American Muslim Investment in Civil Society: Political Discussion, Disagreement, and Tolerance

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Abstract

Using data from a national survey of 465 American Muslims conducted just after the 2008 election season, the authors assess whether American Muslims are invested in the practices (political discussion, especially across lines of difference) and norms (tolerance) that many theorists suggest are crucial to the maintenance of liberal democracy. The authors find that American Muslims tend to be intolerant of acts against religion. The authors' explanation draws on intergroup relations theory, finding that post–September 11, 2001, discrimination served an educational function boosting tolerance, and disagreement in Muslim social networks tends to depress tolerance unless it is with an in-group discussion partner.

Keywords

In April 2010, the Miami-Dade Transit Authority (MDTA) decided to pull advertisements purchased by the New York-based organization Stop the Islamization of America that briefly appeared on MDTA buses, which read "Fatwa on your head? Is your community or family threatening you?" (Kaleem 2010). The MDTA pulled the ads after reporting the results of a review that the ads "may be offensive to Islam." In a statement, South Florida Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) chapter director Muhammed Malik responded to the ad by arguing (in part): "Islam guarantees freedom to and freedom from religion," and that the ads made false statements and promoted "bigotry" (Kaleem 2010). At issue here are fundamental questions concerning room for debate in a democracy and what we expect from majorities and minorities in their commitment to democratic norms of tolerance and respectful debate. In this article, we sidestep the normative arguments and ask two related questions: (1) are American Muslims tolerant when they are the target of threatening messages and actions, and (2) are American Muslims more or less tolerant when they encounter disagreement in political discussion?

Our goals for this article are threefold. First, we plan to assess the tolerance levels of American Muslims. Is it actually the case that American Muslims hold intolerant views? Second, we probe for the effects of reported discrimination since September 11, 2001, on Muslim tolerance levels, arguing that experiencing intolerable acts is,

somewhat paradoxically, a potent form of civic education. Primarily, and third, we focus on investigating the effects of experiencing interpersonal disagreement on tolerance levels conditional on the in-group status of the discussion partner. Using data collected from the first nationwide network and tolerance battery assessment of American Muslims, we find evidence to suggest that American Muslims are not very tolerant of acts against religious groups, that discriminatory experiences tend to promote tolerant attitudes, and that social network composition plays an important, conditional role in shaping Muslim tolerance levels. These findings, buoyed by strands of intergroup relations theory, should serve to challenge existing conceptions about American Muslims and their political behavior, as well as existing notions about the role of exposure to difference in a democracy.

Tolerance and American Muslims

Tolerance is a critical topic in the study of politics because without tolerance for differing ideas, democracy cannot

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be long-lived (Mill [1859] 1975). Indeed, when citizens are willing to use the administrative machinery of the state to suppress ideas, free choice is no longer operative. Thus, to enable democratic accountability and the representation of popular interests, people must be free to express their ideas fully. And without the sense that they are free to express themselves, people retreat to intolerant attitudes, intolerant families, and intolerant communities, all of which create a culture of conformity that endangers the broader set of political liberties (Gibson 1992).

Though the assessment of American Muslim tolerance is new, the study of tolerance itself in the political realm is not. Events of the twentieth century certainly provided enough fodder for those who were looking to be intolerant. For instance, it is not surprising that Americans were willing to strip others of their most basic civil liberties to suppress dissenting thought during the cold war (Stouffer 1955). Later studies using Stouffer's (1955) approach offered some hope, however, by showing increasing levels of tolerance of communists, socialists, and atheists (J. A. Davis 1975; Mueller 1988; Nunn, Crockett, and Williams 1978). Despite this, others using a different, "content-controlled" measurement strategy uncovered a much more widespread and troubling "pluralistic intolerance" (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus 1982; see also Gibson 1986; Mueller 1988), making the wider study of intolerance a continued concern for scholars.

One important reason advanced to explain the supposed increase in tolerance is that the questions employed in those early studies concerned communists and socialists, who became seen as less threatening over time (Beatty and Walter 1984; Mueller 1988; Nunn, Crockett, and Williams 1978). Indeed, the imminent threat of nuclear disaster had declined by the mid-1970s, with the United States not showing a single sign of falling to communism. One conclusion to draw from this is that tolerance reflects presumably stable value conflict, as well as the variable power of the group pushing said conflict. The latter component clearly focuses our attention on the threat a group poses.

The Role of Threat

The notion that threat is a factor in political tolerance has been clear since early work (Stouffer 1955), and it is now commonly understood that tolerance of a particular group will decrease if a group is thought of as threatening in some way (e.g., Gibson 1998, 2006; Marcus et al. 1995). Following the September 11, 2001, attacks, the perceived threat from Muslims was high and attacks against Muslims increased (American Academy of Religion 2001). Despite the relatively long experience Americans have had with tolerance and its expectations, the reaction from some non-Muslim Americans was not unexpected given the threat context in which it occurred. Even the most tolerant of

groups in American society, such as Jews, tend to react with intolerance when a threat against the group is made, such as by Nazis marching in Skokie, Illinois (Filsinger 1976; Jelen and Wilcox 1990).

One obvious question about American Muslims regards their experiences living in America after September 11, 2001, and after which many reported encountering discriminatory practices (Djupe and Green 2007). It may be obvious to suggest that the social and political experiences of American Muslims over the past decade may have promoted Muslim intolerance toward non-Muslims, either as a way of exacting revenge against an out-group majority seen as oppressive or in an effort to protect fellow in-group members. However, we draw on the real group conflict approach—a particular branch of intergroup relations (for reviews, see Huddy 2001; Monroe, Hankin, and Van Vechten 2000)—to reach a different conclusion. The real group conflict perspective suggests that group tensions are rooted in actual (as opposed to perceived) conflict, and thus focuses on shared, tangible goals (Sherif 1967) and identities (Gaertner and Dovidio 2000; Transue 2007) that can overcome intergroup tension.

