature of the vote choice variable, I estimate probit models with emotional evaluations of

Obama and prejudice items—blacks and Muslims—separately. The probit coefficient estimates and 95 percent confidence intervals for the two models are depicted in figure 5.5. The solid circles refer to the model with emotional evaluations of Obama whereas the hollow circles indicate the model that includes prejudice toward blacks and Muslims.

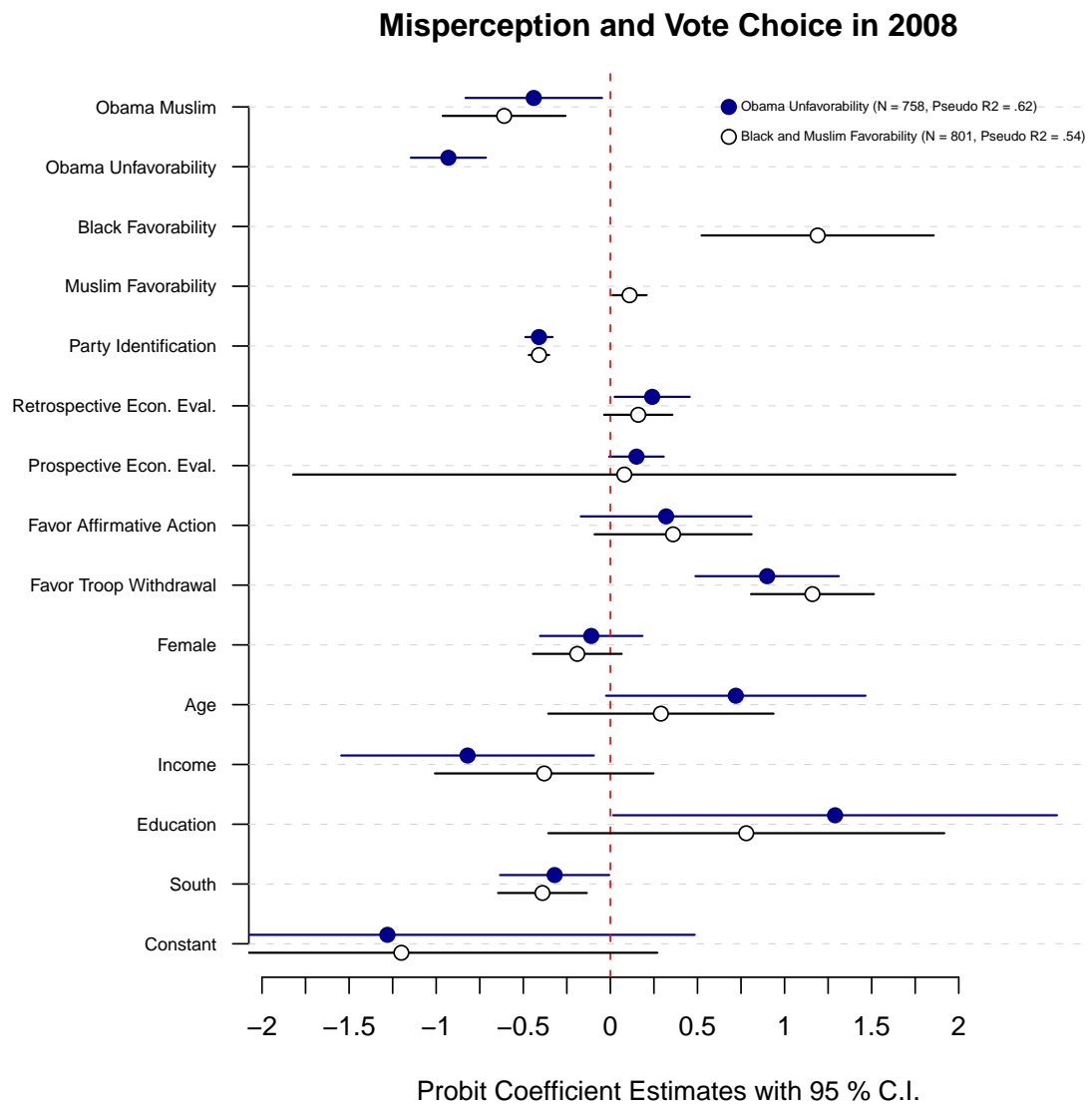


Figure 5.5: Vote Choice Model (Source: 2008-2009 ANES Panel Data)

After controlling for all theoretically relevant variables, like black prejudice, Obama unfavorability, party identification, and policy evaluations, the misperception about Obama being a Muslim has a statistically significant effect on vote choice in the 2008 presidential election. White Americans who believe the rumor that Obama is a Muslim are less likely to vote for Obama as opposed to McCain in both models. The confidence interval around the point estimate does not overlap zero so the effect in the two models is statistically significant at the .05 level or less. In the model with the Obama unfavorability measure, whites who believe this misperception are 7 percentage points less likely to vote for Obama as opposed to McCain, when we set all other variables in the model to their observed values. Similarly, the change in predicted probability is more than 10 percentage points in the model with black and Muslim prejudice. These movements in predicted probability are also statistically significant at the .10 level based on the confidence intervals generated by simulations. So, my major hypothesis about the electorally consequential nature of this misperception is verified by the model. It diminished the probability of voting for Obama among white Americans both statistically and substantively. Additionally, the misperception of Obama's faith may be considered to exert an independent effect because the model is very well specified in accordance with previous scholarship in American public opinion. The model shows that the rumor's potential impact may not be just a re-expression of emotional anger toward Obama, prejudice toward blacks or Muslims, and partisanship. There was much more to it, and it was electorally consequential.

Another substantively interesting finding concerns the nature of the linkage

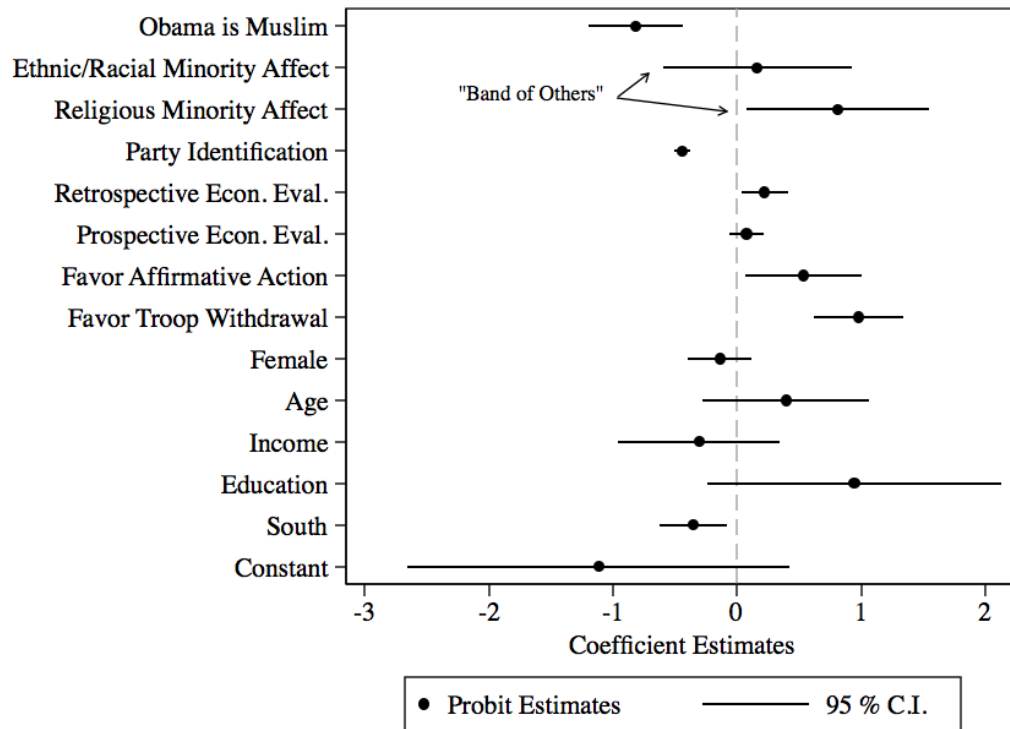
between prejudice and vote choice in the 2008 presidential election. Black and Muslim prejudice decreased the probability of voting for Obama, on average. It is interesting, though, to see that a single variable measuring Muslim affect is as strong as a factor score measuring black prejudice in terms of influencing vote choice. That is, we would expect much more measurement error in a single indicator variable as opposed to a multiple indicator measure, and the higher the measurement error, the higher the sampling variability. However, the standard error around Muslim affect is much tighter than the standard error around black prejudice which is supposed to have lower measurement error. In terms of substantive effects, as you move from the lowest to the highest favorability in black and Muslim affect, whites become 11 and 22 percentage points more likely to vote for Obama, after setting all other variables to their observed values. A similar story regarding the sampling variability is also seen in the standard errors around these changes in predicted probabilities. While the change we observe resulting from Muslim affect has a p-value of .10, the change as a result of a move in black prejudice has much higher sampling variability.<sup>12</sup>

All other variables are in the theoretically expected direction. For example, as whites get more Republican, pessimistic about the past and future situation of the economy, opposed to affirmative action and a deadline for troop withdrawal from

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<sup>12</sup>While the statistical significance of a change in predicted probability always means significant change, statistically insignificant change does *not* necessarily indicate a statistically insignificant change. The point I want to make here is that we would expect weaker inferential power from a single indicator variable as opposed to a multiple indicator variable, but that is not the finding in this case.

Iraq, they become less likely to vote for Obama controlling for socio-demographic variables. Among these, economic evaluations and attitudes on the Iraq War reach conventional levels of statistical significance. And, Southern whites are more likely than non-Southern whites to vote for McCain in the 2008 presidential election.



Source: 2008-2009 ANES Panel Data (non-Latino white respondents).

