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MUSLIM WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES AND EXPERIENCES WITH DISCRIMINATION

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“My hijab erases my blackness.” – Sarah, 27

Few group identities in the United States are as durable as Black racial identity, so Sarah’s matter-of-fact statement in discussing how swift her identity as a Black woman was subsumed by her physical marker of wearing a hijab (head-scarf) reveals how powerful Islamophobia has become in the United States. The heightened state of Islamophobia is also coupled with the fact that Muslim women are currently the most politically vocal Muslims in national American political discourse, as evidenced by the rising popularity and attention of two members of the infamous “squad”; Congresswomen Ilhan Omar (MN-05) and Rashida Tlaib (MI-13). Their inauguration into Congress with three other women of color as outspoken progressive Democrats has also opened them up to various levels of personal attack for being Muslim. Omar is a hijab-wearing Black Muslim woman and first-generation Somali American, and Tlaib is a non-hijab-wearing Arab Muslim woman who proudly discusses being a Detroit native with roots from Palestine. Like Sarah, attacks targeted toward Ilhan Omar overlook her Blackness and fixate on her foreignness, evidenced by former president Donald Trump encouraging his supporters at a rally to target Omar and ‘send her back!’ (BBC News, 2019). Omar and Tlaib’s examples represent the diversity of Muslim women in America. However, there is a limited understanding of how Muslim women internalize Islamophobia and perceive discrimination, and whether it affects their political efficacy.

This chapter offers a portrait of how Muslim women perceive discrimination in a distinct way, compared to Muslim men, and examines its relationship with political efficacy (trust in the government and political processes).

Drawing on my originally collected data of a nationally representative survey of 1,000 Muslims and 40 in-depth interviews with Muslims in various regions, my mixed methods evidence reveals that Muslim women, on average, perceive discrimination as a larger issue than Muslim men do. The interview findings further illuminate that the manifestations of discrimination vary by their racial and ethnic background and their socialization into the climate of Islamophobia. This is the case particularly for Black Muslim women who negotiate a social climate that is both anti-Black and Islamophobic. The distinctive intersection of racial background (Black versus Arab women, for example) with women's acclimation to gendered Islamophobia reveals the nuanced ways women react to Islamophobia. This relationship is found to be politically consequential for Muslim women, wherein they have lower levels of trust in government, that is, political efficacy, compared to Muslim men. Most often, discourse around Muslim women flattens their identities to just religion; this chapter offers an account of how Muslim women consider the shifting socio-political climate in a manner that takes into consideration the complexities of their identities as women of color.

Gendered Islamophobia

Central to understanding the heightened perceptions of discrimination and experience of Muslim women is understanding their reaction to a specific type of Islamophobia; gendered Islamophobia (Beydoun and Sedique, 2022). Islamophobia refers to the fear and prejudice that individuals may harbor toward Muslims, that is connected with the process of flattening Muslims into stereotypical tropes. Gendered Islamophobia argues that intrinsic in the development of Islamophobia are the curation of stereotypes that bifurcate Muslim men from Muslim women, treating men as violent, terroristic individuals and women as foreign, exotic, submissive, and meek.

The hyperattention surrounding Muslims and levels of Islamophobia escalated after the terrorist attacks in New York City on September 11, 2001. Implicated in the attack were not only the political actors who came from Muslim backgrounds, but Muslims writ large who were seen as complicit in their crimes by sharing the same faith-based background (Beydoun, 2018). Right-wing conspiracy theories that Muslims were all inherently violent and untrustworthy began entering mainstream discourse with media circuits and in the government (Bail, 2012). Government policies like the PATRIOT Act eased restrictions to allow law enforcement to investigate Muslims with limited evidence. Police surveillance strategies explicitly targeted Muslims, such as the New York Police Department's establishing a special investigative unit that mapped Muslim communities for surveillance, not only in New York, but within the surrounding region (Associated Press, 2012). Media portrayals of Muslims became increasingly negative, affecting the diminished favorability towards Muslims by

the general American public (Lajevardi and Abrajano, 2019; Aziz, 2021; Bleich, 2021). Hate crimes spiked drastically, with targeted attacks towards individuals perceived to be Muslim and religious community centers (Elsheikh et al., 2017). Islamophobia has endured in the two decades following 9/11, with the impacts of Islamophobia affecting former President Barack Obama being smeared as the “first Muslim president” and Donald Trump’s ascension into office and his anti-Muslim remarks bringing a heightened level of targeted attacks on Muslims (Lajevardi and Abrajano, 2019; Sedique, 2019;).