Our expectations for the effects of facing discrimination are rooted in the educational effects of such an experience. Though the precise mechanisms are opaque, we see several viable candidates. Undergoing discriminatory treatment by the majority and its government may lead to the realization that others should not have to face the same treatment. Given that the United States has a basic commitment to tolerance and diversity, which was echoed by many elites after September 11, 2001, should provide minorities with a superordinate identity that may overcome narrow group divisions (Gaertner and Dovidio 2000). Alternately, or in addition, we expect that those experiencing discrimination would turn to organizations protective of their rights. These interest groups, such as the composite American Muslim Task Force and the Council on American-Islamic Relations, are devoted advocates for Muslim rights, but have also been at the forefront of making positive connections with the non-Muslim community in and out of politics. Over time, reports of such contact should have a positive educational value, serving to boost tolerance of those with discordant views. Therefore, realizing that our hypothesis is context dependent, we expect that experiencing discrimination at the hands of other Americans should, in time, promote tolerance among American Muslims. In another society without such powerful and shared cultural frames and legal recourse, however, it is possible that a far different outcome would occur.

Difference in Social Networks

We suspect that Muslim social networks hold important potential in explaining their tolerance attitudes. It is quite

an old idea that exposure to different views can promote a variety of democratic goods, including the tolerance of dissenting views (Mill [1859] 1975; for reviews, see Delli Carpini, Cook, and Jacobs 2004; Mendelberg 2002). It is widely regarded that exposure to diverse views is "essential for us to comprehend and to come to appreciate the perspective of others" (Benhabib 1992, 140; qtd. in Mutz 2002a). Experiencing debate over even the most fundamental of disagreements with a reciprocal exchange of views can instill a powerful sense of tolerance for those expressing those views (Gutmann and Thompson 1996). However, political tolerance can result from participation in something far less than ideal deliberative encounters. For example, Mutz (2002a) examines the effect of discussing politics with a person holding disagreeable views (without further qualification) and finds that engaging in "cross-cutting political talk" boosts political tolerance by working through increased awareness of the rationales for dissonant views (cognitive) and developing intimacy with those holding dissonant views (affective). This effect of cross-cutting political talk is consistent with previous findings about the negative effects on intolerance of other variables that are thought to control exposure to dissonant views—education, gender, and living in a rural area (e.g., Nunn, Crockett, and Williams 1978; Stouffer 1955; Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus 1982).

We suspect that disagreement in everyday political discussion affects people in different ways depending on the status of those expressing differences of opinion. Mutz (2002a) emphasized that the effects of disagreement depend on psychological orientations, such as a civil orientation toward conflict, but we suggest the structural location of the individual affects how disagreement is processed. This does not deny the importance of psychological orientations toward conflict, but instead provides an external motivation—group status—to process information in a particular way.

To experience opposition to one's views as a minority has much more serious ramifications than as a member of the majority. Majoritarians benefit from the weight of the majority behind them as they encounter minority positions. Work from the Asch experiments forward has found that the presence of a confederate allows a person to resist the arguments of another (Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague 2004; see also Noelle-Neumann 1993). Minorities have fewer confederates in society and may thus be particularly sensitive to disagreement.

Exposure of minorities to disagreement may call attention to group boundaries and intergroup conflict, as even trivial group distinctions can trigger contention (Hogg and Abrams 1988; Tajfel 1970; Tajfel and Turner 1986). Subsequent work has clarified that out-group hostility does not automatically follow from in-group affinity (Brewer 1979; Brewer and Campbell 1976), which leads to inquiries about the conditions under which out-group antipathy is generated.

As Brewer (1999; see also D.W. Davis 2007) maintains, several dynamics serve to induce out-group hostility and are of interest here. When sufficiently large in-group cultures take the force of a "moral authority," antipathy to those who do things differently is likely, though this is not sufficient to produce hostility when groups remain segregated. Only with contact does hostility result. A second dynamic involves the threat induced by real group conflict, as described briefly previously. Brewer (1999, 435-36) argues that "the perception that an out-group constitutes a threat to in-group interests or survival" generates the conditions necessary for hostility toward the out-group.

These two dynamics make clear how minorities may react to encountering disagreement from in-group and out-group members. In-group disagreement, in this case with other Muslims, should have the same effect of promoting tolerance as is most often discussed in the literature. Such encounters are not set in the context of threat, nor do they traverse the bounds of the in-group's "moral superiority." In-group agreement should reinforce in-group solidarity, which is enough to motivate discrimination against out-groups (Brewer 1999).

If exposure to disagreement between groups triggers a sense of threat in randomly assigned groups, it is even more likely to do so in groups with fresh, ongoing, minority-based experiences like American Muslims. When minorities experience disagreement coming from nonminorities, in this case Muslims experiencing disagreement as expressed by non-Muslims, group boundaries will be heightened because it both challenges their moral superiority and highlights a threat to the interests of the in-group. As a result, they will become less willing to tolerate noxious political speech and action. This should be especially true for tolerance of statements directly attacking the group, but should also apply more generally to tolerance for any noxious sentiment. Experiencing agreement with an out-group member should boost tolerance since it reduces threat and suggests a potential superordinate, shared identity that can transcend narrow group boundaries.

Alternate Explanations

Lastly, we include several controls that have featured in other tolerance studies. Specifically, we expect women to be more intolerant than men. This is, in part, because they are more threat responsive than men (Marcus et al. 1995), but also because women tend to have more insular social networks than their male counterparts (McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1986; Popielarz 1999). Higher education has been a consistent predictor of more tolerant attitudes since the earliest studies (Stouffer 1955), and we expect no differently here. Income reflects a higher education, but it

also enables meeting a wider circle of acquaintances, and may be linked to higher tolerance levels. Those born in the United States as second-generation Americans have a tendency to throw off ethnic and religious affiliations and embrace their country of residence. To the extent this means their social networks are more diverse and cross group boundaries, we expect that second-generation American Muslims will show greater tolerance.