Figure 5.6: Band of Others and Vote Choice (Source: 2008-2009 ANES Panel Data)

The final probit model, shown in figure 5.6, tests how the misperception shaped vote choice, along with attitudes toward the band of others through its two dimensions (racial/ethnic minority affect and religious minority affect). The findings strongly support earlier findings. The belief that Obama is a Muslim dampens the likelihood of voting for Obama controlling for attitudes toward the band of others,

political orientations, and other theoretically important variables. In this fully-specified model, those who believe in the rumor are 15 percentage points less likely to vote for Obama while holding all other variables at their sample values. Simulations show that the change in predicted probability is statistically significant at the .10 level. The other expectation regarding the relative importance of religious minority affect over racial/ethnic minority affect in voting behavior is also both statistically and substantively supported. The effect of the band of others mostly works through affect toward atheists and Hindus, rather than blacks and Latinos. The effect of the former is significantly different from 0. A comparison of substantive effects also shows a similar story. White Americans who feel the least prejudiced toward religious minorities are 14 percentage points more likely to vote for Obama as compared to the ones who are extremely prejudiced toward atheists and Hindus, when we hold all other model variables at their observed values. The magnitude of change resulting from racial/ethnic minority affect is 3 percentage points. The former effect is statistically significant at .10 whereas the latter is not.

## 5.5 “Obama is a Muslim”: A Negative Ad?

If the rumors about Obama’s faith were electorally consequential, then it may have also influenced voter turnout and political participation in the 2008 presidential election.<sup>13</sup> Since the 2000 presidential elections, the United States has been experiencing a continuous increase in voter turnout. It was, for example, around 49

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<sup>13</sup>I want to thank David Leege of the University of Notre Dame for this idea.



percent in 1996 but hit almost 57 percent (both among the voting age population) in 2008, thereby setting a new record since 1968 (McDonald 2008). The turnout jump among the young, African Americans, and Latinos was remarkable (Philpot, Shaw and McGowen 2009, Pettigrew 2009), and the shift was predominantly in favor of the Democratic Party (Weisberg and Devine 2010). Despite all of these favorable circumstances in the U.S. electoral base, the promising Democratic candidate was an African American, and prejudice toward blacks would make some voters not show up to cast a ballot on Election Day. In fact, Pasek et al. (2009) find, using measures of both implicit and explicit racism, that racial prejudice was costly for Obama in terms of both voting behavior and turnout. As a direct effect of anti-black prejudice, many Americans “who were otherwise strongly inclined to vote for Obama but not necessarily strongly inclined to turn out might have chosen to not vote, because voting for McCain would have been distasteful” (Pasek et al. 2009, 949).<sup>14</sup>

The rumor about Obama being a Muslim is somewhat related to anti-black prejudice but it also has an independent electoral effect as I showed in the vote choice model. It is an expression of a more generalized de-Americanizing campaign that features ethnocentric attitudes toward outsiders, not just African Americans. So, we may expect to find that, like anti-black prejudice, white Americans who

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<sup>14</sup>They also looked at the impact of the misperception about Obama’s faith on turnout and vote choice but they did not find a statistically significant effect. The reason for insufficient evidence, as Pasek et al. (2009) also acknowledge at the end of the article, may be due to the over controlled or exploratory nature of the multinomial logit model which has more than eighty variables ranging from sociodemographic variables to candidate personalities.

believe that Obama is a Muslim would choose to abstain rather than turnout to vote. Their negative evaluations toward African Americans and Obama along with associating him with Islam may decrease the likelihood of voting among many white voters. Unlike the former two prejudiced attitudes, though, the misperception was an active and stable component of the presidential campaign. Except a very few instances like the Rev. Jeremiah Wright incident, the Obama campaign did not address race-related issues directly. In contrast, they had to issue several campaign statements, and Obama himself felt it necessary to talk about his Christian faith to dismiss allegations regarding his faith being Islam. So, the rumor, unlike other forms of prejudice, may be considered as a negative campaign by conservative elites. Even though John McCain always talked against the rumor, it became a widespread campaign tool among conservative radio/TV shows and email chains. “Obama is a Muslim” was like a negative campaign ad not being aired on TV by the Republican challenger but everywhere else in the media.

The empirical findings of the effect of negative ads on turnout are mixed. For example, Ansolabehere et al. (1994), Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995), Ansolabehere, Iyengar and Simon (1999) find that negative advertising demobilizes electorates by weakening the sense of efficacy or the belief in the responsiveness of public officials and the electoral system. In contrast, a recent study by Geer (2006) showed that negative ads boost turnout and political participation. Since the negative ads are likely to include more substantive and easy information than positive ads which are usually policy-driven and technical, Geer (2006) argues for easy knowledge generated by these ads translating into greater political partici-

pation. A meta analysis of negative political campaign research shows that even though it stimulates campaign knowledge, its effects are mostly negative in terms of declining political efficacy, satisfaction, and trust; but not in terms of turnout (Lau, Sigelman and Rovner 2007). If misperception about Obama can be considered a negative campaign advertisement, then we would expect a negative impact on both turnout and political participation among white voters. A hot button rumor like a presidential candidate being a Muslim is easy information, and it may raise doubts about his suitability for office because of the Judeo-Christian tendencies in the political system. That is, voters may feel disappointed as a result of such a rumor that they would prefer to stay home on Election Day, and refrain from being an active part of the political system. Initial evidence from the 2008-2009 ANES Panel Data supports this expectation. The mosaic plot in figure 5.7 depicts the bivariate relationship between turnout and the misperception among white voters. Those who associate Obama with Islam are more likely than the others to abstain from casting a ballot. Almost 15 percent of those who believe in this rumor did not vote as compared to 8 percent among non-believers. A test of association shows that this relationship is statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 15.04, p < .0001$ ).

I constructed a political participation index score out of nine items that are not directly related to voter turnout. They include whether the respondent joined a march/rally/demonstration, attended a meeting of a town or city government or school board, signed a petition on the Internet about a political or social issue, signed a petition on paper about a political or social issue, gave money to a religious organization, gave money to any other organization concerned with a political

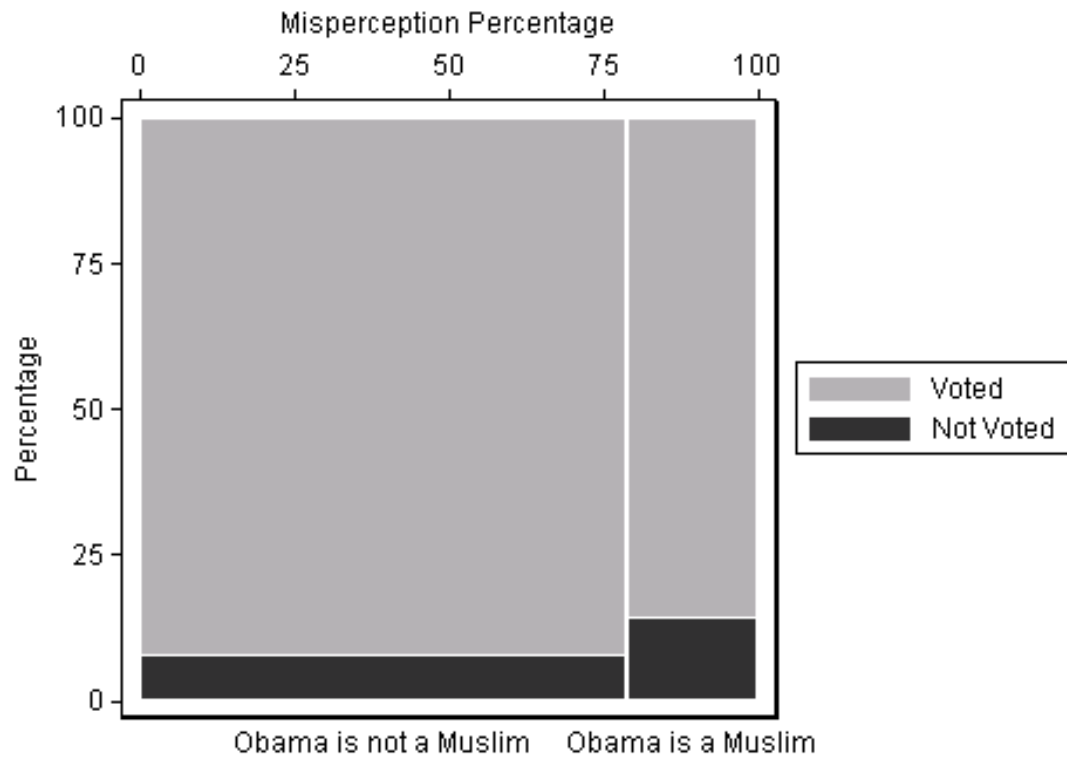
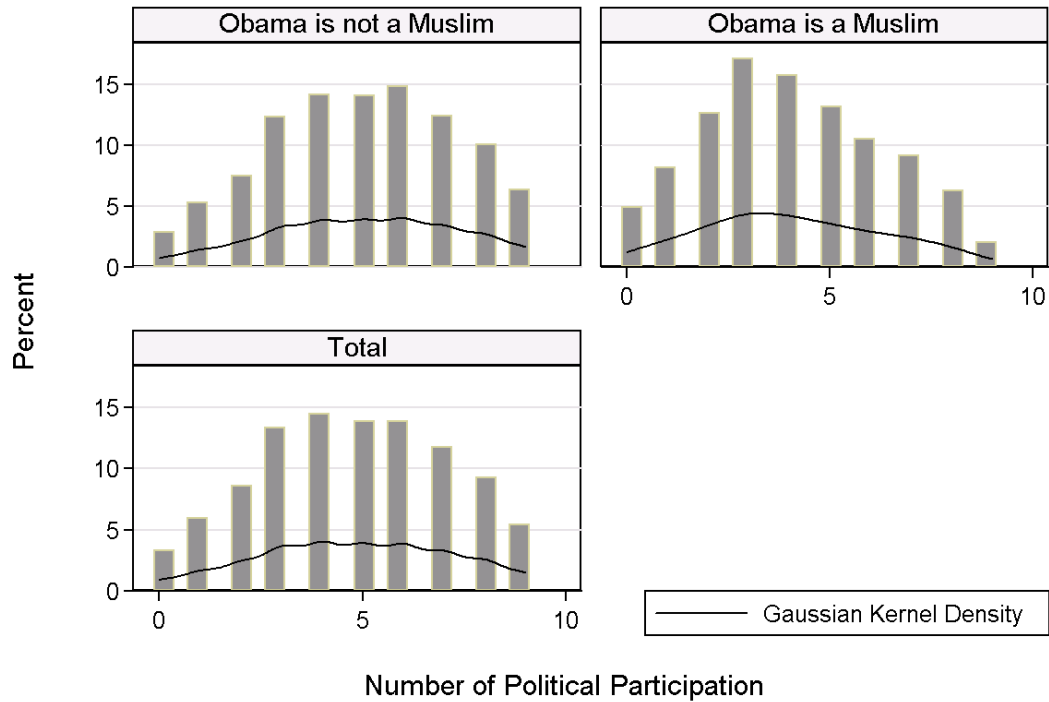


