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ARE ALL MUSLIMS TREATED THE SAME? RACIAL AND ETHNIC  
DIFFERENCES IN PERCEIVED DISCRIMINATION AMONG MUSLIM  
AMERICANS

by

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A dissertation submitted to the  
Graduate School-New Brunswick  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Program in Sociology

Written under the direction of

Deborah Carr

And approved by

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New Brunswick, New Jersey

May, 2016

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Are All Muslims Treated the Same? Racial and Ethnic Differences in Perceived

Discrimination among Muslim Americans

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**BACKGROUND:** Discrimination against Muslim Americans has been broadly researched and well documented. Yet, this group has been mainly looked at through an oversimplified homogenizing lens. Studies that have explored sources of heterogeneity in Muslim Americans' experiences of perceived discrimination are absent.

**OBJECTIVES:** This study examines the prevalence and correlates of perceived discrimination across Muslim American racial/ethnic groups; focuses on differences in perceived discrimination among Muslim Americans based on their religious identity, practices, and beliefs; and analyzes the extent to which Muslim Americans differ in their perceptions of being discriminated against as a group.

**DATA:** Data come from the 2011 Muslim American Survey conducted by the Pew Research Center with a representative sample of 1,033 Muslim adults 18 years old and older living in the U.S.

**METHODS:** Bivariate, binary and multinomial logistic regression, and moderation analyses are conducted to examine the prevalence of perceived discrimination across Muslim American racial/ethnic groups; to predict their perceptions of discrimination; and

evaluate the extent to which the effects of race/ethnicity on perceived discrimination vary by gender, religious practices, and community involvement.

**RESULTS:** Hispanic Muslims report the highest and Asian Muslims report the lowest frequency of perceived discrimination. Nearly all Muslim racial/ethnic groups have higher odds of reporting one or more types of perceived discrimination, relative to white Muslims. Muslim women are less likely than Muslim men to report several forms of discrimination. Older Muslims report lower rates of perceived discrimination than younger Muslims. White Muslim men are more likely to report experiencing discrimination than white, black, and Asian Muslim women. All Muslim racial/ethnic minority groups with high levels of religious practices report higher odds of perceived discrimination, compared to their white counterparts. Muslim Americans who identify themselves as other/mixed race and Hispanic report higher odds of perceived group discrimination than white Muslims. The community engagement measure is a prominent factor in shaping perceptions of group discrimination for Muslim Americans.

**CONCLUSIONS:** The findings highlight varying degrees of perceived discrimination among Muslim American racial/ethnic groups and suggest that future studies examine negative implications for Muslims who are at the greatest risk of mistreatment.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. I am grateful to Allah for the good health and wellbeing, for wisdom and guidance, for countless blessings and grace that enabled me to complete this project. I am indebted to thank my methodologically diverse, intellectually rich, and humanely compassionate committee members for the completion of my dissertation. First and foremost, I would like to thank my mentor, academic advisor, and committee member, Professor Richard Williams for all his support and guidance. Thank you for your close reading of my work and helping me shape my scattered and undeveloped thoughts. Thank you for your invaluable mentorship, caring, patience, motivation, and faith in me. Next, I would like to thank Professor Lauren Krivo and Professor Lee Clarke for being with the project from the very beginning. Thank you for your perseverance and determination. Regardless of significant changes that I took in the course of developing this project, you put your confidence in me. Your professional insights and deep delved suggestions always challenged me to broaden my research and make it sociologically relevant. A very special thanks goes to the chair of my dissertation, Professor Deborah Carr who generously agreed to step in, take the leadership, and help move the project to another stage. Thank you for your full dedication, for reading countless drafts of my work, and for tirelessly encouraging me to get the work done. Finally, I would like to thank Professor James Jasper who was graciously willing to serve as my external reader.

I would not have completed my dissertation without spiritual support and everlasting love of my mother, Sharifamoh Nabieva and father, Rahim Zainiddinov. You genuinely wished for my success and prayed full heartedly for it. Thank you for checking

on me every week by calling from over seven thousand miles away and asking about the status of my project.