Equally longstanding to the effect of education is the finding that more religious Americans are less tolerant (Stouffer 1955). In particular, fundamentalist Christians who regard the Bible as the literal word of God hold a set of beliefs that strongly influence their political beliefs (Wilcox, Jelen, and Leege 1993, 85), encouraging them to reject "unbiblical" lifestyles such as homosexuality (Reimer and Park 2001, 736). These dogmatic beliefs lead to intolerance since the dogmatic are unlikely to accept other beliefs and lifestyles they find contrary to the Bible (Burdette, Ellison, and Hill 2005; Gibson and Tedin 1988; Jelen and Wilcox 1990; Layman 2000; Reimer and Park 2001, 736; Robinson 2010; Smidt and Penning 1982; Steensland et al. 2000; Wilcox and Jelen 1990; Wilcox and Larson 2006, 137; but see Eisenstein 2008).

Religious practice can also lead to intolerance by encouraging religious individuals to remain cloistered in cohesive social groups without exposure to dissonant beliefs (Green et al. 1994, 32; Reimer and Park 2001, 736; though see Neiheisel, Djupe, and Sokhey 2009). This sequestered atmosphere is the opposite of the cosmopolitan lifestyle associated with secular individuals that feeds tolerant attitudes (Green et al. 1994, 29). We include measures that tap both belief (literal interpretation of the Koran) and practice (religious attendance) dimensions of religion, expecting both variables to exert negative effects on tolerance. However, we suspect that they both may not be consistent predictors across our various measures of tolerance. Since religious attendance may contribute to a less diverse network, we suspect that it may depress all tolerance measures equally, but dogmatic religious beliefs may be limited in effect to items that are salient to religion. In particular, literal belief in the Koran may only affect religious tolerance and tolerance regarding anti-Islamic acts.

Data and Design

Our data are drawn from a national survey of American Muslims inquiring about their social network practices and political tolerance. The survey included a series of political participation, demographic, tolerance, and network battery questions and was executed using mail surveys and CATI technology from one of the author's universities between February and August 2009 (individuals without phone contact information were sent paper-based surveys). This effort yielded 465 completed responses.

In the absence of an exclusive sampling frame of American Muslims, and with limited financial resources to screen the religious affiliation of hundreds of thousands of people living in areas where the American Muslim population is generally clustered, we based our sampling strategy on an innovative methodology designed to increase corresponding hitrates without jeopardizing the selection probabilities for the resulting sample. Our approach was based on a simple augmentation technique. We executed our two-tier approach using a "first-tier" subset of an overall frame of 724,480 persons determined to have a Muslim surname in the Aristotle database.[1] Our selected subset consisted of 15,000 people. This created our primary sample. Following this, a supplementary sample was selected from the remaining frame in a fashion analogous to the list-assisted method of random digit dialing (RDD), where telephone numbers are selected proportionate to the residential density of telephone banks. Here, our "second-tier" sample of 10,000 was selected using a probability proportional to size (PPS) technique for which the size measure was a function of the percentage of voters inferred to be Muslim in each ZIP code.

By merging an external list of Muslim surnames into the Aristotle database, we partitioned the entire frame into six mutually exclusive strata (two for the first tier and four for the second). The first stratum consisted of those who had a Muslim surname and were coded as such. The second stratum included those with only a Muslim surname. The other four strata were constructed based on the percentage of those who either had a Muslim surname or were coded as such, with the fourth stratum having the lowest percentage as compared to the remaining three in the final four.

Given the highly nonuniform distribution of the Aristotle records across the six strata, we needed an efficient allocation plan to produce a probability-based sample that could reach a sizeable number of American Muslims while including sample contacts from all strata and achieving cost efficiency. Assuming equal variances across all strata and a cost function directly proportional to the screening effort, i_h represents the hitrate for a Muslim in stratum h, which is a monotonically decreasing function of the stratum index

$$n_h = n \times \frac{N_h \sqrt{i_h}}{\sum N_h \sqrt{i_h}}.$$

This sampling strategy is similar to the one employed in 2007 by the Pew Research Center. Though the Pew study benefitted from prodigious resource availability in constructing its sample, an examination of differences in demographic characteristics on respondent sex, immigrant status, race/ethnicity, and Sunni or Shi'a affiliation
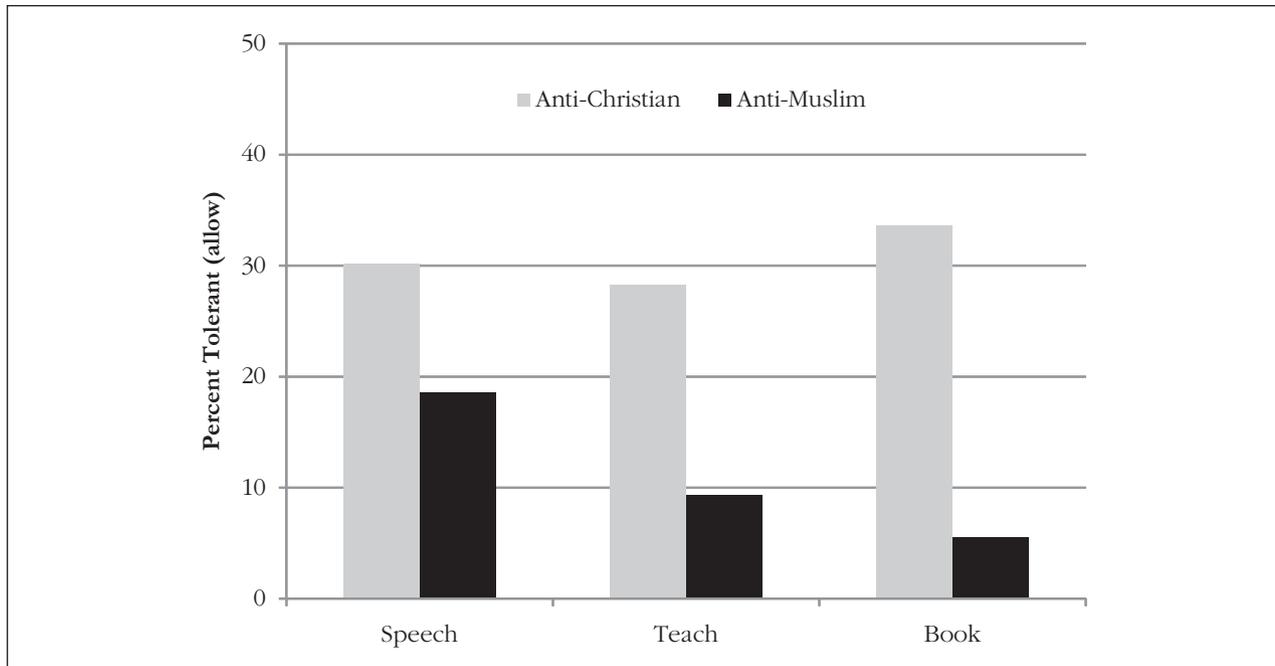
Figure 1. The percentage of Muslims willing to tolerate different acts intolerant of Christians and Muslims