Figure 5.7: Voting Turnout and Misperception (Source: 2008-2009 ANES Panel Data)

or social issue, attended a meeting to talk about political or social concerns, invited someone to attend a meeting to talk about political or social concerns, or distributed information or advertisements supporting a political or social interest group. They are all binary choice variables transformed into a single additive index with a reliability (Cronbach’s  $\alpha$ ) of .77. Figure 5.8 shows the distribution of this variable among the white population as a whole, those who believe Obama is a Muslim, and those who do not. Those who believe the rumor are less likely to participate politically when compared to those who think Obama is not a Muslim. Both the bar

charts and the Gaussian kernel density, which is a non-parametric way of showing skewness, support the idea that the rumor depressed the level of political activity among white Americans.



Source: 2008-2009 ANES Panel Data (among non-Latino white respondents).

Figure 5.8: Political Participation and Misperception

Obviously, negative campaigns or prejudice are not the only determinants of turnout and political participation (please see Harder and Krosnick (2008) for an extensive review of turnout and participation determinants). For example, the higher someone’s political efficacy, the higher the likelihood of political participation (Acock, Clarke and Stewart 1985). It can be either internal (the belief in one’s capability to understand and participate in politics) or external (the belief in the

responsiveness of political institutions to citizen involvement) efficacy (Rosenstone and Hansen 2003). Both of them are 5-category variables, ranging from “not at all” to “a great deal.” They are coded to range from 0 to 1. The higher the value, the more efficacious the person is so the more likely she will participate. Strength of partisanship can be another potential determinant of political participation as the stronger the identification, the more likely the person is to participate (Rosenstone and Hansen 2003). Across the two parties I coded strong, weak, independent leaners, and pure independent respondents together. It ranges from 0 to 1 with higher values indicating stronger partisanship.

Socio-economic status is believed to be crucial in determining political participation as well. It is believed that wealthier people may expect more rewards from voting and participating. They have more to lose depending on the electoral outcome so they are more likely to vote and participate (Frey 1971, Rosenstone and Hansen 2003). I measure wealth through personal income which ranges from 0 to 1. Since formal education strengthens civic skills regarding the ability to understand how the political processes operate and how to navigate the requirements of registration, each additional year of education is associated with higher levels of political participation (Teixeira 1992, Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995, Harder and Krosnick 2008). It is a 12-category variable in the 2008-2009 ANES Panel Data where each category refers to years of schooling, 0 being the least and 1 being the highest number of years. Until the mid-1980s women were less likely than men to vote and politically participate due to low levels of political efficacy (Arneson and Eells 1950). They become much more interested in politics and efficacious since the 1990s that

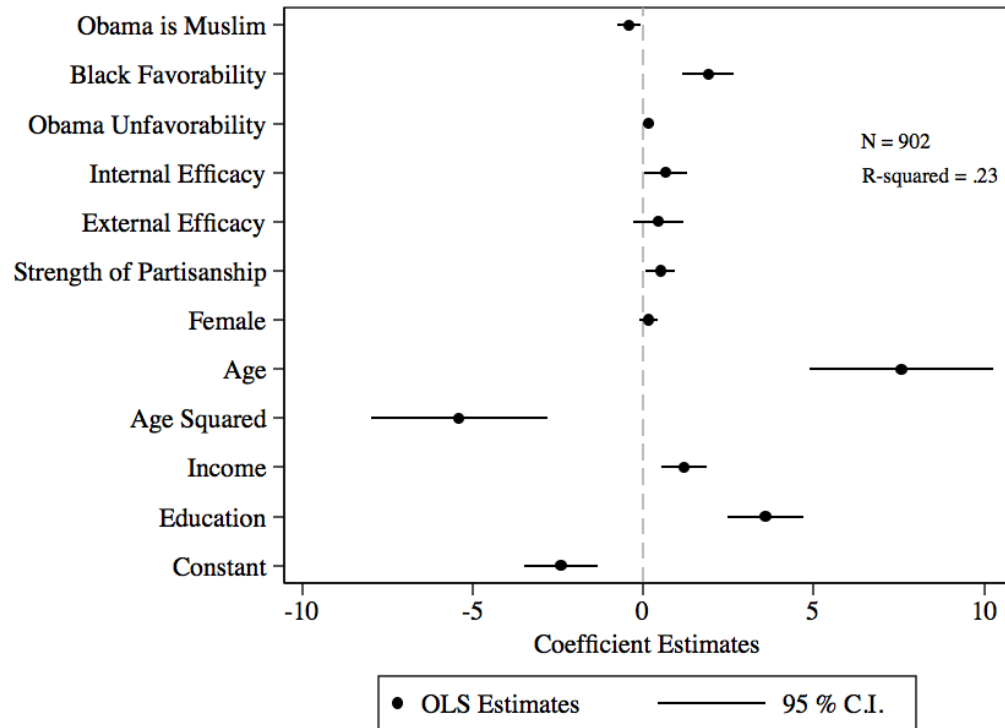
they now turn out to vote at the same or higher rates as men (Schlozman et al. 1995). The relationship between age and political participation is non-linear. That is, people become increasingly interested in politics, participate, and vote more between early adulthood and late adulthood. After about 75, they become less likely to be involved in politics and participation (Strate et al. 1989, Turner, Shields and Sharp 2001, Rosenstone and Hansen 2003). I include both age (ranging from 0 to 1) and age-squared terms into the same model to account for this non-linearity.

Unfortunately, since more than 90 percent of the white voters in the 2008-2009 ANES Panel Data reported turnout, it is impossible to fit a non-linear functional form (probit or logit) with these independent variables. Some of the coefficient estimates were too big indicating identification problems. This is why I was able to examine only the political participation index in a multivariate setting. The dependent variable, as I mentioned earlier, is an additive index score of nine political participation items. The count nature of it necessitates fitting either a poisson or a negative binomial model. But, as can be seen from figure 5.8, the distribution is fairly normal. Hence, I run an ordinary least squares regression which makes the substantive interpretation a lot easier.<sup>15</sup> This is especially true in linear models when all independent variables have similar ranges. All of the independent variables in the political participation model range from 0 to 1. The model findings are presented

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<sup>15</sup>Poisson model parameter estimates and standard errors suggest the same level of statistical and substantive significance as the ones from OLS. I did not fit negative binomial regression because the Lagrange-Multiplier test suggested by Cameron and Trivedi (2005) does not indicate overdispersion.

in figure 5.9.



Source: 2008-2009 ANES Panel Data (non-Latino white respondents).

Figure 5.9: Multivariate Analysis of Political Participation and Misperception

As the coefficient estimate on misperception suggests, white Americans who think that Obama is a Muslim are less likely than the rest to politically participate, controlling for anti-black prejudice, emotional reactions against Obama, political efficacy, and all other theoretically relevant variables as discussed. Like the vote choice example, the impact of this rumor can be considered as independent of all other prejudice-related dynamics. The negative advertisement nature of the rumor depressed the willingness to participate in 2008. Similarly, racial prejudice toward African Americans plays a crucial role as well. As whites get less prejudiced to-



ward blacks, they become more likely to participate. Since all variables are on the same scale, we can also say that the effect coming from black favorability has a substantively large impact on the political participation index score. The influence of emotional evaluations of Obama is significantly different from 0 but substantively, when compared to the other measures' coefficient sizes, the effect is minimal.

Internally and externally efficacious people, as theoretically expected, are more likely to be active in political and social life. Strong partisans are more likely than pure independents to participate, on average, under controlled conditions. Females are no more or less likely than males to have higher scores on the political participation index. The non-linear nature of the relationship between age and participation is clearly seen in the figure, too. While the constitutive age term is positive, the squared term is negative suggesting a concave link. Substantively speaking, age has the largest impact on participation, indicating the habitual nature of participation. As people get older, participation may become a regular activity in daily life. Wealthier and more highly educated people also participate more, on average.

Obviously, there may be many other individual and aggregate level variables such as voter registration laws (Hanmer 2007, 2009), the quality of candidates and open seat status (Jacobson 2004), and party contact and canvassing (Gerber and Green 2000), that could be added to this participation model. However, this parsimonious model, along with the straightforward bivariate relationships, support the idea that this misperception was not only electorally consequential but also a non-trivial factor in shaping turnout and political participation in 2008.