I could not thank enough my wife and children for being with me throughout this process. I especially thank my wife, Sabohat, for her sacrifice, encouragement, support, and patience all these years, for standing always by me through the good times and bad. To my four children Suhayl, Shahrnoz, Humayro, and Muhammadamin: Thank you all for always being my true inspiration. Muhammadamin, you are three years younger and, Humayro, you are just a few months older than this project. Suhayl and Shahrnoz, you have grown up with this project. In a true sense this project is yours and dedicated to you.

I would also like to thank the Muslim Center of Middlesex County (MCMC), a spiritually rich, ethnically diverse, and warm hosting community part of which I was all these years. Thank you all for creating and maintaining a welcoming atmosphere for me and my family and making us feel home.

My list of acknowledgments is incomplete without expressing my sincere appreciation to the staff and graduate assistants of the Center for Race and Ethnicity at Rutgers University. My two years of work with you as a graduate assistant broadened and enriched my understanding of such important concepts as race/ethnicity and diversity in the U.S. context. You truly cared about my progress and success. Thank you for your full and generous support.

I express my deepest gratitude to one and all who directly or indirectly have lent their hand in this project and without whom I would never have travelled this road alone. The road that culminated in my transformation from a student to a scholar. I thank you all with all my heart and mind.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **BACKGROUND**

Discrimination against Muslims has been witnessed in many domains of American society and has invaded all aspects of Muslim life (Livengood and Stodolska 2004; Kaushal, Kaestner, and Reimers 2007; Khanlou, Koh, and Mill 2008; Marcus 2009; Freeland 2001; Widner and Chicoine 2011; Aroian 2012; Sahgal 2013). Additionally, Muslim Americans have encountered all forms of discrimination, ranging from verbal abuse to physical threats and to racial and religious profiling (Nimer 2001; Gilbert 2002; CAIR 2007; Pew Research Center 2009; Peek 2011). Although the spike of discrimination against Muslims has been observed following the 9/11 terrorist attacks (FBI 2001; Nimer 2001; Cainkar 2004; CAIR 2007; Abu-Ras and Abu-Bader 2008), Muslim Americans have been the targets of discrimination for a long time. The history goes back far earlier than the 1960s-1990s when Muslims met unfavorable attitudes and increased racial profiling due to the U.S. military involvement in Muslim countries, the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967, 1973, and 1982, the 1979 Iran hostage crisis, the first Gulf war of 1990-1991, and terror attacks against U.S. citizens both inside and outside of the country (Nimer 2001; Haddad 2004; Livengood and Stodolska 2004; Moore 2007; Peek 2011). Muslims were seen as an aberration from norms since the inception of Islam in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Islam was not seen, as claimed by Muslims, the continuation and seal of the same Divine message revealed earlier to preceding prophets. It was rather considered an innovation and rival to Christianity. Islam, irrespective of belonging to the same root and having direct link to Abraham's religion, was never seen as part of the triad – Judeo-Christianity-Islam. It was seen as the violation of widely accepted norms. Muslims were

viewed as lost Christians that needed an immediate intervention in mind and soul to be brought back to the straight path.

A similar concern with Islam and its adherents has been shown by American colonists since the early appearance of Muslims in America about five centuries ago. As argued by some scholars, the American colonists inherited negative views about Muslims that can be traced in the Old Testament, deepened in the time of the Crusades, and continued during the Renaissance (Suleiman 1988; Alatas 2007:379). Although early Muslims were brought as slaves, Spanish colonists were afraid that their preaching of Islam could cause rebellion not only among slaves but also among indigenous people for whom Christianity spared not time and efforts for conversion (Diouf 1998:17-18). Thus, conversion of Muslims into Christianity through different ways, including by force was carried out rigorously and extensively (Watson 1973; Diouf 1998; Turner 2003).

Discrimination against Muslim Americans has been broadly researched and well documented. Encounters with discrimination against this minority group can be met in scholarly works, media outlets, national polls, and civil rights advocacy publications (e.g. Nimer 2001; CAIR 2004; Gallup 2009; Pew Research Center 2009; Knickerbocker 2010; Morgan 2011). Despite a gradual increase in studies on discrimination against Muslims, research that examines perceived discrimination among Muslim Americans is still in its infancy.