between ours and the Pew study reveals a relatively modest comparison spread on each indicator.[2] This gives us greater confidence in the representativeness of our sample and the ability to speak more generally concerning the implications of our results.

Tolerance, Discrimination, and Network Measures

We use four dependent variables to capture respondent willingness to tolerate speech and actions they dislike. The first is a religious tolerance measure, asking whether the respondent agrees or disagrees that "Islam should tolerate diverse interpretations of its teachings."[3] For this 4-point, Likert-scale item, we use ordered logit to estimate our model. We then created a series of count variables capturing political tolerance. We asked the same three items for two groups patterned off of the General Social Survey's Stouffer battery. We introduced the first series of items with, "There are always some people whose ideas are considered bad or dangerous by other people— for instance, somebody who is against Christianity." Thus, the first three items asked if people against Christianity should be able to make a speech in their community, teach in a college or university, and have their book removed from the public library. For the second set of items, we substituted in the introductory text "someone who is against Islam."

The distribution of these items is presented in Figure 1, which shows how low American Muslims' tolerance for

anti-religious speech and action is. Around 30 percent are willing to tolerate anti-Christian speech and acts, but far fewer are willing to tolerate actions against Islam. Just under 20 percent would allow a speech against Islam in their community, half that many (9 percent) would allow a person against Islam to teach in a university, and almost half that many (6 percent) would keep a book against Islam in the library. From these six dichotomous items, we made three indices—one for each group of three questions and one combining both groups. The alpha for the anti-Christian tolerance index was .50, for the anti-Islam index it was .54, and for the combined index it was .64. Because these variables are counts, we use Poisson regression to estimate the models.

Regarding discrimination experienced by Muslims after September 11, 2001, our survey asked if respondents were threatened or attacked (4.5 percent said yes), if law enforcement officers had singled out the respondent (9.5 percent said yes), and if people acted suspiciously of the respondent (22.8 percent said yes); 28 percent reported experiencing at least one type of discrimination. These figures are considerably lower than those reported by Djupe and Green (2007) using the Project Muslim in the American Public Square (MAPS) data from 2001 and 2004. They report that more than 56 percent either faced discrimination themselves or knew that others had (59 percent in 2004). More specific questions yielded much lower figures—44 percent reported verbal abuse, 12 percent physical abuse, 24 percent racial profiling, and 18 percent denied employment. The differences may be related to

time and question wording. Our questions were asked eight years after the event. But primarily, our questions asked if respondents had been discriminated against "because of your faith." It is possible to imagine that some may view their discrimination as a result of their race rather than their religion and hence may disagree with the question despite suffering discrimination. We include these measures individually in the analyses that follow.

Our other primary independent variables are captured by way of a social network battery such as has been used since the 1986 General Social Survey (see Marsden 1987). To gather data on up to three discussion partners, we adapted the political name generator language first used by Huckfeldt and Sprague (1995) in their 1984 South Bend study and since used in the 1992 Cross-National Election Study and the 2000 and 2008 American National Election Studies (ANES), among others.[4] The effects of using different name generator language are generally small (Klofstad, McClurg, and Rolfe 2009). The key questions for this analysis include the extent of disagreement in the discussion dyad (the respondent-discussant pair) and whether the discussant was a Muslim or not. To gain the disagreement measure, we asked, "When you discuss politics with this person, do you disagree (1) rarely, (2) sometimes, or (3) often." Overall, 8 percent disagreed often with their discussion partner, 44 percent disagreed sometimes, and 49 percent disagreed rarely. This distribution does not vary by the Muslim identity of the discussion partner (p = .20), but points to being slightly higher when the respondent had a Muslim discussant (mean of 1.61 vs. 1.55 for non-Muslim discussants). While discussion with Muslims and non-Muslims may not be different in disagreeable content, we expect that the effects of disagreement with a non-Muslim may be far different than with a Muslim, as discussed earlier.

We also include the size of the respondent's network under the theory that larger networks are more likely to include weak ties (Granovetter 1973; Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995). Networks with weak ties, in which the respondent's discussion partners do not know each other, are likely to include a diversity of views necessary to enhance tolerance. We also include the perceived political expertise of the discussant since those with political knowledge tend to have the qualities that are related to higher tolerance levels, such as higher education (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Huckfeldt 2001). Hence, discussion with political experts may help to spread tolerance.

Our survey data are novel in the sense that the social networks of sizeable numbers of American Muslims have never before been mapped. To get a sense for what they look like and what that means, we show the distribution of some key Muslim network measures alongside comparable measures from different religious traditions as captured in the 2000 ANES. The religious traditions were defined by the procedure laid out by Steensland et al.