## Conclusion

The 2008 presidential election was an exceptional election. It resulted in the election of the first African American person to the highest political office in the United States. His success was remarkable, especially among new voters such as young people and minorities. Despite all favorable conditions for a Democratic victory, Barack Obama was denied a landslide vote margin in the election. An extremely unpopular incumbent president from the Republican Party, an unprecedented and devastating financial credit crisis leading to an economic recession, skyrocketing unemployment rates, and favorable population shifts toward the Democratic Party among the youth made many election forecasters expect a wide margin of victory for Obama (Lockerbie 2008, Lewis-Beck and Tien 2008, Holbrook 2008). But, he was not able to win a decisive victory, and, actually, he held a minority of the popular vote among white voters. Lewis-Beck, Tien and Nadeau (2010) later concluded that the big discrepancy between their forecasted and the realized margin was due to a lack of racial prejudice measure in their forecasting model. In other words, according to them, the denial of a landslide for Obama was the result of anti-black attitudes among whites. Pasek et al. (2009) reach the same conclusion that racism played a substantial role in the 2008 presidential election.

The models in this chapter simply provide additional evidence for such claims, and broaden the scope of racial prejudice's role in the 2008 elections. The impact of anti-black attitudes on both vote choice and political participation was undeniably strong both statistically and substantively. Whites who hold negative attitudes

toward blacks were less likely to vote for Obama, turnout to vote, and participate politically. It is terribly unfortunate but not surprising to find such a powerful impact of racism against blacks in American public opinion due to historical, institutional, and structural reasons. But, this chapter also shows that anti-black prejudice may not be the sole factor behind the denial of an overwhelming triumph for Obama. A misperception about his faith played a key role in that discrepancy as well. A non-trivial portion of the American population, especially among whites, held the stable belief that Barack Obama was a Muslim. We also observe this in the statistical and substantive influence of affect toward religious minorities and Muslims on vote choice. Both the rumor about Obama being a Muslim and prejudice toward the religious dimension of the band of others diminished electoral support for him among white voters independent of anti-black prejudice and emotional evaluations of Obama, and all other theoretically important variables. An examination of this rumor as a negative campaign advertisement also revealed that it depressed turnout and the tendency to become involved in political and social life among whites.

Racial attitudes played a crucial role in the 2008 presidential election. Prejudice toward African Americans may be the leading force in this dynamic, but not the only one. It was more than that. A rumor about Obama being a Muslim was successful in portraying him as an outsider, not American enough, and a member of many outgroups at the same time. The generalized structure of opinions regarding religious minorities, or attitudes toward a dimension of the band of others, provides the bigger picture concerning the role of minority attitudes in the 2008 presidential election.

# Chapter 6

## Muslims' Integration Story

### 6.1 Muslims in America and Europe

During my stay at Nuffield College (University of Oxford) as a post-doctoral fellow, I found many opportunities to compare and contrast Muslim immigrants' experiences both in the United States and the United Kingdom. Muslim Americans, as I showed in the introductory chapter, have mostly middle class experiences due to their education and income levels. Muslims in Britain, on the other hand, are overwhelmingly living in lower-class areas, and mostly in their own enclaves. Muslim Americans are more motivated than their counterparts in Britain to become an integral part of mainstream society. Other than Dearborn, MI, it is hard to spot a specific location which is densely populated by Muslim immigrants in the United States. In contrast, everybody knew that the eastern part of Cowley Road in Oxford was predominantly a Muslim area with lots of halal stores and restaurants serving Middle Eastern, Pakistani and Afghani food. Through my interactions with

Muslims in Oxford, I learned that almost all of them sought asylum or refugee status, and their case had been waiting at the home Office, the immigration authority of the United Kingdom. In a colloquial term, they define themselves as “off the book.” Conversely, the majority of Muslim Americans have legal immigrant status or citizenship because they came to pursue higher education or operate small businesses. Another striking difference between the experiences of Muslims in England and America is the radicalism of the religious leaders. My experiences at mosques in America have always been peaceful because sermons always condemned violence, terrorism, and extremism. As a secular person, I felt extremely uncomfortable to hear many imams’ *openly* jihadist positions in Britain so I stopped going to mosques in England.

When compared to Muslim immigrants in England, Muslim Americans are having a better immigration experience full of education and business opportunities. It may not be wrong to name them “role models both as Americans *and* as Muslims” ((Stephens and Reago 2005), emphasis in the original). Unlike British Muslims, Muslim Americans are willing to become part of mainstream American society (but see also Peach (1996)). But what makes Muslim Americans want to accept American ways of life and culture? My experience in England gave me the intuitive answer to this question. If a Muslim immigrant holds positive attitudes toward out-groups or out-group related issues, then she or he will not have problems with the idea of becoming mainstream. In other words, the level of ethnocentrism will be the main determinant of a minority group’s (like Muslims in Western societies) willingness to live like mainstream society. *Muslim Americans also hold opinions toward the*

*band of others, and these attitudes will shape the trajectory of their integration.*

As they become more welcoming toward non-Muslims, homosexuals, and increase the diversity of their friendship network, they will grow positive attitudes toward becoming mainstream. Level of ethnocentrism will play a central role in Muslims', and arguably all other minorities', assimilation. Income disparities will prevent most Muslim immigrants from being perceived as mainstream in Europe. However, the story in America is different and this chapter will show that lower levels of ethnocentrism among Muslim Americans make them accept mainstream values. By using the 2007 Pew Muslim American survey, I find that if a Muslim American does not have any problems with marrying a non-Muslim, accepts homosexuality as a way of life, and has a diverse friendship network, then she is more willing to think of herself first as American, accept American ways of life and norms, and speak English fluently.

## **6.2 Measuring Assimilation of Muslim Americans**

Assimilation is a controversial concept at a theoretical level. There are three approaches that try to define assimilation at a conceptual level. The classical argument is the most ethnocentric as compared to the others because it perceives middle-class Protestant white group as the normative reference category (Alba and Nee 2005, Jung 2009). Immigrants are measured against whites to determine how assimilated they are and how “good” they are. As such, the argument is immigrants should try to “act white”. Assimilation is an inevitable process that follows a non-

linear process for groups. Some groups may take longer to assimilate, and some may become assimilated quickly but all assimilate into this dominant category eventually. Socio-economic mobility or any other ethnicity-specific features of immigrant groups do not weigh in prominently in this approach to assimilation because it is an unstoppable process (Alba and Nee 2005).

The neo-classical argument, on the other hand, defines assimilation as a context where ethnic distinctions and cultural differences among all social groups decline (Alba and Nee 2005). Assimilation is not just for immigrants or minorities but it is a simultaneous process for all groups, including the mainstream. White Anglo origin Americans are not considered to be an ideal category for immigrants. Rather, it is more of a cultural integration that fosters the idea of “living together”. Immigrants will want to have better jobs, education, houses, and speak English fluently, and these requests will lead to assimilation without a conscious effort (Alba and Nee 2005).

Finally, the segmented assimilation theory is a counter argument against this cultural interpretation of assimilation. They argue that simply requesting better life standards will not be enough. There are contextual factors like recent economic downturns, rising unemployment, and declining demand for unskilled labor in developed countries that prevent immigrants from realizing upward mobility (Gans 1992). This is particularly important in the case of second generation immigrants. According to Portes and Zhou (1993), second generation immigrants have three potential paths to follow. They may become like the white middle class, decline in socio-economic status and assimilate into the underclass, or experience rapid economic

advancement due to tight solidarity among the immigrant community. The variants that determine which path they will belong to, according to Portes and Zhou (1993), include financial resources, education, job skills, experience, language proficiency, government attitude toward immigrant communities, receptiveness of the “native population”, level of racial prejudice, family structures, and, more importantly, immigrants’ attitude toward the dominant culture. Unlike the neo-classical scholars, the segmented assimilation theory does not foresee an automatic and inexorable process of integration into the mainstream.

Based on these theoretical approaches, there may be three different ways of measuring the level of assimilation among immigrant groups. The classical approach defines assimilation as becoming similar to the dominant category so if an immigrant calls herself *first* “American” rather than her racial, ethnic, or religious background, then she would be considered as “assimilated” by the classical theorists (Huntington 2004). She prioritized being American over her other identifications so she wants to be a part of the dominant category. The unconscious nature of assimilation, offered by the neoclassical theorists, can be measured by fluency in English. For example, if an immigrant answers survey questions in English rather than in her native language, then the neo-classical theory would consider her as an assimilating case. Fluency in a nation’s predominant language will facilitate an immigrant’s cultural assimilation (Staton, Jackson and Canache 2007, De la Garza, Falcon and Garcia 1996, Rumbaut 1994, Huntington 2004). The third way of observing assimilation would be a perceptual measurement of an immigrant’s willingness to adopt to the culture and norms of the dominant society. The segmented theory of assimilation



lation puts a different aspect to assimilation by requesting a positive feeling toward the mainstream. For example, accepting American values, for them, is a starting point to experience educational and economic upward mobility, and this may lead to “complete incorporation into mainstream society within three generations (Gordon 1964).

The 2007 Pew Muslim American Survey has all three different measures of assimilation. The survey asked the respondents “Do you think of yourself first as an American or first as a Muslim?”, and almost one in three Muslim Americans preferred to say “American.” Comparatively, more than three quarters of the mainstream American population consider themselves first as American as opposed to “Christian.” The difference in Muslims’ integration into the American and European societies is most visible in this question. Only 7, 13, and 3 percent of British, German, and Spanish Muslims identify themselves first with the national belonging, rather than religious tradition, respectively, according to the 2006 Pew Muslims in Europe survey. Respondents who called themselves first as American are coded to 1, and Muslim to 0.

As a second measure, the interview language is used. 83 percent of Muslim Americans answered the questions in English. This is a relatively high level of English proficiency when compared to other immigrant groups like Latinos (71 percent of Latinos answered questions in English in the 2008 American National Election Studies, post election survey). If respondents completed the interview in English, then they coded to 1, and all other languages (like Arabic and Farsi) are coded to 0. As a final way of measuring Muslim Americans’ integration, I will use willingness

to become American. The survey asked Muslim Americans:

Which comes closer to your view?

1. Muslims coming to the U.S. today should mostly adopt American customs and ways of life, OR
2. Muslims coming to the U.S. today should mostly try to remain distinct from the larger American society

Almost half of Muslim Americans thought that they should mostly adopt American customs and ways of life. One in five Muslim Americans thought that they should mostly try to remain distinct from the larger American society<sup>1</sup>. Respondents in the first category are coded to 1, and the second category to 0.