Inherent in these dynamics is that Muslim women are treated and perceived distinctly from Muslim men. *Gendered Islamophobia* orients a Muslim woman as an object that is in need of imperial saving and a Muslim male as one tied to violence (Beydoun and Sedique, 2022). The implications of violence in a post-9/11 arena were targeted toward Muslim men, and Muslim women were seen as passive supporters of their actions. It is a relational dynamic and dialectic, wherein the contours of Muslim womanhood are defined as opposing the construction of Muslim masculinity. Imagining Muslim men as violent, with terroristic tendencies produces the image of Muslim women as foreign, oppressed, and submissive. Consequently, it places Muslim women as the immediate victims of masculine Muslim violence. Government and American culture assign Muslim women cultural stereotypes—with legal consequences—that are the opposite of those assigned to Muslim men. Muslim womanhood is linked with ideas of submissiveness and subordination; as a result, many observers want to liberate Muslim women from Muslim men, who are caricatured as violent and oppressive (Beydoun and Sedique, 2022). Public opinion reifies these findings. In a 2021 survey of Americans, I found that respondents ranked Muslim women as more submissive than any other group they were compared with (Beydoun and Sedique, 2022). Moreover, legal cases, from terror-related cases to hijab discrimination to immigration cases, had judges including opinion in their writings that reified stereotypical notions of Muslim women (Beydoun and Sedique, 2022).

This process of flattening Muslim women into specific roles that sexualize and orient them in relation to men is a process of racialization that we see also occurring for Black women, Asian American women, and Latinas as well (Ayee et al., 2019; Omi and Winant, 2014). Asian American women are often perceived as exotic, foreign, and fetishized for their physical presentation (Azhar et al., 2021). Black women are similarly sexualized in depictions, and also hold additional stereotypes as either nurturing towards white children in the trope of a “mammy” or as someone overly reliant on government services, with the trope “welfare queen” (Ayee et al., 2019). While the stereotypes may vary by each minority group’s history and interactions with dominant political powers, there are distinctive ways that women within each of these communities are depicted and perceived by the process of racialization that minority groups experience in the United States. Most importantly, Black women, Asian American, Latina,

and Muslim women often remain on the margins of conversations surrounding their community, which speaks to the ways that patriarchal notions affect communities of color.

Muslim Women in America: A Mosaic of Backgrounds

Muslim women in the United States represent a diversity of backgrounds and experiences. What is particularly unique about Muslim women is that they are not only part of a religious group that is racialized but also typically racially identified as non-white and carry additional identities as Black women, Asian women, and Arab women. Muslims account for 24% of people in the world and many Muslim countries are homogenous by ethnic backgrounds and histories. This makes Muslim women in the United States unique, as they are a numeric minority in their home country and arguably comprise the most racially and ethnically diverse composition of Muslims in the globe.

In many ways, Muslim women in the United States represent a microcosm of Muslims across the world. This is because Muslims include a rich history comprising Black Americans, generations of people with immigrant origins, such as Lebanese and Bengali Americans and recent arrivals. Muslim American life is rooted in Black American history, since the earliest Muslims arrived to the United States via the transatlantic slave trade (Austin, 1997; Berg, 2005). While Islam was eradicated from daily practice of enslaved communities, descendants of those Muslims, like Noble Drew Ali and Elijah Muhammad, revived the tradition of Islam within Black American communities in various ways. Black Americans now account for 20% of the Muslim population in the United States and have been among the most historically significant Muslims in American discourse, with key figures like Muhammad Ali and Malcolm X leaving a lasting legacy as the foundation of Muslim American life. Waves of immigration, from early Bangladeshi laborers in Harlem in the early 1900s; to the wave of engineers and medical professionals from Muslim-majority countries that came after the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act to recent refugees from Somalia and Afghanistan have brought together a community that is both ethnically and socio-economically diverse (Bald, 2013; Pew, 2017). Moreover, the fastest growing community of Muslims are Latinx Muslims (Russ, 2019). As such, we cannot presume that Muslims in the United States will have similar worldviews and may vary their reaction and attachment to the effects of Islamophobia.