(2000). On several of the items, the coding options varied slightly between our items and the items on the ANES, so we standardized all measures by placing them on a 0 to 1 distribution. The results for six measures are displayed in Figure 2. The first is the network average political agreement, which ranges from a low of .59 in Muslim networks to .74 in Jewish social networks. The rest of the religious traditions lie closer to Muslims' networks (.62 in Catholic networks and .64 in Black Protestant networks) than to Jewish networks.

While Muslims networks may have close to average levels of political agreement, they are not nearly as politically charged as are the networks of adherents of other religious traditions. Levels of political discussion and politically expert discussion partners are significantly lower among Muslims than in other traditions. Political talk is over 10 percent lower in Muslim networks, and political expertise in Muslim networks is about 20 percent lower than in the average religious tradition. Furthermore, Muslims do not appear to be as widely integrated in society. Muslims are at roughly the median position in terms of networks containing a coworker (22 percent), but Muslim networks have higher proportions of women (by about 15 percent) and tend to have more family (by almost 10 percent, on average).[5] We left out a comparison of same-church discussion partners because the items are not comparable. We asked if the discussant was Muslim, of which 69 percent of discussants were (the average network was composed of 67 percent Muslims; 53 percent of networks were solely composed of Muslims, while 21 percent contained no other Muslims). However, the ANES asked a subset of respondents if the discussants were a member of the same *house of worship*, of which only 6 percent were on average (11 percent among evangelicals and 6 percent among Jews).[6]

Thus, Muslims' social networks are distinctive and mirror their minority status. They do not appear to reflect a considerable degree of political motivation, primarily shown in their lower level of agreement, which should be driven by a mix of motivation and discussant supply (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995). But this also could be a function of their minority status, since a supply of discussion partners may be low outside of the family and Islamic center or mosque. If their networks are not politically charged, then Muslims may be at a disadvantage in the political process since social ties constitute a significant source of cheap, quality information shortcuts (Downs 1957; Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995; Sokhey and McClurg, forthcoming). The insularity of their networks is also suggestive of why their tolerance levels are low, since open networks promote exposure to diverse views and working with others beyond one's own group.

While we are here, it is interesting to note the distribution of networks in the other religious traditions. In particular,
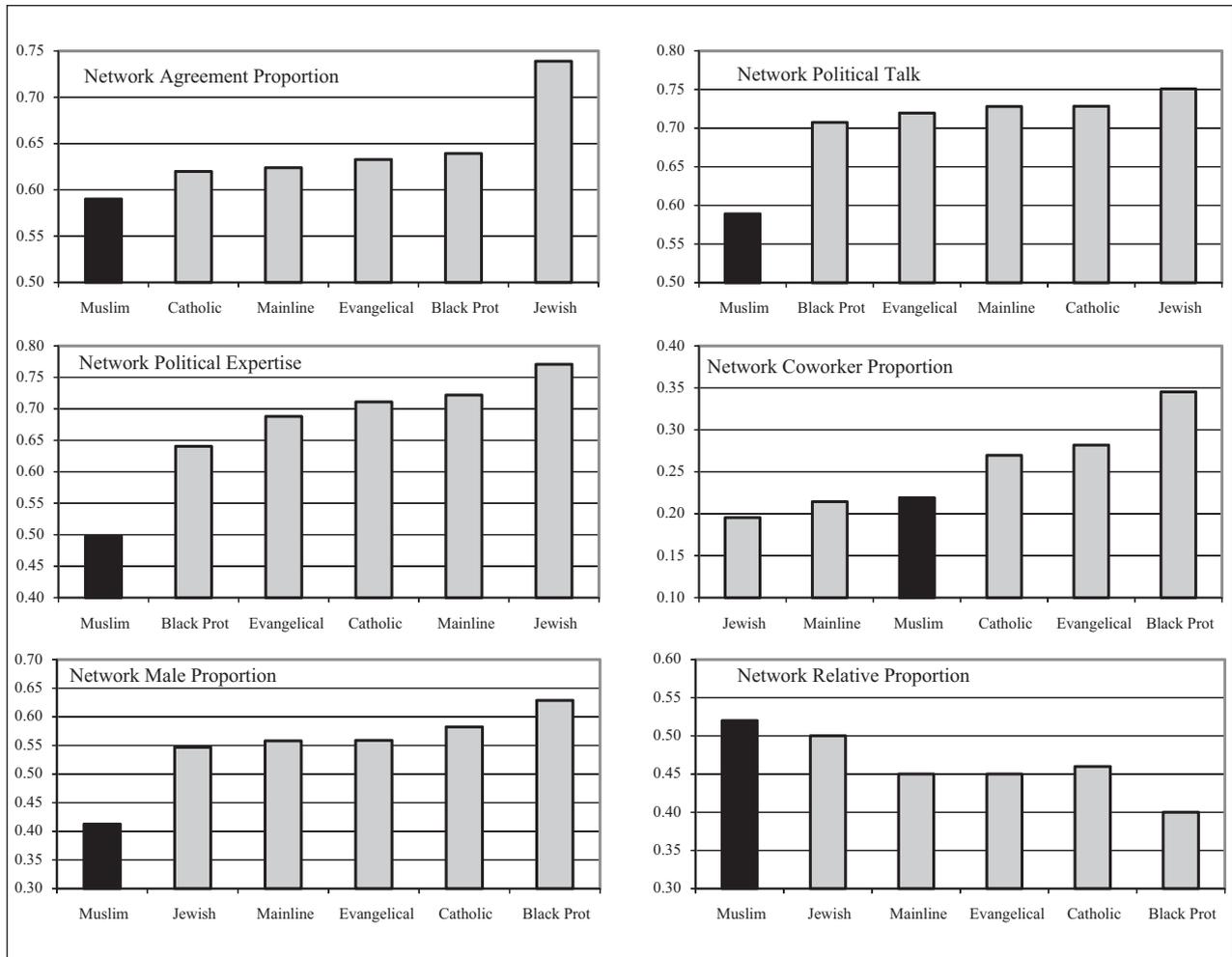
Figure 2. Comparison of social network compositions by religious tradition