The main goal of the present study is to examine differences in perceived discrimination across various racial and ethnic groups within the Muslim American population. As the goal of the study suggests, there are two main objectives addressed by this study. First, focusing not on perpetrators but rather on targets of discrimination, the

dissertation examines Muslim Americans' own perceptions of discriminatory incidents. Second, my dissertation focuses on the diversity of the targeted group. Acknowledging the fact that Muslim Americans come from all over the world and include converts from among blacks, whites, and Latinos (Haniff 2003; McCloud 2006; Esposito 2011; Pew Research Center 2011), the study highlights the importance of examining the differences of experiences that might exist within this heterogeneous racial/ethnic minority group. Thus, the study avoids the broad categorization of Muslims as a single group in reporting perceived experiences with discrimination. It rather examines differences in perceived discrimination across various racial/ethnic groups within the Muslim population.

The study is grounded in two sets of literature. First, more broadly, it delves into general literature on perceived discrimination among minority groups. Most research in this area has focused on African Americans and their greater perceived discrimination relative to whites (e.g. Feagin 1991; Krieger and Sidney 1996; Kessler, Mickelson, and Williams 1999; Barnes et al. 2004). Although a number of previous studies indicate that prevalence of perceived discrimination varies by ethnic groups, such as African Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanic Americans, they fail to show differences that exist within ethnic minority groups treating them as homogenous groups. With a few exceptions (Harris 2004; Perez, Fortuna, and Alegria 2008), studies that disaggregate minority racial/ethnic groups and look at the prevalence of perceived discrimination within them by using a national sample are limited. Moving beyond a homogenous treatment of Muslims, I examine differences in perceived discrimination across various racial and ethnic groups within the Muslim American population.

Second, more specifically, this study is based on literature on discrimination against Muslim Americans. Despite a growing body of literature on discrimination against Muslim Americans, several important aspects have been overlooked in previous research. First, the prevalence of studies on Arab Americans (Suleiman 1999; Moradi and Hasan 2004; Abu-Ras and Abu-Bader 2008; Padela and Heisler 2010; Widner and Chicoine 2011) shows that other Muslim ethnic groups received less scholarly attention. It could unintentionally foster a homogenous impression of equating all Muslims with Arabs. Second, most studies focus on attitudes toward Muslim Americans (Slade 1981; Johnson 1992; Saad 2006; Park, Felix, and Lee 2007; Zainiddinov 2013), neglecting these persons' own perception of how they are treated. Third, most studies focusing on perceived discrimination among Muslim Americans examine how discrimination is related to self-reported psychological distress and coping (Rippy and Newman 2006; Abu-Ras and Abu-Bader 2008; Padela and Heisler 2010). They are limited in evaluating the rates of discrimination that differ across Muslim racial/ethnic groups. Fourth, most studies that illustrate Muslim individuals' self-perceptions of mistreatment are primarily qualitative, use regional small samples, and focus on specific communities (Sonn 1994; Livengood and Stodolska 2004; Bruss 2008; Read 2008). With an exception of very few empirical works that focus on Arab Americans (e.g. Padela and Heisler 2010), studies that use nationally representative samples of Muslim Americans to explore racial and ethnic differences in perceived discrimination among the Muslim population are absent.

My dissertation is one of the very few studies, which aims to bridge the identified gaps in prior research. Employing a national sample, moving beyond a homogeneous treatment of Muslim Americans as a single group, and focusing on racial/ethnic

differences in perceived discrimination among this minority group, the study makes a contribution to the growing body of literature on perceived discrimination among minority groups and, more specifically, to the existing body of knowledge on discrimination against Muslim Americans.

## **PERCEIVED DISCRIMINATION**

Despite its remarkable gains in economic and social wellbeing of ethnic minorities and considerable progress in combatting racial disparities, contemporary America continues witnessing discrimination as an acute problem of its society. Since discrimination nowadays manifests itself mostly in a subtle and covert form (for a review, see Pager and Shepherd 2008), many studies focus on perceptions of discrimination to get a minority group members' subjective perception of unjustified treatment (e.g. Crosby 1984; Sigelman and Welch 1991; Naff 1995; Kessler et al. 1999; Carr and Friedman 2005). For the purpose of the present study perceived discrimination is defined as "the level or frequency of discriminatory incidents to which people perceive they (or members of their group) have been exposed" (Major and Sawyer 2009:90). This study analyzes the prevalence of discriminatory treatments to which Muslim Americans perceive they have been exposed. The focus is not on people who practice discriminatory acts, but rather on targets of discrimination. In particular, to what extent Muslim Americans perceive acts directed toward them are of discriminatory character. Most studies focus on attitudes toward Muslims, neglecting their own perception of how they are treated. Yet, not all attitudes translate into discriminatory acts. The weak relationship between attitudes and actual behaviors has been documented by many studies (Eagly and Chaiken 1993). Research showing that attitudes are poor predictors of behavior goes back to the early 30s