This diversity also means that Muslim women worship in distinctive ways. Some Muslim women emerge from communities where hijab is more welcomed, such as the case of Black Americans, whereas other Muslims have more contentious relationship with religious garb like hijab and do not adorn it as often, as is the case with Iranian-Americans (Shirazi, 2001). However, the vibrant distinctions among Muslim women are flattened in contemporary discourse, and Muslim women are commonly perceived with monolithic imagery and notions of foreignness and submissiveness (Dana et al., 2019).

Muslim Women's Experiences of Discrimination

Methods

To better understand who Muslim women are and how their distinctive identities affect their attitudes surrounding gendered Islamophobia, I fielded a survey of 1,000 Muslims nationwide from April to June 2019 in an online panel survey implemented by Qualtrics, utilizing demographics of race, gender, age, and socio-economic status from a 2017 Pew study to find a group nationally representative of the profile of Muslims in the United States (Pew, 2017). I coupled this empirical assessment with 40 in-depth interviews with Muslims in four different regions of the country; Southeast Michigan, Bay Area California, North Carolina, and the Tri-State area (Philadelphia, New Jersey, New York). Names discussed in the analysis are all pseudonyms to protect the identity of the respondent. In addition to conducting these interviews, I acclimated to different sites that Muslims spent time in, attending cultural events, parks to civic engagement spaces. Sixty percent of Muslims do not attend the mosque regularly, so being in non-faith-based spaces and understanding group dynamics in additional social spaces was important to getting a sense of the spectrum of Muslims in the United States (Senzai, 2012).

Statistical Portrait of Muslims in the United States

The survey sample reflects the racial diversity of Muslims in the United States.¹ Twenty-one percent of respondents in the study identify as Black, 22% as South Asian, 11% as Middle Eastern, and 31% as White. Income and education are also distributed across the sample in interesting ways, 26% of respondents have a family household income that is less than \$30,000 while 27% make over \$100,000 a year. The large spectrum with income reveals the different communities and histories that comprise Muslim Americans. For Muslim women specifically, 38% of women in the survey wore hijab daily, while over 50% did not wear the hijab frequently or at all.

Understanding Discrimination between Muslim Women and Men

Individual perceptions of discrimination identify how marginalized citizens internalize a shifting racial climate like Islamophobia (Oskooii, 2015). Assessing Muslim women reveals distinctive experience for women, in comparison to men. The 2019 survey results reveal that on average, Muslim women felt that discrimination is a larger problem than Muslim men did. When asked if discrimination against Muslims is a major problem, 62.4% of Muslim women answered yes, while only 37.6% of Muslim men did. That's nearly a 25% gap between women and men, and highlights how different perceptions are surrounding the current climate of Islamophobia.²

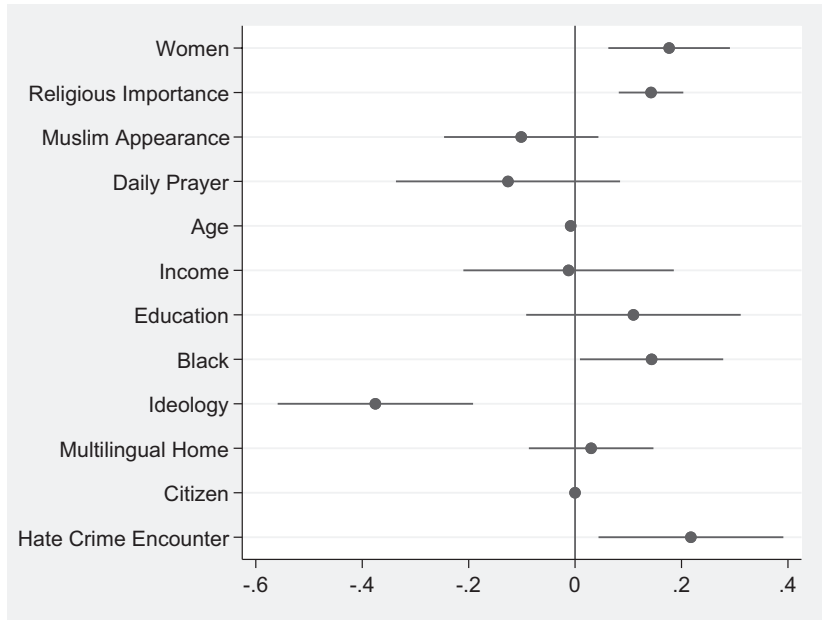


FIGURE 4.1 Regression results; factors influencing having a higher perception that discrimination is a problem in the United States.