we are interested in where evangelicals fall in these distributions since there is a widespread assumption that evangelical networks are especially religious, insular, and agreeable with strong ties between members. Evangelical networks are statistically equivalent to mainline Protestant networks in levels of agreement, discussion, and the proportion of relatives, but have miniscule (if significant) differences between them in political expertise (the mainline has more), same church discussants (evangelicals have more), and coworker discussants (evangelicals have more). It certainly seems that assumptions of evangelicals as socially distinctive from the rest of society are quite overblown—evangelicals rank near the middle on every measure of their networks examined, save the proportion of coworkers.

Results: Determinants of Religious and Political Tolerance

We now turn our attention to the models of tolerance—the results are presented in Table 1 for the four dependent variables described previously. Again, these include a measure of the degree to which Islam needs to accommodate different interpretations (religious tolerance), measures of tolerance for anti-Islamic and anti-Christian acts (separately), and a summary measure combining tolerance for anti-Islamic and anti-Christian acts (all political tolerance). The first three independent variables test our core assertions about the conditional effects of disagreement in networks. They function in the same way across all four models, and all three variables are statistically significant in each model. Throughout, disagreement levels in the discussion dyad exert a downward pressure on tolerance. As we expected, having a Muslim discussant likewise depresses tolerance. However, the interaction of the Muslim discussant and disagreement is positive and significant, indicating that disagreement works differently coming from Muslim and non-Muslim discussants.

To simplify the interpretation of the interaction term, we present Figure 3, which estimates the probability of being tolerant of anti-Islamic expression (the others work similarly). There we see that the probability of being tolerant is highest when the respondent experiences agreement with a non-Muslim. Tolerance is lowest when there

Table 1. Estimates of Four Measures of Religious and Political Tolerance

Independent variables	Diverse interpretations of Islam (ordered logit)			Tolerance of anti-Muslim acts (Poisson)			Tolerance of anti-Christian acts (Poisson)			Total tolerant acts (Poisson)		
Social network measures												
Disagreement	−.44	.22	**	−.51	.23	**	−.30	.13	**	−.36	.11	***
Muslim discussant	−.82	.44	*	.77	.41	*	−.51	.24	**	−.56	.21	***
Muslim × Disagreement	.43	.26	*	.52	.26	**	.27	.15	*	.33	.13	***
Discussant expertise	−.08	.12		−.08	.11		−.01	.07		−.03	.06	
Political talk	−.05	.11		.08	.10		.06	.06		.07	.05	Ұ
Network size	.29	.09	***	.22	.09	***	.00	.05		.07	.04	Ұ
Post 9/11 experiences												
R threatened or attacked	.15	.43		.79	.31	***	.26	.21		.41	.18	**
Suspicion toward R	−.03	.18		−.07	.17		−.10	.10		−.08	.09	
Targeted by police	.67	.30	**	.18	.25		.26	.16	*	.23	.13	*
Celebrate July 4th	−.14	.09	Ұ	−.13	.09	Ұ	−.04	.05		−.07	.04	*
Demographics												
Female	.15	.16		−.17	.14		−.19	.09	**	−.18	.07	***
Education	−.15	.07	**	.09	.06	Ұ	−.04	.04		.00	.03	
Religious attendance	−.18	.09	**	−.08	.08		−.13	.05	***	−.11	.04	***
Koran literalism	−.17	.12	Ұ	−.18	.11	*	.07	.07		.00	.06	
Income	.06	.08		.18	.07	***	.06	.04	Ұ	.10	.04	***
Born in the United States	.25	.15	*	.14	.14		.23	.08	***	.21	.07	***
Age	−.92	.11	***	−.56	.11	***	−.39	.06	***	−.44	.06	***
Constant				.26	.61		1.20	.36	***	1.52	.31	***
Model statistics	$N = 629$, LR $\chi^2 = 112.4$†, pseudo $R^2 = .07$, Cut 1 = −4.59 (.68) Cut 2 = −2.63 (.67) Cut 3 = −.95 (.66)			$N = 631$, LR $\chi^2 = 79.6$†, pseudo $R^2 = .08$			$N = 631$, LR $\chi^2 = 85.0$†, pseudo $R^2 = .05$			$N = 631$, LR $\chi^2 = 141.7$†, pseudo $R^2 = .06$		

Source: 2009 American Muslim Survey.
*$p < .10$, **$p < .05$, ***$p < .01$ (two-tailed). Ұ$p < .10$ (one-tailed test). †$p < .001$ (one-tailed χ^2 test).

is agreement with a Muslim. Disagreement with a non-Muslim erases the benefit of intergroup contact in the sense that tolerance deceases, while disagreement with a Muslim produces the tolerance boost attributed to exposure to disagreement in the literature (Mutz 2002a). The magnitudes shift slightly across the four models, but the pattern is the same. The effect of disagreement on tolerance is conditional on the group ties of the discussion partner consistent with the intergroup relations literature.

Of the remainder of our network variables, expertise has no effect either way, political discussion has a positive but insignificant effect, and only network size exerts a consistent and significant effect in line with our expectations. That is, a larger political network boosts tolerance of diverse views in all cases except tolerance of anti-Christian acts, but especially in the cases of religious tolerance (column 1) and political tolerance of anti-Islamic expression (column 2).