There will be separate models in which these three different measures of Muslim American assimilation will be the dependent variables. In addition to these models, I also create a combined variable out of the three variables to get a more precise estimate of Muslim Americans' level of assimilation. An exploratory factor analysis of these variables<sup>2</sup> shows that these three variables can be explained by one factor, with loadings of .72, .68, and .67 for the American identity preference,

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<sup>1</sup>The rest gave voluntary answers of "both" or "neither" but they are excluded from the analysis.

<sup>2</sup>Exploratory factor analysis of binary variables is not technically correct due to the distributional assumptions. In the model estimation stage, the dichotomous nature of these variables is modeled for a more accurate depiction of the underlying dimension. This exploratory analysis is conducted only to show that these variables are closely related to each other.

language of interview, and willingness to assimilate variables (eigenvalue = 1.42). Therefore, I will model this combined score of assimilation among Muslim Americans as well.

### **6.3 Assimilation and Ethnocentrism**

Immigration to a different country is only the beginning of a long journey of integrating into mainstream society. It is a long journey because it is mostly a non-linear process (Chong and Kim 2006). As we see in the experiences of Jews and Italian Catholics, there are favorable and unfavorable times in this process. It has many aspects like socio-psychological, cultural, and economic assimilation that may occur simultaneously or not (Staton, Jackson and Canache 2007). In the end, assimilated individuals abandon old cultural practices, national attachments, and other related loyalties to the country of origin (Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2003). Earlier generations of European immigrants were role models in leaving most of their previous attachments and loyalties, and becoming more and more American as time passed and they become more affluent (Alba and Nee 2005). Recent immigrants, on the other hand, may not experience the same assimilation story. They may think that even though they earn economic achievements, there may be some glass ceilings that limit their willingness to become mainstream (Chong and Kim 2006). Their attitudes toward mainstream society's life-styles may be a powerful factor. That is, prejudice among minority groups toward mainstream people may shape their willingness to adopt new value systems and behaviors.

Given that Muslim Americans are mostly middle class, then the socio-economic obstacles that early immigrants had to cope with may not be a powerful factor in their willingness to become mainstream American. I argue that the level of ethnocentrism or generalized prejudice toward American norms, values, and ways of life among Muslim Americans will play a crucial role in their journey of integration into the core American society. Absence of prejudice in both immigrants and mainstream society is an essential feature of assimilation's final stages (Rumbaut 1997). Assimilation requires work from both parties. Even if I elaborate the theory of band of others around the understanding of mainstream ethnocentrism, ethnocentrism is not limited to only the major "ingroup". Kinder and Kam (2009) show that ethnocentrism can be found in any individual regardless of race, ethnicity or any other minority feature. Asian Americans, Latinos, and African Americans can be as ethnocentric as white Americans, and ethnocentrism is found in each group in varying degrees. Thus, ethnocentrism is not a phenomenon that is limited to mainstream opinion. Muslims are no exception to this rule. Their attitudes toward outgroups like homosexuals and non-Muslims will make them more or less ethnocentric.

Then, what is the mechanism that explains ethnocentric evaluations and assimilation? Ethnocentrism, as I defined earlier, refers to a readily available tendency to see the world in an enemies vs. friends fashion. As ethnocentrism grows stronger, the distance between the ingroup and outgroup increases. The definition of enemies and friends becomes more restrictive or exclusive. There are clearly defined enemies with undesirable qualities, and friends with positive features. If a member of a minority group holds an ethnocentric worldview, then the most visible outgroup for

her will be the mainstream society. As this worldview gets more and more ethnocentric, she will not be willing to become an integral part of this mainstream society. The mainstream society will be a clear enemy with lots of undesirable norms and styles. So, the starting point for a successful assimilation should be to minimize ethnocentrism both in the mainstream society *and* with the minorities in question. It is a dual process. I argue that the level of ethnocentrism among minority groups in general, Muslim Americans in particular, will play a big role in explaining assimilation. My hypothesis is that as Muslim Americans become more positive toward outgroups in general or less ethnocentric, they will be more willing to assimilate into mainstream American society.

I will measure outgroup affect (or lack of ethnocentrism) among Muslim Americans through a combined score of three different variables. The first one concerns Muslims' attitudes toward homosexuality. It is shown that homosexuals are one of the highly stereotyped outgroups almost everywhere, not just in the United States (Andersen and Fetner 2008). Muslim Americans' opinions about homosexuals are no exception to this general tendency. When they were asked in the 2007 Pew Survey, almost two out of three Muslim Americans thought that homosexuality is a way of life that should be discouraged by society. Clearly, Muslim Americans evaluate homosexuality as unacceptable so they draw a clear distinction between themselves and homosexual people. It is a reliable way of measuring ethnocentrism. I coded those who think that homosexuality should be accepted by society to 1, and that it should be discouraged to 0. The second measure for outgroup affect among Muslim Americans comes from a tendency to accept marrying a non-Muslim. Theologically

speaking, Islam allows men to marry a non-Muslim women in the expectation of a conversion but it strictly prohibits intermarriage for women. We observe this doctrine-based distinction in Muslim Americans' answers to the question whether it is okay to marry a non-Muslim. Overall, 62 percent think that intermarriage is acceptable. While this number reaches 86 percent among immigrant Muslim<sup>3</sup> men, it stays the same among immigrant women. Willingness to accept intermarriage is considered to be one of the most crucial factors that shape immigrants' assimilation process (Gordon 1964, Alba and Nee 2005, Anderson and Saenz 1994, Liang and Ito 1999, Qian and Lichter 2001). Respondents who are okay with intermarriage are coded to 1, and those who find it unacceptable to 0. The final measure of outgroup affect is the outgroup composition of friendship network. As the diversity of close friends increase, the frequency of contact with different groups increase, and as a result prejudice or stereotype against outgroups may decrease (Allport 1954, Pettigrew and Tropp 2006). The survey asks Muslim Americans how many of their close friends are Muslims. Ten percent of immigrant Muslims have only Muslim close friends, and 8 percent have very few. Forty-five have somewhat diverse friendship networks, and 37 percent have mostly Muslim friends. I coded this 4-category variable so that the higher the score, the more diverse the friendship network is. I conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to create an underlying outgroup affect variable out of these three variables. The higher the values on this variable, the less

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<sup>3</sup>By saying immigrant Muslim, I mean those Muslims who are not born in the U.S., or converted to Islam from other religions such as Christianity.

ethnocentric Muslim Americans get so that they will be more likely to assimilate<sup>4</sup>.

## 6.4 Behavioral Factors of Assimilation

The level of discrimination and other behavioral forms of prejudice among the dominant society toward minorities can have a significant influence on minorities' willingness to assimilate and immerse into mainstream society. Worry of being under constant surveillance by many people or feelings of being subject to prejudice and discriminated can "reinforce the tendency of minorities to think in group terms" so they will attribute more importance to race and ethnicity related policies, and retain their group-specific consciousness (Chong and Kim 2006, 337). In other words, discriminated minorities will allocate most of their resources in enhancement of their groups' status in society by trying to remove inequalities. This will facilitate a mindset that is configured to think in terms of groups rather than a nation which will slow down the process of assimilation (Alba and Nee 2005, Chong and Kim 2006) and political integration into the system (Pei-te Lien and Wong 2004).

In the 2007 Pew Muslim American survey, there are three types of discrimi-

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<sup>4</sup>Since the variables are categorical, they are not distributed normally. It would be a violation of the distributional assumption if the measurement model did not take this feature of these variables into account. Therefore, I used the Mplus 5.0 program to run both the measurement models and structural equation models with latent variables because, unlike Stata or any other statistical packages, Mplus has the ability to model categorical indicators and dependent variables with their respective distributions, like Bernoulli, beta, beta-binomial, etc. This is the case for all other latent variables I used in the final structural model.

nation questions. The first set concerns worrying about not being hired for a job or promoted because of being Muslim; being under close surveillance by the government in terms of means of communication (like emails and telephone calls) because of being Muslim; and being treated poorly due to headcover (for men) or headscarf (for women) because it identifies them as Muslim. They are all 4-category variables ranging from not at all worried to very worried. I created a latent variable to be included into the assimilation structural equation models. Higher scores on this latent variable indicate higher levels of worrying about discrimination.

The second set of questions asks respondents whether they experienced discrimination under several scenarios so it gets at their perceived level of discrimination. There are four questions in this category asking whether they have experienced people acting suspicious of them, calling them offensive names, being singled out by airport security, and being singled out by other law enforcement. They are all binary response variables, and those who expressed being discriminated against are coded to 1, and the rest to 0. I created a latent variable out of these 4 binary questions. Higher scores on this factor means higher level of perceived discrimination.<sup>5</sup> The third variable about discrimination is a more direct question whether respondents have ever been a victim of discrimination. Those who said yes are coded to 1, and the rest to 0.