Implementing a linear regression analysis, utilizing perceptions of discrimination as the dependent variable, and controlling for age, income, ideology, religious observance, and gender, I find that the difference between women and men remains statistically significant and that women perceive that discrimination is a large issue affecting Muslims at a higher rate than men.³ Figure 4.1 highlights the results as plot points with a 95% confidence interval, and the variables that are statistically significant include gender, religious importance, experiences of hate crimes, and race. Black Muslims are more likely to perceive discrimination as a problem compared to non-Black Muslims, and women are more likely to perceive discrimination as a problem compared to men. Related, a separate scale asked individuals about hate crime encounters, and those that had reported encounters believed that discrimination is a larger problem than those with less frequent encounters.⁴

Understanding Discrimination between Muslim Women

Muslim women have a more heightened sense that discrimination is a problem compared to men, which highlights how distinctive the process of gendered Islamophobia is between women and men. Given the diverse spectrum of racial and ethnic backgrounds, are there differences between subgroups of Muslim women? Focusing the data to the 587 women in the survey, I then examined

what variation we may find between Muslim women. Running a second linear regression analysis with perceptions of discrimination as the dependent variable, with the same independent and control variables as the first regression, there is no statistically significant difference by Muslim women when it comes to racial background or ethnicity. The same variables that were statistically significant in the first model (age, citizenship, religious importance) remained the primary points of difference for the subset of women. The only additional factor included in this model that was not in the first was including a variable on whether women wore hijab. What is interesting is that there is no statistically significant difference in perceptions of discrimination between Muslim women who wear the hijab and those who do not wear hijab. This begs the question, does wearing the hijab not matter as a factor?

To complement the findings from the empirical analysis, and better understand what dimensions of Muslim women's experience may not be captured through surveys, I turn to my qualitative interviews. The qualitative interviews suggest that hijab *does* matter, but it is a point of concern that emerges *both* for women who do wear the hijab and those who do not. Women discussed personal encounter they experience, and also referenced the experience of other women.

Women discussed subliminal messages and perceptions they felt targeted them. Raya discussed perceptions of being subservient, "Why do people just assume we're subservient? My dad didn't ask me to wear the hijab, my husband didn't tell me to wear it. I do this shit for myself. So, why are people shocked that I'm not going to just sit there and be like 'oh yes, whatever you say sir', like no. Like, it just drives me nuts, that people think and assume that Muslims are just subservient ...I have an opinion, I have a voice, I voice it, just, on all fronts." Raya spoke passionately about this misperception and how it emerged in situations such as interactions at the grocery store, in instances she least expects.

More explicitly, Muslim women cited specific discriminatory experiences that had occurred that gained public traction. In the Bay Area, experiences emerged about anti-immigrant sentiment in some cities targeting elder women in their family. Within the Midwest, two women cited the case of Noor Abukaram, a track star who had her time in a track meet disqualified because the referee did not believe hijab was approved sportswear. In North Carolina, women mentioned the death of three young people—all aspiring dentists at UNC-Chapel Hill—murdered by their neighbor, an individual well-known for posting Islamophobic remarks on social media.

The Physical Markers of Discrimination for Muslim Women

References to the hijab were made both by women who wore the hijab and women who did not. The death of the three students, one male and two hijab-wearing Syrian Americans, rattled respondents and emerged as a reference

point across many of my interviews in North Carolina. One respondent, Farah, who did not wear hijab, commented, “You know, the killer did not know they were Muslim and did not bother them until they met Deah’s wife. She wore hijab ... and I feel like that’s what made them vulnerable.” What exacerbated the death of the three students was the unwillingness of the police to label it a hate crime. Farah goes on to say,

I went back to class the next day. And I’m at school nearby, so it’s close enough where people should have heard about what happened. I bring it up at the start of class, and my professor goes, ‘Oh, that was just a misunderstanding about parking.’ And I could feel myself get heated, I couldn’t believe he said that. And that’s the kind of stuff that made this really worse, not only did they die, but people were invalidating the trauma their family is having.