To the extent they predict tolerant attitudes, experiences with discrimination after 9/11 predict greater tolerance, though different experiences predict different measures of tolerance. Being targeted by the police boosts the probability of greater acceptance that Islam should accept diverse interpretations (column 1). Police targeting boosts tolerance of anti-Christian acts (column 3), while having been threatened boosts tolerance of anti-Muslim acts (by 34 percent in column 2—one of the largest effects in the model and only slightly larger than the effects of disagreement and having a Muslim discussant). The experience of being threatened or attacked physically and being targeted by the police boosts the probability of more political tolerance using the combined measure of anti-Islamic and anti-Christian acts (column 4). It is hard to deny that the personal experience of discrimination lends a powerful lesson in the necessity of respecting political liberties in a free society. Interestingly, the perception that others
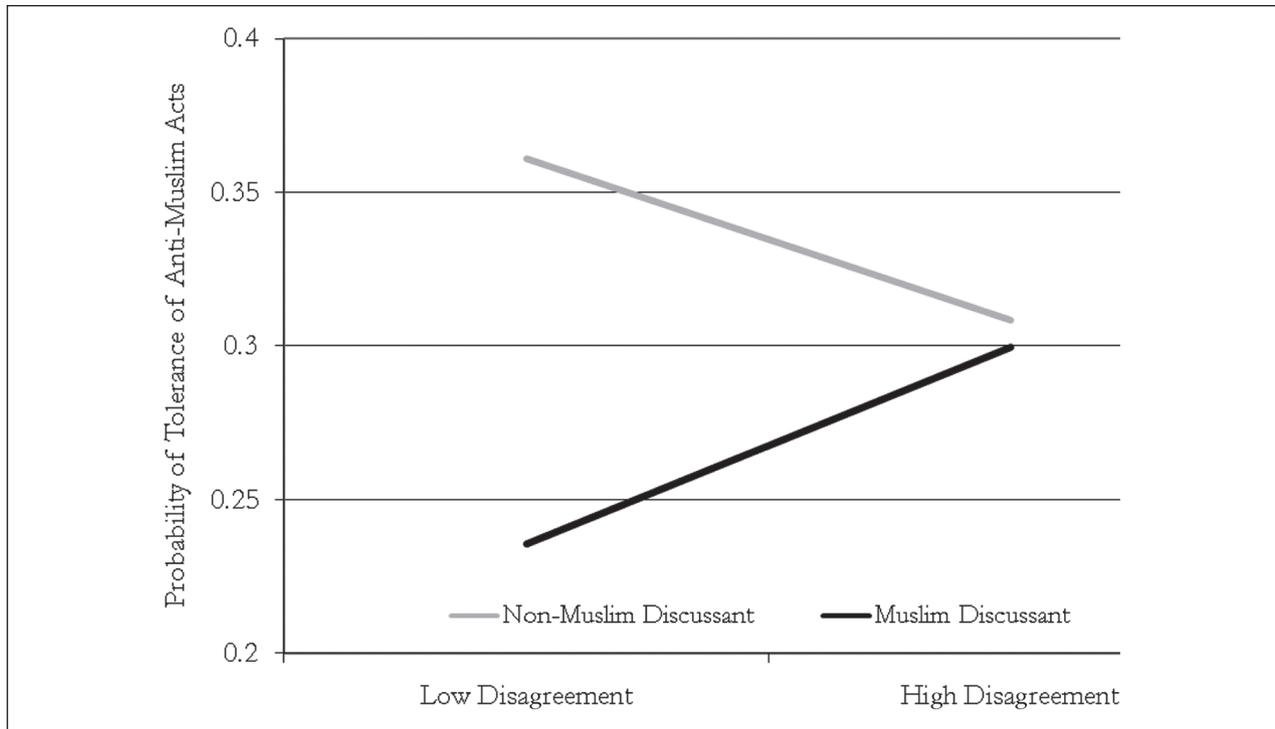
Figure 3. The probability of Muslims willing to tolerate acts intolerant of Muslims given the Muslim identification of and disagreement with the political discussant (estimates from Table 1, column 2)

are suspicious of the respondent points insignificantly toward being less tolerant, while celebrating the 4th of July consistently predicts less tolerance. Love of country is not necessarily a good predictor of upholding its founding principles.

Lastly, most of our personal control variables work as the literature would predict, with a few exceptions. By and large, women are more intolerant than are men except in the cases of anti-Islamic acts (columns 1 and 2), perhaps as a reflection of a desire for greater women's rights within the modern Islamic tradition. Education has inconsistent effects across the four models. It is insignificantly related to the total index and tolerance of anti-Christian acts but leads to greater intolerance for diverse interpretations of Islam (column 1) and yet greater tolerance of anti-Muslim acts (column 2). Since the highly educated are more likely to be ideologically consistent, perhaps they are more opposed to diversity of interpretation but act in a way consistent with the literature supporting the rights of people in the public square. Higher income in all but one case (diverse interpretations in column 1) boosts tolerance, while being a citizen consistently predicts higher tolerance except in the case of anti-Islamic acts. Older Muslims are more intolerant on all measures.

Religion works in ways largely consistent with predictions. Previous work suggests that religious dogmatism may promote intolerance of views opposed by the religious

tradition, suggesting a measure of salience is necessary to apply dogmatic beliefs to tolerance judgments (Gibson and Tedin 1988; Jelen and Wilcox 1990; Layman 2000; Reimer and Park 2001; Robinson 2010; Smidt and Penning 1982; Steensland et al. 2000; Wilcox and Larson 2006; Wilcox, Jelen, and Leege 1993). That is precisely what we find here—those with a literal view of the Koran are more intolerant of diverse interpretations of Islam and anti-Islamic actions but are not more or less tolerant of anti-Christian acts (or the combined index in column 4). Moreover, greater religious attendance depresses tolerance in all cases but tolerance of anti-Islamic acts, though the coefficient points in the same, predicted negative direction.