Another set of behavioral factors that may shape Muslim Americans' assimila-

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<sup>5</sup>Since African Americans suffer “the indignities of racial discrimination to a significantly greater extent than other minorities” like Latinos and Asian Americans, I included paths coming from being black Muslim American to these two sets of discrimination in the structural equation models.



tion journey is the level of religiosity. As religiosity of a minority increases, they may become more group-oriented which may dampen the speed of integration into mainstream society. For example, Amyot and Sigelman (1996, 187) find that the most assimilated Jews are the ones who do not practice Judaism or maintain strong ties with other Jews in the area. Similar results are also found for religiously committed Christian Asian Americans and their lack of seeing themselves as an integral part of larger American society (Pei-te Lien and Wong 2004). In terms of political connectedness to the American political spectrum, Barreto and Bozonelos (2009) show that high religiosity coupled with discrimination make Muslim Americans dealign themselves from the two major parties, and identify themselves more and more as independent. Since neither the Democrats nor Republicans appeal to Islamic religiosity as much as they “encourage religiosity among Protestants, Jews, and Catholics,”, religious Muslim Americans cannot find a political home in line with their belief systems (Barreto and Bozonelos 2009, 4). The structural equation models in this chapter control for potential impact of religiosity on Muslim Americans’ assimilation as it may play a critical role in assimilation (Foner and Alba 2008). I measure religious commitment with three observed indicators in line with the work of Layman and Green (2006). Respondents are asked about how important religion is for them, how frequently they pray and attend mosques<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup>Unfortunately, I could not include the view of the Koran variable as another indicator because almost 90 percent of immigrant Muslims think of the Koran as the word of God. There is a theological emphasis on this aspect of Islam. Anything other than this view would make someone a non-Muslim theologically so Muslims may feel a moral and religious obligation not to think of the

## 6.5 Politics, Demographics and Assimilation of Muslim Americans

Government policies targeting minorities can play significant roles in the speed of immigrants' assimilation into mainstream society (Alba and Nee 2005). Income inequality, for example, makes it harder for immigrants to move up in the socioeconomic scale (Dye 1969, Hero 1992). Thus, governments that have extensive social welfare programs promoting egalitarian values help immigrants' integration. Muslim Americans are mostly highly educated and middle class so social welfare programs may not be as important as they are for other minorities in the U.S.

This does not mean that politics has little say in their assimilation. Instead, it plays a greater role in foreign policy area. After the September 11 terrorist attacks, the U.S. government launched a war on terrorism which includes pre-emptive policies such as the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars, and even the PATRIOT Act. Even though the political architects of these policies try to frame them as against terrorists, not against Muslims, Muslim Americans have not had very positive attitudes toward them. According to the 2007 Pew Muslim American survey, more than 85 percent of immigrant Muslims think that the U.S. government made the wrong decision about the Iraq War. They are evenly divided regarding the Afghan War. But overall, when they are asked about whether the U.S. led war on terrorism is a sincere

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Koran as written by men. Since age and education may have a significant impact on religiosity, I included paths from them to this latent variable. Also, African Americans are known to be religiously more committed so there is also a path from African American Muslims to religiosity.

effort to reduce terrorism, 60 percent think it is not. So, Muslim Americans may be resentful about acts and actions of the U.S. government, and this may decrease their willingness to assimilate into the larger American society. I created a factor score out of these three binary measures. Higher scores mean being more critical of U.S. foreign policy<sup>7</sup>.

There are several socio-economic indicators that are theoretically necessary in explaining assimilation. The first one concerns the number of years in the U.S. Among immigrants, research shows that as time passes, assimilation gets easier because of the increase in familiarity, and frequency of contact with mainstream society (Gordon 1964, Alba and Nee 2005). Similarly, upward mobility in income scale and education are believed to hasten assimilation. Importance of generational differences also makes age of the respondent as a theoretically important variable in assimilation models (Gans 1992).

## 6.6 Models and Findings

There are four structural equation models with different dependent variables measuring the level or willingness of assimilation among Muslim Americans. The factor loadings of latent variables for each model is presented in table 6.1. For the

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<sup>7</sup>Since all of these policies are predominantly formulated and executed by the Republican administration and elites, I included paths from party identification of Muslim Americans to this latent factor. Party identification is measured by two dichotomous variables, namely Democrats and Republicans. Independents are the comparison category.

fourth combined model, the dependent variable is also a latent variable. Its factor loadings are presented in table 6.2. One of the loadings for each latent variable in all models is set to 1 to satisfy the identification condition in structural equation model.

The first model examines Muslims' likelihood of calling themselves first Americans rather than Muslims and their level of outgroup affect. The model and estimates are shown in figure 6.1<sup>8</sup>.

In line with my expectation, those who hold warmer attitudes toward outgroups and related issues are more likely to call themselves first American rather than Muslim. If a Muslim American does not hold ethnocentric evaluations about homosexuals, intermarriage with non-Muslims, and have diverse friendship networks, then she sees herself primarily as American as opposed to Muslim. Among other statistically significant variables, Muslim Americans who were victims of dis-

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<sup>8</sup>The circles refer to latent variables, and rectangles to manifest or observed variables. The figures do not show measurement indicators which can be found in the previous tables. The loadings are shown only for the main independent variable, namely outgroup affect. The estimates between the independent variables and the ultimate dependent variable—assimilation (First American, English interview, willingness to adopt American customs, and a combined measure of all)—are logit coefficients. Estimates going toward the latent variables are linear coefficients. Simultaneous estimation of both the linear and non-linear models are possible within Mplus 5.0. Unfortunately, the mixed nature of the estimation technique and non-linearity prevent me from computing indirect and total effects, which are usually reported in linear structural equation models. Therefore, the only substantive interpretation can be made by referring to the sign and statistical significance of the coefficient (\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ )

Table 6.1: Latent Variable Factor Loadings from Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Indicators	Models and Factor Loadings			
	First American	English Interview	Adopt Customs	Combined
<i>Worry of Discrimination</i>				
Discrimination at work	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Constant surveillance	.71	.71	.71	.71
Headcover or headscarf	.78	.78	.78	.78
<i>Perceived Discrimination</i>				
Suspicious Behavior from others	1.00	–	1.00	–
Offensive Names	.92	–	.93	–
Singled out at the airport	.66	–	.67	–
Singled out other places	1.20	–	1.18	–
<i>Religious Traditionalism</i>				
Importance of Religion	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Frequency of Prayer	1.06	.96	1.20	.89
Mosque Attendance	.91	.83	.97	.78
<i>The U.S. Foreign Policy</i>				
Afghan War Wrong	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Iraq War Wrong	1.02	1.17	1.13	.98
War on Terror Unsuccessful	.97	1.08	1.03	.94

Source: 2007 Pew Muslim American Survey.

Notes: The models are estimated among immigrant Muslim Americans. The cell entries refer to factor loadings for four structural equation models with calling oneself first American as opposed to Muslim (column 2), presence of interview conducted in English (column 3), willingness to adopt American customs and ways of life (column 4), and combination of these three variables in another latent variable (column 5) as dependent variables. For identification condition, one of indicators in each latent variable is set to 1.

Table 6.2: Assimilation Factor Score Measurement Model

Indicators	Loadings
Adopt American customs	1.00
Interview in English	2.09
First American	2.05

Source: 2007 Pew Muslim American Survey.

Notes: The models are estimated among immigrant Muslim Americans.

crimination are less likely than other Muslims to call themselves first American. And, as they become more critical of U.S. foreign policy, they are less likely to identify themselves as Americans. The model fit of this and other models are presented in table 6.3. Statistically significant chi-squared values refer to a poor fit but it is extremely sensitive toward sample size. As the sample size gets larger, like in this case ( $N = 525$ ), it becomes impossible to get insignificant p-values. Due to this extreme sensitivity to sample size, Kline (2005) suggests an alternative way to examine the chi-squared values: If the quotient after dividing the chi-squared value with degrees of freedom is less than 3, then the model can be considered to have a good fit. As the table shows in the second row, the models of the chapter satisfies this threshold so they can be said to fit the data well. The root-mean-square-approximate (RSMEA) is a better measure for large samples with non-linear components. The lower the RMSEA, the better, and the cutoff point is usually .05 or .06. So, both this and all the other models make the cutoff point in terms of good model fit within structural equation modeling standards.

As a second way of measuring assimilation, I model the language of the interview being English or not, and the findings are in figure 6.2. This has the best model fit with the lowest chi-squared and RMSEA values. The story is extremely similar

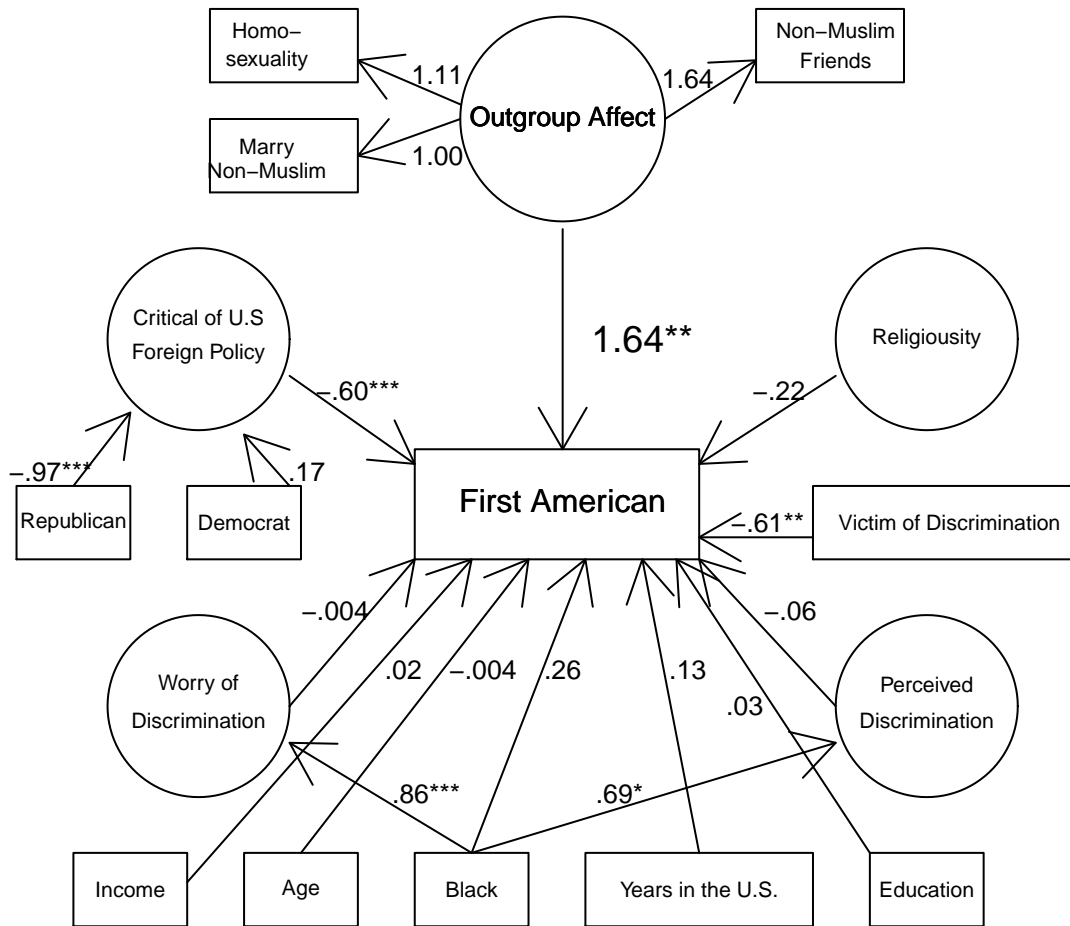


Figure 6.1: Outgroup Affect and American Identification (Pew 2007 Muslim American Survey)

to what we see in the previous model. As Muslim Americans get less ethnocentric or much warmer toward outgroup related issues, then they are more likely to have a survey interview in English. Ethnocentrism among Muslim Americans shapes their proficiency in English. Like the previous case, being critical of U.S. foreign policy and the victim of discrimination dampen the likelihood of being fluent enough in English to answer the survey questions. Among the socio-demographic variables,