The initial police report did not cite the incident as a hate crime. That news added insult to trauma for the grieving family and Muslims who felt like it could have been them. For Farah, this was even more distressful to hear a professor she noted she had admired, buy into this talking point that the victim’s family was actively pushing against. Moreover, the notion of “it could have been me” rang true in a powerful way for respondents in North Carolina, particularly for Muslim women, who had to reconcile how safe they truly felt wearing hijab when people’s worst nightmares became a reality.⁵

While hijab is the clearest marker of being Muslim, women reported other factors that influenced their experiences with Islamophobia. A few women mentioned their name being clearly Muslim and uncomfortable conversations because of that. One respondent noted, “I travel a lot for work. And every time I run through the TSA line, I get nervous, because of just how obviously Muslim my name is. I’m not sure that anxiety ever goes away for me.” Additional nuances with interactions with discrimination emerge when women consider their Muslim identity coupled with their racial and ethnic background.

Erasing Blackness: Muslim identity and Blackness

“My hijab erases my blackness.” Sarah’s reflection from the beginning of the chapter, highlights an emerging theme from the interviews I conducted with Black Muslim women. Sarah is a convert; she grew up in a Christian household on the east coast and converted to Islam in college. Sarah is also very proud of her identity as a Black woman, saying “I see myself as regular Black girl. I grew up in Jersey, I had a diverse set of Black friends, I dated Black men, but when I became Muslim...and then when I started wearing hijab, *people started seeing me different.*” The shift in Sarah’s externally perceived identity reveals what the timeline of feeling like an outsider looked like for someone who was socialized

into a different experience as a racial minority in the United States, and the drastic shift after visibly appearing Muslim. Sarah continues,

People confuse me for being from Africa. It's so common for people to ask me where I'm from, and they are always waiting for me to mention some African country. And it's not just me, girl, all my Black girlfriends who wear hijab, go ask Faiza, it happens to us all the time, it's wild. So yeah, in many ways, my hijab erases my Blackness.

The role of hijab specifically, in making her Muslim identity salient above her racial identity illuminates an additional feature of Islamophobia. Even with such a complex identity, the role of hijab itself has re-imagined her identity to the public. Her experience mirrors the very public backlash that Black politicians who are either Muslim, like Ilhan Omar, or had proximity to Muslims, like Barack Obama endured. Both Omar and Obama's allegiances to the United States were questioned because of their proximity to Islam. One factor that distinguishes Black Americans from other Muslims is the general perception of having a "cultural authenticity" to being American (Jackson, 2005). That authenticity of belongingness to the United States is one that is almost immediately removed within the current climate of Islamophobia.

Socialization into Islamophobia also affects how salient this experience is for Black Muslim women. For Black women who were converts and socialized into the Muslim community later in life, the impact of Islamophobia is jarring and one that stood out to them very clearly. Black women who grew up in multi-generational Muslim households had grown up more aware of the climate of anti-Black racism and Islamophobia. For women I interviewed socialized into Muslim life earlier on, the experience mirrored more of other Muslim women, since they had been socialized into both. One respondent from the Midwest noted, "I'm Black and proud of it, but I grew up in the mosque and there were girls from all backgrounds that grew up with me. We all wore hijab and went to school with it on. We would talk about what that was like, when we would hang out after school." Growing up in a Muslim family in a multi-cultural religious center influenced her views wherein she saw the challenges she faced as part of the process of being Muslim in her hometown.

The greatest distinction for Black Muslim women, in general, was the sense that they were doubly marginalized, residing at the intersection of belonging to two communities that are perceived as racially contentious within the current climate in the United States. There was also additional conversation that they were isolated by the public but also experienced anti-blackness within the Muslim community from other Muslims. The intra-Muslim tension is one distinctive to Black respondents, who discussed it within interviews at higher rates than any other Muslim woman interviewed.

The final distinction, in considering Black racial identity with Islam is also ethnic distinctions and variations in countries of origin. Black Muslims, while historically part of the multi-generational Black American community rooted in descendants of slaves comprise the primary component; there is also a large and growing African immigrant community. African immigrants approach Blackness distinctively than Black Americans (Watts Smith, 2013). This distinction is important to bear in mind as it emerges within discourse around Islamophobia as well. For Black Muslim women from Sudan or Somalia for example, the initial discourse centered around Islamophobia. One respondent, Lila, noted, “You have to understand, like I grew up here, and I identify as Black and Somali. But my parents, the community we come from, it’s all still, what tribe are you from? Like Somalis don’t all even get along between themselves to say we’re all one Somali community, so Blackness, that’s definitely not what my parents would think of.” The generational divide in experience mirrors findings that research on Black immigrant communities highlights, whereby the complexities of race and ethnicity play out differently by generation and family background.

