How Do Religiosity and Immigrant Generation Level Affect Muslim American Political Participation? *

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This is a test abstract

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Introduction

Over three decades ago, research showed that Muslim Americans had well-developed political ideologies but lacked opportunities to influence American politics. Political participation data often reflected common sentiments among Muslims of disenfranchisement and disconnect from the political sphere (Hougland and Christenson 1983). Despite comprising a wealthy and well-educated segment of the population and theories to show correlative effects between affluence and political engagement, Muslim Americans were simply absent from this significant marker of integration. But everything changed post 9-11 as anxiety, fear, and defensiveness proved to be catalysts for political mobilization (Ayers and Hofstetter 2008). In their 2004 study, Ayers and Hofstetter show that Muslim anxiety and sensitivity post 9-11 accounted for a near 20% increase in voting from 1995. Muslim Americans were also more likely to be involved in a political party, demonstrate in a protest, or donate to a political campaign as a result, making them politically engaged on multiple levels.

I am interested in seeing the changes in Muslim American political participation since this research was produced. 9-11 created a heightened sense of awareness of Islamic extremism domestically. But since 9-11 Muslim Americans have had to face external threats as well. The growth of ISIS and other Muslim militant groups (Hamas, Hezbollah, Al Shabab, etc.) and the acts of terror that pledge allegiance to them have induced new fears in the global West. While militant groups engage in destructive wars in some Middle East and African countries and threaten destabilization in others, policies combating potential terrorism directly target Muslims abroad and have increasingly taken shape throughout countries with large Muslim minorities. If 9-11, and the perceived threats to Muslim Americans generated as a result, was a significant indicator in explaining increased political participation, what role have recent events and global trends played in their engagement in politics? Are rates of participation in line with previous research that linked increased anxiety with increased political participation or have new events depoliticized Muslim Americans and led them to pursue paths of consulation and solidarity within their community over fruitless political endeavors?

By using the Pew Research Center's 2017 survey of U.S. Muslims, I will assess new data on Muslim American political involvement and compare it with previous findings to examine changes over time. I am interested in seeing the correlation between Islamic affiliation and political participation broadly, but to understand the degree of interaction, I will control for two factors: degree of religiosity and immigrant generation level. By providing variation on Muslim American minorities, these two variables will provide us with added knowledge on who within

*Thanks to people and stuff

the community is more likely to be politically motivated. While degree of religiosity can show us whether religious devotion is likely to induce political involvement, looking at immigrant generation levels can tell us whether those who are more likely integrated into American society will feel more comfortable participating in its politics. Interestingly, there is a contrasting effect between these variables as I hypothesize the relationship between relgiosity and political participation to decrease as one becomes less relgious but to increase among Muslim Americans of higher generations.

Data and Methods

My data comes from Pew Research Center. The data includes results from a 2017 survey, conducted over fourteen weeks in 2016, on U.S. Muslims concerning their place in society. Pew's data is the result of 1,001 phone interviews with Muslim Americans 18 or older. In identifying target respondents, researchers relied on existing data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the American Community Survey on the Muslim American community to create a sampling plan that they believe speaks to the larger diaspora of Muslim Americans nationally. This means the number of initial screening interviews was very high- at about 40,000 phone numbers- but allowed enough room to maneuver to screen-out respondents in achieving a confident sample.

Respondents were weighted and ranked which means the design took into account areas with large Muslim congregations, respondent's birth regions, multi-adult households, and adults with both landline and cellphone numbers. They then created separate frames for each, weighted phone numbers that fit into those categories and divided them between stratums ranging from, for example, "Very high Muslim density" to "lowest Muslim density." In doing this, the design could both account for duplicates and yield a high probability sample since technically each adult in the U.S. had a probability of being included in the study.

The goal of the survey was to provide a broad description of Muslim American characteristics and attitudes and therefore drew on previous surveys of Muslim Americans from 2007 and 2011 to maintain this level of efficacy. They did, however, adjust the 2017 strategy to deal with increased concerns of government surveillance and accountability. To achieve this, interviews were conducted over the phone in English or the respondent's native language if necessary. In first establishing rapport with the respondent, surveyers asked broad questions and included questions on multiple relgious backgrounds to make the respondent feel they were not being targeted based on their religious affiliations. The interview included more than one attempt to identify relgious affiliation should the respondent feel uncomfortable in revealing this information from the outset and included a $50 incentive should they complete the survey. Once the interview was under way, the surveyors followed the survey design in asking broad quesions ranging from citizenship status to perceptions on American society.

Results

Conclusions

References

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