Table 6.3: Model Information

Information	Models			
	First American	English Interview	Adopt Customs	Combined
$\chi^2$ (df)	153.02* (51)	104.50* (41)	150.87* (51)	133.09* (46)
$\chi^2/(df)$	3.00	2.54	2.96	2.89
RMSEA	.06	.05	.06	.06
Number of Observations	525			

Source: 2007 Pew Muslim American Survey.

Notes: The models are estimated among immigrant Muslim Americans.

\*  $p < .05$

unlike the first model, we see that younger and more educated people who have been living in the U.S. for a long time are more likely to be fluent in English. The younger generations tend to be more fluent in English due to their socialization into the American education system earlier than older Muslim Americans. So, this finding is not surprising.

To measure the cultural aspect of assimilation, I model the willingness to accept American customs and ways of life as opposed to remain distinct from the larger American society. Like in the previous models of assimilation, as figure 6.3 shows, lack of ethnocentrism is the driving force behind the Muslim Americans' attitudes toward mainstream American customs and ways of life. As they get less and less concerned about homosexuality, intermarriage, and holding a homogenous friendship network, they become more likely to see the benefits of immersion into American society. In fact, outgroup affect is the only variable that has a statistically significant effect on cultural assimilation. Unlike previous models, being a victim of discrimination or critical of U.S. foreign policy were not playing that much of an important role in shaping Muslim Americans' evaluations of American ways of life.



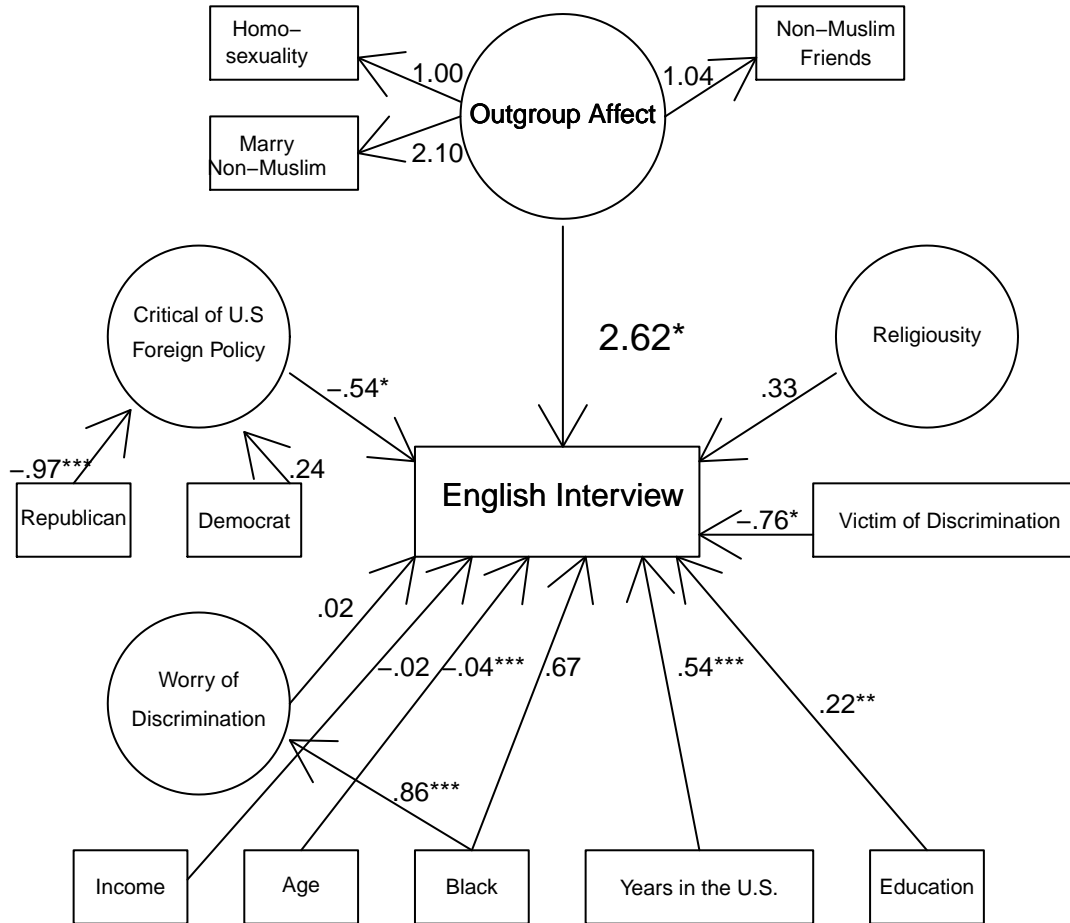


Figure 6.2: Outgroup Affect and Fluency in English

In the final model depicted in figure 6.4, I try to examine the big picture of assimilation by combining all of these different but closely interrelated measures of assimilation into one latent variable. Since the assimilation factor score is an interval level variable, unlike the other models, the paths have ordinary least squares coefficient estimates not logit estimates. The major finding we observe in the previous models holds strongly in this case as well. Ethnocentrism, or lack thereof, is a significant predictor of their assimilation into American society. A generalized syn-

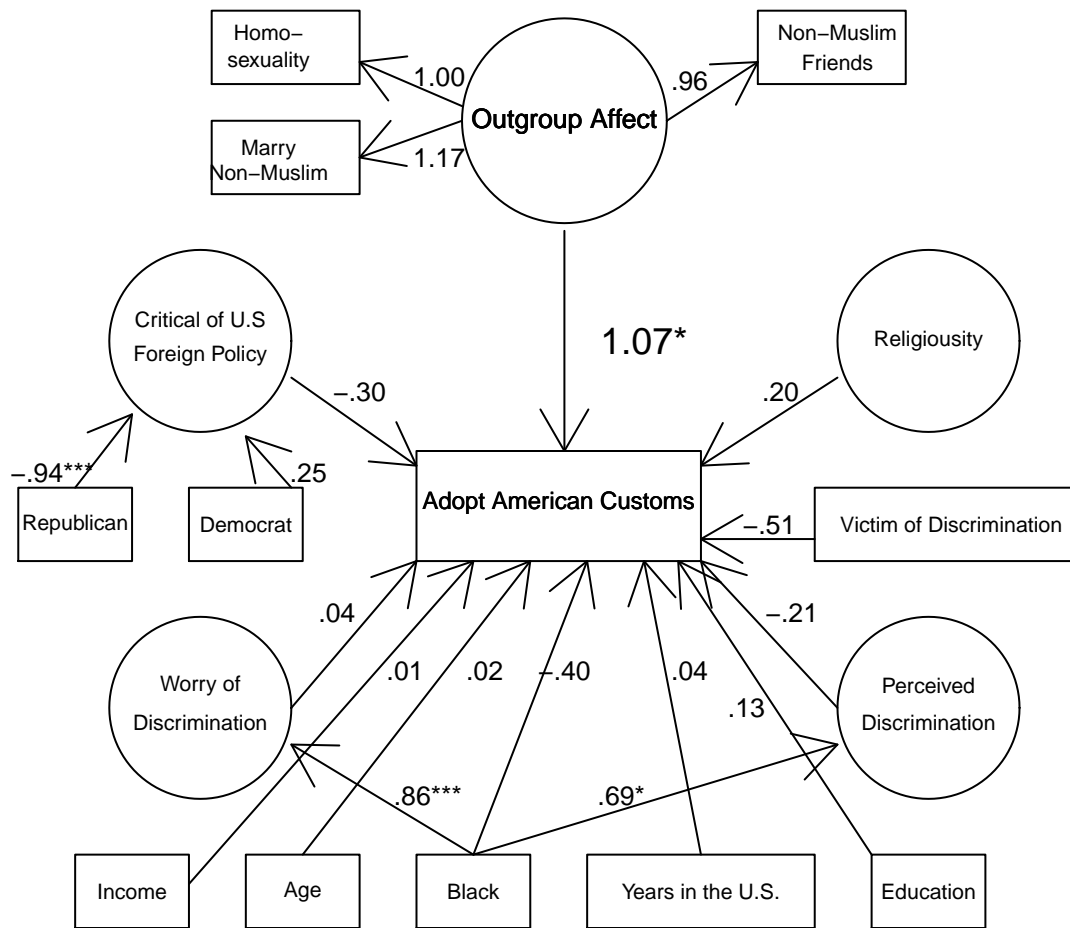


Figure 6.3: Outgroup Affect and Willingness to Accept American Customs

drome regarding how they feel about outgroups and related issues determine Muslim immigrants likelihood of assimilation. In this bigger-picture model, we also see that being a victim of discrimination has a negative influence on joining the mainstream society. Likewise, political attitudes about American foreign policy in the Middle East plays a major role in dampening the likelihood of assimilation. Also, educated Muslims who live in the U.S. for a longer time have a much easier time becoming immersed into the larger American society. This model has the best fit to the data

following the fluency in English model.