Empire and Islamophobia

The complexities of race and ethnicity, as highlighted with Black immigrants also touches on the reality that gendered Islamophobia has been a part of the empire-making apparatus of governments beyond the US. Islamophobic stereotypes emerged when nations like Britain and France were colonizing Muslim-majority regions like Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia (Aydin, 2017). Historian Cemil Aydin notes, “The racialization of Islam was bound up with its transformation into a universal and uniform religious tradition, a force in international politics, and a distinct object in a discourse of civilizations” (2017, 3). After the 1860s, religion empire and race were beginning to become globalized. Islamophobia escalated when French and British empires began absorbing former Ottoman areas of rule, such as Tunisia and Egypt (Kurita, 2002). The consequence of this is two-fold; one, Muslims who have immigrated from colonized countries like Egypt have a specific experience of western tropes minimizing Muslims they recall, and two, current United States conflicts in Muslim-majority countries have spillover effects on Muslims in the United States.

For Muslims in the United States that have a connection to their ancestral areas, the spillover effects of US conflict were palpable. Lila, a second-generation Iraqi woman reflected,

I remember the first time we got harassed. I was five and sitting in the back of the car and my mom was driving. It was around the time of the first Gulf War. This guy kept honking at us and pointed for her to roll her

window down, so she did. Then he started screaming ‘Go back to where you came from!’ And a bunch of other things I don’t remember, I just remember how red he got and how he wouldn’t stop shouting.

Lila’s first Islamophobic incident as a child was tied directly to the first Gulf War. While the Gulf War was far removed in Iraq, news headlines filled households daily with specific tropes of Iraqis, Arabs, and Muslims.

Another young woman, named Suraya, references her heritage being from Afghanistan. While she was born in Afghanistan, she grew up in the Bay Area. Suraya notes, “When people find out I’m from Afghanistan, it can be a weird conversation. Especially in high school, I was one of the only Afghans. I remember my teacher asking me, in front of everyone, if I felt responsible for 9/11, and I was so confused.” Suraya mentions this specific incident targeting her and also discusses how people have also expressed pity for the plight of Afghan women. For most of my respondents, discriminatory encounters were not a matter of whether they occurred but more so a question of *when* they were first introduced to the climate of Islamophobia.

Implications for Trust in Government and Protest

Given that most respondents, in my qualitative interviews, had some incident that emerged of a discriminatory encounter, the consequences of these perceptions and encounters can be far reaching. Discriminatory experiences can either motivate increased or decreased political engagement among Muslims (Oskooii, 2015). I return to the 2019 survey data to understand whether we see a relation for Muslim women.

One meaningful measure of political engagement is trust in the governmental and political process, known as political efficacy. Examining external political efficacy, at face value, Muslim women report lower levels of political efficacy, when compared to Muslim men.⁶ Twenty-eight percent of men believe that government officials care about what people like them think, while only 10% of women agreed. Running a linear regression analysis with political efficacy as the dependent variable, I find perceptions of discrimination being high were positively related to efficacy, whereby the higher one perceived discrimination to be a problem, the more likely they were to have diminished trust in the government.⁷

Discussion

The implications for this relationship are far-reaching. As the survey evidence highlights, Muslim women do have a distinctive experience with Islamophobia in the United States that is uniquely gendered. Women perceive that discrimination is a larger problem than men and this perception is found to be a significant predictor for having lower levels of trust in the government. Important

extensions of this work would be to see whether lower efficacy levels affect the type of political engagement women take on. The qualitative interviews, thus far, suggest that Muslim women do not disengage when these experiences occur, but that it modifies their belief on how to engage within the political process.

Particularly powerful insights from the interviews highlighted here are the ways that racial and ethnic backgrounds complicate experiences of discrimination. For Black Muslim women, especially converts, Muslim identity with hijab is so powerful that it subsumes their racial identity. This finding is powerful given the durability of Blackness and identifies one specific condition where Islamophobia may serve to decrease the durability of that identity. In addition, Black Muslim women struggle with having layers of complicated encounters with the climate, not only from external forces but also within the community, sometimes living on the margins of both communities, not being Muslim enough and encountering anti-Blackness, and not being authentically Black enough and rendered on the margins of Black American experiences. The unique intersection with immigration plays out, particularly for Somali American women, who are Black women but also immigrants.