of the past century (LaPiere 1934). Thus, in my view, it is important to examine Muslim Americans' own perceptions of discriminatory incidents, irrespective of their attribution for those mistreatments. The course of the present inquiry attempts to explore differences in the level and frequency of discriminatory acts to which Muslim Americans perceive they have been exposed, although it realizes that Muslim Americans might not perceive that they have been targets of discrimination.

Gee, Pavalko, and Long (2007) identified four important reasons for studying perceived discrimination. In their view, perceptions of discrimination are commonly reported, they are connected to structural discrimination, they serve as a "barometer for human rights," and they have detrimental effects on wellbeing (Gee et al. 2007:266).

Additionally, two caveats related to research on perceived discrimination are worth noting. First, although members of a stigmatized group may underestimate or overestimate discriminatory incidents to which they have been exposed (see Major and Sawyer 2009, for a review), it is more important to examine what subgroups among a purportedly devalued group are more likely to perceive themselves as targets of discrimination. Second, one might question to what extent perceptions of discrimination by target groups coincide with actual experience of discriminatory acts. Depending on the notions of accurate, insensitive, or oversensitive perception of discrimination, stigmatized individuals may indicate actual discrimination, fail to show it, or overestimate it (Feldman and Swim 1998; Major, Quinton, and McCoy 2002). While some scholars link perceptions of discrimination with overlooking or misperception of discriminatory incidents (Pager and Shepherd 2008), others are confident of a parallel between perceived and actual discrimination (e.g. Crocker, Major, and Steele 1998:523; Schuster et al.

2005). Still, others find startling differences among subgroups concerning the correspondence of perceived and actual social discrimination (Hartung and Renner 2013).

## **MOTIVATIONS FOR THE PRESENT STUDY**

A rapid growth in the Muslim population in the United States highlights one of the important reasons for studying this minority group. According to some estimates and scholarly predictions, by 2050 Muslims will be the second largest religious group in the U.S. (Smith 1999; Armstrong 2000; Lipka 2015). The possible growth of political, economic, and social power for this group could not be neglected as well. Studies show that Muslim Americans hold similar or better socio-economic position than the general public. For example, nearly half of Muslim American respondents (46%) rate their financial situation excellent or good (versus 38% for the general public), over a quarter (26% versus 13% for the general public) are currently enrolled in college, and one in fifth (20% versus 17% for the general public) report being self-employed or owning a business (Pew Research Center 2011). Muslim Americans are also becoming more socially and politically active. Lack of civic activism and failure to seek paths of assimilation with larger American society (McCloud 2006), ascribed to Muslim immigrants before, remain in the past. A majority of Muslim Americans hold liberal attitudes on a number of political issues and 56% say they want to assimilate (Pew Research Center 2011). Thus, the importance of examining race/ethnic differences in perceived discrimination among Muslim Americans to find out what groups are more in danger of being discriminated could not be emphasized enough.

The other impetus for the present study is linked to the nature of its analysis. The study adds a new case to the limited number of existing studies on minority groups'

perceptions of discrimination. It does so by disaggregating Muslim Americans as a minority group and by looking at the racial/ethnic differences in perceived discrimination within them using a nationally representative sample. Findings will help understand Muslim minorities' experiences and how they differ across the five racial/ethnic identities.

Furthermore, building on previous research, this study examines whether and to what extent patterns of perceived discrimination among Muslims are similar to other minority groups. I will not limit the current course of the study to showing some social implications of the differences that exist within the "Muslim" identity category. To make my dissertation stronger, I will replicate some aspects of my study using data from the 2004-2006 National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States (MIDUS II), to examine whether the perceptions of discrimination among Muslim racial/ethnic groups are similar or different from non-Muslim members of the same categories. It will allow me to identify whether there is something akin to a "Muslim factor" in perceptions of discrimination in society and whether being a "Muslim" makes a difference in perceptions of discrimination among racially and ethnically identified individuals or being a "Muslim" is independent of those identities.