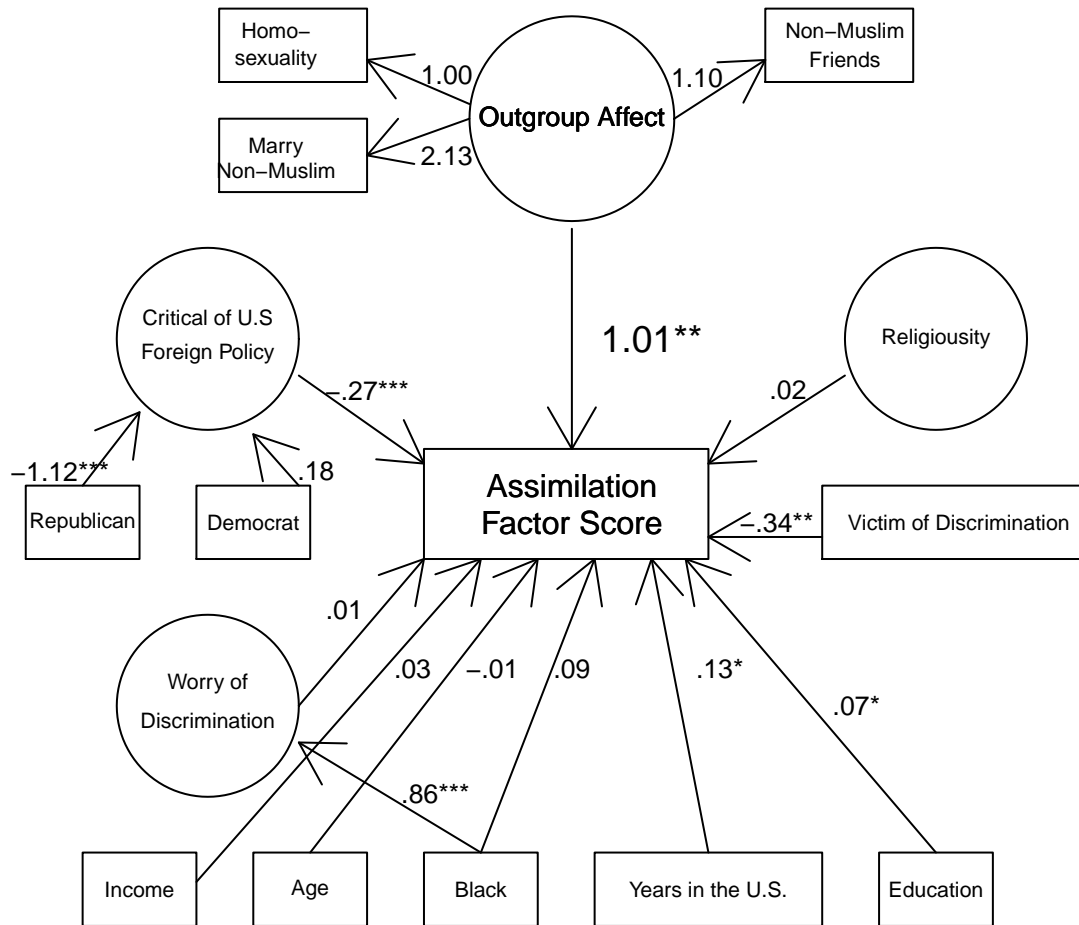


Figure 6.4: Outgroup Affect and Assimilation Factor Score

## 6.7 Conclusion

This chapter showed that *the theory of Band of Others, or ethnocentrism, is also a major player in Muslim Americans' attitudes toward mainstream American society* so it is not just a mindset of the dominant group(s). It can be found everywhere, and it is particularly important for immigrant communities. I showed that

Muslim Americans are willing to integrate into American society at varying degrees, and their attitudes toward homosexuals, intermarriage, and the idea of having non-Muslim friends play a huge role in determining their level of assimilation. *What matters the most for Muslim Americans' integration is their attitudes toward the band of others.*

It has always been a big question whether Muslim Americans will join other immigrants, like Jews and Catholics, in terms of being an integral part of the larger American society. I think this chapter establishes a convincing answer to that question. Yes, the attitudes of white Americans toward Muslims is extremely important but Muslim Americans should work toward this ideal goal as well. As the findings of this chapter suggest, their evaluations of outgroups will play an essential role in this. They may become mainstream one day, as long as they leave their exclusionary view of the world aside, and try to have a more positive attitude toward groups that are not like them. It is not hard. Jews, for example, are known to be one of the most tolerant and liberal groups in the U.S., and I am confident that this attitude helped them become a significant component of American society. Muslims can do it too. Of course, it will take time to get rid of old-school ethnocentric bigotry, like it did for other immigrant minorities, but there is a shining hope about a success story of Muslims in America.

# Chapter 7

## Conclusion

### 7.1 American Democracy and Muslim Americans

Muslims in America have never been this vulnerable before. The September 11 terrorist attacks followed by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the most recent Christmas Day and New York City bombing attempts, reinforced the existing negative image of Muslims in contemporary American society. The preceding chapters analyzed the sources and outcomes of this prejudiced image of Muslim Americans through both an original theoretical framework and a series of empirical tests. This research shows that many Americans evaluate Muslims primarily through an ethnocentric lens. I call this mainstream ethnocentrism the Band of Others. It refers to a multidimensional structure of mainstream ethnocentrism which shapes the presence or absence of prejudice toward Muslim Americans. Those who welcome blacks, Jews, Latinos, Asians, homosexuals, illegal immigrants, people on welfare, and feminists also welcome Muslim Americans. Bigotry does not put clear-cut boundaries among

minorities. And, dislike of Muslims is no exception to this generalized attitudinal structure.

The empirical findings also suggest strong influence of the band of others in American public opinion and political behavior. Ethnocentrism among mainstream Americans conditions the likelihood of voting for a hypothetical Muslim or Arab candidate, believing in the rumor that Barack Obama is a Muslim, and voting for him in the 2008 presidential election. Additionally, this study demonstrates that ethnocentrism is present among Muslim Americans as well, and it is one of the strongest factors that shapes willingness to assimilate into mainstream American society.

The band of others is found to be a powerful dynamic for mainstream society and Muslim Americans in almost every aspect of American public opinion. V. O. Key (1961, 535), in *Public Opinion and American Democracy*, argues that the study of public opinion is “bootless unless the findings about the preferences, aspirations, and prejudices of the public can be connected with the workings of the governmental system.” So, the question is what the theory of the band of others and its empirical influence on attitudes toward Muslims mean for democratic theory. Normatively, the welcoming nature of American Democracy for immigrants depends upon how mainstream society feels about the band of others. Warmer feelings toward the band will strengthen the dynamic nature of democracy in the United States. Conversely, as mainstream society gets more racist, xenophobic, homophobic, and anti-Semitic, the longstanding peaceful nature of American democracy may be harmed. It may be impossible to completely rid mainstream minds of ethnocentrism, but the govern-

ment institutions and opinion leaders of society may coordinate to lessen prejudice toward the band of others.

Muslim Americans' journey into becoming a part of mainstream society depends largely on the general mood toward this band. Will they move from the relatively disliked band (cultural/behavioral) to the relatively liked one (ethnic/racial band)? The historical accounts of previous immigrants' stories show signs of success. Jews and Catholics suffered from highly prejudiced public opinion but, in the end, social norms developed much warmer attitudes toward them. Today, they can be considered as indispensable members of mainstream America. Traumatic terrorist attacks by radical Islamists made Muslims, unfortunately, one of the most disliked groups in America. References to the Judeo-Christian foundations of American society have been salient during debates about whether Muslims can someday become part of mainstream American society. It may not be wrong to say that the current mood among mainstream Americans toward the band of others, not just Muslim Americans, is not very favorable.

So, I argue that Muslim Americans should take the initiative in terms of strengthening their willingness to assimilate into American society. Their socio-demographic features cannot be more favorable for a minority group to show their good faith in becoming part of the mainstream. Many Muslim Americans, unlike Muslims in Europe, are highly educated and earn mostly middle class income. They are self-employed business owners, doctors, lawyers, teachers, and students. When compared to the first Catholic and Jewish immigrants, these are very favorable strengths in terms of integration. These early immigrants had to work a lot

harder to have better socio-economic status in America. And, this upward-mobility played, arguably, the most important role in their journey into mainstream society. Muslim Americans already mirror middle class America, and this may provide a positive motive for their story. However, as the final chapter shows, they may be hit by ethnocentric attitudes, too. The hopes for integration based on their socio-demographic characteristics may be hindered by the level of prejudice they hold toward non-Muslims. Negative attitudes toward mainstream society or other minorities among Muslim Americans may impede the process of integration. Therefore, Muslims should make their positive socio-economic status salient in the eyes of mainstream American society, and put their own prejudices aside as much as possible. Middle class, highly educated, and hard working people have always been welcomed in the United States, and Muslim Americans should put effort into making their highly favorable features widely known by everybody in America.

To conclude, the United States has struggled throughout her history with the saddening history of slavery and dislike toward immigrants from time to time. But, the people of America have been able to overcome most of these ethnocentric sentiments. The contemporary United States has been credited for the mutual understanding of differences among ethnic, racial, and religious groups. Otherwise, it would be impossible to sustain the longest functioning democracy in the world. And, as this piece of research shows through multiple empirical tests, the key to this mutual understanding is attitudes toward the band of others. Positive opinions of the band of others, coupled with the willingness to blend in by Muslim Americans, will enhance the strength of the vibrant and affluent democracy in America.



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