Their experiences also point to the experience of women from other ethnic backgrounds as well. The relationship of gendered Islamophobia with war and empire has spillover effects on how Muslim women navigate daily life. Respondents referenced both the Gulf War and the emerging war after 9/11 as points in time where they were told to go back to 'where they came from' and dealt with hostile interactions.

Conclusion

Muslim women comprise a vocal, dynamic, and distinctive community of individuals from different racial and ethnic backgrounds who have all had to negotiate a shifting socio-political climate with gendered Islamophobia. They often remain in the margins of conversation, and little is understood about what impact this has on everyday Muslim women in the United States. This chapter aims to understand Muslim women in conversation with their multi-dimensional identities as not only Muslims, but women that often occupy additional racialized identities as Black or Bengali women, for example. The findings highlight that Muslim women do perceive discrimination at higher levels compared to Muslim men and that this is politically consequentially, decreasing their external political efficacy.

Notes

- 1 The appendix includes a figure which provides a graphical illustration of the racial background of Muslims within the survey and further information about the demographic profile of the Muslims within the survey.

- 2 The specific question individuals were asked to measure this assessment was, "In general, do you think discrimination against Muslims is a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all?"
- 3 The full details of the variables included within the linear regression analysis are discussed within the appendix.
- 4 Perceptions of discrimination (the dependent variable in the linear regression analysis) ask individuals to think through what their opinion is upon the state of discrimination in the U.S., whereas the hate encounters question is a ten-question scale asking if they had a specific type of encounter (ten encounters listed). The two questions have minimal correlation, and report in a Cronbach's alpha of 0.0816. See the appendix for further details on the linear regression analysis.
- 5 Most of my respondents in North Carolina were either students or recent alumni from the university systems in the Raleigh-Durham area.
- 6 The specific question on political efficacy utilized was, "How much do government officials care about what people like you think?" The choices for respondents were a great deal, a lot, a moderate amount, a little or none at all.
- 7 An OLS regression model was implemented, whereby political efficacy was the dependent variable, and perceptions of discrimination, and gender were included in the model, in addition to socioeconomic variables like income as control variables within the model.

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APPENDIX

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

This chapter draws on the original survey data I collected from April to June 2019 in an online panel survey implemented by Qualtrics survey firm. I utilized the demographics of race, gender, age, and socio-economic status from the 2017 Pew Study of Muslim Americans to gather a sample of Muslims that can be considered nationally representative of the profile of Muslims in the United States. The Pew Study of Muslims, which was a data set utilized in Chapter Four, offers the most comprehensive profile of Muslims and is often used as the benchmark of what a national profile of Muslims looks like (Mogahed, 2018). Since their questionnaire is limited in asking relevant questions, I developed my own questionnaire, drawing in survey questions from prior surveys implemented on Black, Latino, and Asian Americans and complementing the questionnaire with additional questions that are more Muslim-specific. There were 1,000 respondents within the sample. 58.7% of the sample identified as women and 40.80% identified as men. The median age in the sample was 34 years of age, and the sample skewed toward younger respondents.

Figure 4.2 highlights the racial background of Muslims within the sample, and that the majority identify as non-white. Twenty-two percent are South Asian, 21% are Black, 11% are Middle Eastern and only 1/3 (31%) identify racially as white.

Figure 4.3 highlights the range in educational background, where over 31% have less than a college degree but 24% hold a master's degree and 7% hold a doctorate, highlighting the diversity in educational backgrounds within the community. Similarly, Figure 4.4 highlights the diversity in financial and

income among Muslim respondents. These findings indicate that there is great diversity in the income background of respondents as well, which is consistent with findings from the 2017 Pew Survey as well.