The literature suggests that attendance works this way because it promotes a more insular social network that limits the diversity of experience that is necessary to sustain tolerant views (Green et al. 1994, 32; Reimer and Park 2001, 736). However, while a reasonable supposition, there is simply no evidence to support it in these data. The networks of those who attend more often are no different than those who attend less often—they do not contain more or less agreement, family, coworkers, or Muslims (the latter three are measures of insularity—results not shown). So why does attendance promote intolerance across the board? We suspect attendance fuels intolerance by failing to broaden awareness of competing views

through political communication in houses of worship since such an awareness is a critical force fueling tolerance (Mutz 2002a). Supporting this view, Djupe and Neiheisel (2008; see also Djupe and Calfano 2010) find that clergy tend to communicate about four arguments in favor of their position for every one against it. Thus, the consistent imbalance in argumentation from clergy may promote intolerance consistently. Working against this interpretation, clergy also almost universally promote tolerance regardless of their positions on salient political issues, though tolerance arguments are a potent heuristic themselves (Djupe et al. 2009). We do not have the data to test the effects of these possibilities on tolerance directly, but sorting out this empirical puzzle is of some significance.

Conclusion

Political theorists have long thought that respect for competing views is essential to the maintenance of a free society. Important to gaining a sense of respect is exposure to a difference of views, which can either reinforce truth by its "collision with error" or correct error by seeing truth (Mill [1859] 1975). To be sure, not all agree that exposure to disagreement is salutary, since it can encourage avoidance (Ulbig and Funk 1999), depress participation (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954; Mutz 2002b, 2006), and bring hostility and perhaps even violence (e.g., Scorza 2004). But the weight of evidence thus far suggests that experiencing disagreement will boost tolerance of the expression of even noxious views in the public sphere.

We sought to qualify the view that exposure to difference in social networks has consistent effects on tolerance by examining the tolerance judgments of a minority group in the United States—American Muslims—that has received considerable attention, much of it negative, this past decade. Drawing on intergroup relations theory, we hypothesized that the effect on tolerance of disagreement in social networks would be conditional on the group attachment of the discussion partner. Facing disagreement with a member of one's own group would promote tolerance, while disagreement with a member of the majority would reinforce group boundaries and hostility to challenges to the group. Recognizing the limitation of cross-sectional data, we found consistent evidence supporting the conditional effects of disagreement across a variety of tolerance measures. Disagreement does not affect tolerance in the same way for everyone. The beneficial effect of disagreement is a special case of network composition, though it is a common one since the majority is likely to discuss politics with an in-group (majority) member. At least from minorities' perspective, crossing too many lines of difference does not enhance respect for pluralism.

This dynamic is consistent with the argument laid out by R. Laurence Moore (1986) in his *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans*, in which antagonism from society leads to a focus of energy inward to the group and a drive to better the status of group members. Eventually, success is the undoing of the insularity of the group, but also the making of Americans by overcoming narrow group loyalties and promoting integration into society. This may help explain why American Muslims do not look appreciably different from the rest of America, except that they tend to have higher status; still, as Wuthnow and Hackett (2003) note, their political integration is lacking. Muslims have reduced engagement with politics through their networks, and those discussions are more likely to be disagreeable than are average American networks. It is clearly not enough to have interreligious contact in order to boost tolerance (e.g., Putnam and Campbell 2010)—that contact must be agreeable. Political disagreement in the network promotes insularity in the form of a desire to protect the religious group.

These findings are also consistent with an emerging line of inquiry in the social network literature exploring conditional network effects (see Djupe and Gilbert 2009; Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague 2004; McClurg 2006). While very little is known about the networks of minorities in the United States (though see Leighley and Matsubayashi 2009), there is considerable value in adding social network batteries to studies with sufficient numbers of minorities to assess theories developed in the context of majoritarian, representative samples. We find it hard to believe that networks will function similarly given differences in the status, psychology, and resources of participants (for examples, see Djupe and Gilbert 2009; Mondak 2010).

We also uncovered the surprising finding that those who reported experiencing discrimination after September 11 because of their faith were more tolerant than those without such an experience. Tellingly, the feeling that others were suspicious of the respondent was not enough to trigger tolerant attitudes. Instead, the actual experience of intolerance was enlightening to those with the misfortune to endure it. We do not argue that discrimination is a useful educational vehicle, of course, but in the aftermath of 9/11 when political elites and everyday people were relatively united in their expressions of tolerance for Muslims, it is heartening that victims of discrimination were able to see the need for tolerance and grasp hold of this powerful resource for minorities in truly free societies.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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Notes

1. Aristotle is a data provision and management company that supplies voter information and analysis tools primarily to campaigns.
2. Survey demographic comparisons: percentage female Muslims: Pew (46 percent), authors (41 percent); born in United States: Pew (35 percent), authors (45 percent); Asian Muslims: Pew (20 percent), authors (17 percent); African American Muslims: Pew (26 percent), authors (31 percent); Sunni Muslims: Pew (50 percent), authors (64 percent).
3. For full variable coding, please contact the lead author or see the appendix available online at http://prq.sagepub.com/supplemental/.
4. The text used is as follows: "Now let's move to another area. From time to time, most people discuss politics with others. Looking back over the last six months, please think about the two or three people you talked with the most about political matters. To keep this survey anonymous, please do not tell me their names. I will just ask you for the first initial of each person you speak with about politics. Let's begin."
5. Perhaps not surprisingly, male discussants of women respondents are more likely to be spouses or relatives than are female discussants of men respondents. Thus, Muslim women tend to be a bit less integrated into wider society than men, replicating common findings (e.g., McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1982, 1986).
6. Djupe and Sokhey (2008) argue that even this estimate is flawed since the American National Election Studies (ANES) did not allow for discussants to be listed under multiple affiliations because of skip patterns—for instance, they could not be family members *and* church members or spouses and coworkers. Thus, the number of church member discussants in the 2000 ANES, and from other surveys using the same procedure, is a vast undercount.

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