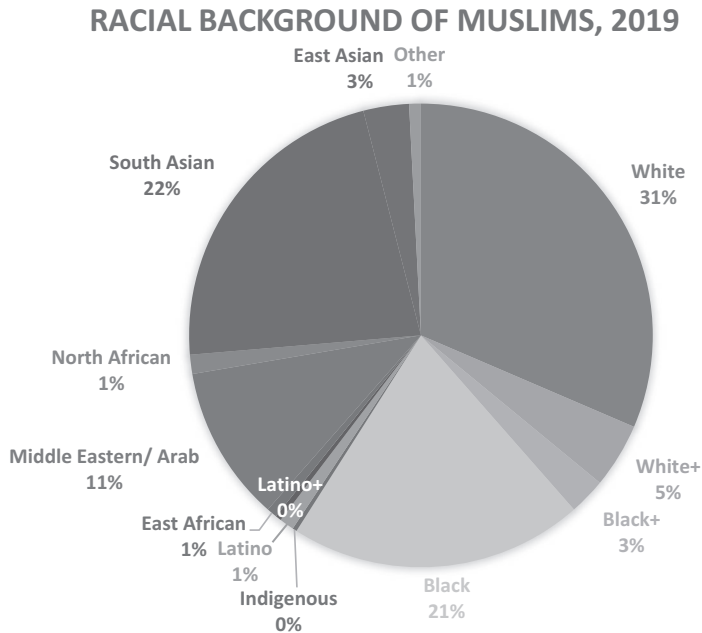


FIGURE 4.2 Racial background of Muslims within 2019 national survey.

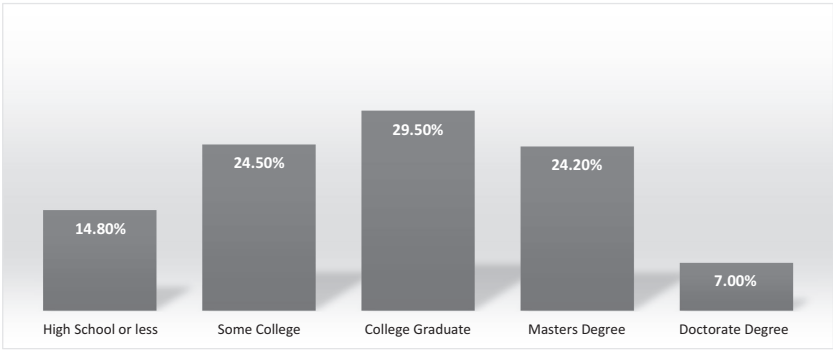


FIGURE 4.3 Educational background of Muslims within 2019 national survey.

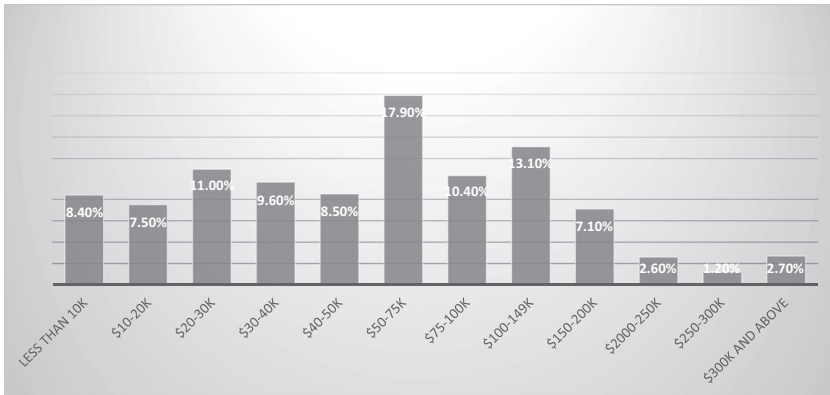


FIGURE 4.4 Income of Muslims within 2019 national survey.

Regression Analysis #1

The first OLS regression model in the chapter measures perceptions of discrimination and whether we see any differences between women and men in their responses. The first dependent variable is, “In general, do you think discrimination against Muslims is a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all?” Using an OLS regression model, the variables used to measure a relationship were: gender, religious importance, age, income, education, race, ideology, citizenship, experiences of discrimination, language (whether they were bilingual or not), and Muslim dress (whether respondent wears a hijab or other item that makes them visibly appear as Muslim).

Regression Analysis #2

The second regression model subsets the data to focus on the individuals in the sample who identify as women. Asked about their views on political efficacy (trust in government), the specific question on political efficacy utilized was, “How much do government officials care about what people like you think?” The choices for respondents were a great deal, a lot, a moderate amount, a little, or none at all. An OLS regression model was implemented, whereby political efficacy was the dependent variable. Perceptions of discrimination, gender were included in the model, and control variables included religious importance, hijab, age, income, education, race, ideology, citizenship, and language (whether they were bilingual or not).