Related to this, the study could challenge previous findings concerning traditional hierarchical positions attributed to certain subgroups, in particular to white men. Past research demonstrates that whites always report lowest rates of discrimination compared to other minority groups (see Smith 2002, for a review). Findings of the present study might suggest that traditional positioning of race and gender might not hold or might play differently for some minority groups such as Muslim Americans.

## DATA

The study draws on the second wave of the Muslim American Survey conducted by the Pew Research Center between April 14 and July 22, 2011. The survey included landline and cell phone interviews with 1,033 Muslim adults 18 years old and older living in the United States. The dataset is publicly available from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life website (<http://www.pewforum.org/datasets>). This is the most current dataset conducted by the Pew Research Center on Muslim Americans. The “first-ever nationwide” survey was conducted by the Center in 2007 (Pew Research Center 2011). Since the 2011 Muslim American Survey asks many important questions from the previous wave, repeats the methodology of the first survey, and more importantly reflects current and important changes in the views, attitudes, and experiences of Muslim Americans, selecting the second wave of the survey of Muslim Americans seems an appropriate decision for the current project.

Several important aspects of the 2011 Muslim American Survey make it suitable for the purpose of this dissertation. First, in addition to English (925), interviews were also carried out in Arabic (73), Farsi (19), and Urdu (16). This approach overcomes the shortcoming of English-only surveys that do not take into account those strata of immigrant Muslim Americans who do not speak English or face difficulty to complete surveys in English.

Second, given the difficulty of constructing a probability sample of Muslim Americans, the survey used a robust methodology to obtain a representative national sample of this segment of American society. Out of the total sample of 1,033 respondents, 358 interviews were drawn from screening of a geographically stratified

random digit dial (RDD) sample of the general public of 41,869 households, 501 were obtained from a commercial database of more than 600,000 households with likely Muslim names, and additional 174 interviews came through recontacting English-speaking Muslim households from previous nationwide surveys conducted since 2007 (Pew Research Center 2011). These sampling sources were used to address three important issues, namely, the high dispersion of the Muslim population throughout the United States, the low incidence (about 5 out of 1,000 respondents identify themselves as Muslim), and cell phone coverage. The response rates ranged from the lowest 18% for the list sample, to 20% for the cell RDD sample, to 22% for the geographic landline RDD sample, and to the highest 54% for the recontact sample (Pew Research Center 2011). Given challenges indicated by previous studies on surveying the Muslim population, which are primary associated with low return rates due to lack of trust (Leonard 2003:44) and reluctance of cooperation stemming from language barrier faced by many recent Muslim immigrants and increased attention to Muslims and Islamic extremism following the 9/11 terror attacks (Pew Research Center 2011), the Pew study can be considered a success in surveying the Muslim American population.

Third, the race/ethnic samples of this national poll are large enough to examine how different racial/ethnic Muslim groups differ in the perceptions of discrimination. With the inclusion of Latino, the fastest growing ethnic minority group of the Muslim American population (Bagby 2012; Diaz 2013; Padgett 2013), as a separate category and its considerable number of mixed or other race respondents, the 2011 Muslim American Survey provides more reliable estimates to examine race/ethnic differences among Muslim Americans. Although some previous studies on discrimination against Muslim

Americans assume about the diversity of this minority group, they are limited in showing within group differences due to bearing qualitative elements of research and being specific in targeting certain communities. The use of the 2011 Muslim American Survey, which contains sufficient number of various Muslim race/ethnic minority groups, helps to overcome this shortcoming.

Finally, in contrast to some surveys that employed a single measure (Smith 2002), the Pew survey allows constructing five outcome measures. The extended number of refined measures serve well in capturing different aspects of respondents' lives.

### **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY**

I use the concept of stigma, an enduring element of devaluing a minority group in larger American society, and a set of interrelated theories on double jeopardy, master status, social integration, intrinsic-extrinsic religious orientation, secularization, and intersectionality as a theoretical framework to combine under one overarching theme three separately standing analytic chapters of the present dissertation. According to Goffman's (1963) theory of social stigma, a stigma is a possessor's "deeply discrediting" attribute that might manifest in one of three forms, namely, "abominations of the body" such as physical deformities, "blemishes of individual character" such as weak character traits, and "tribal stigma" such as race and religion (pp. 3-4). I argue that Muslims are stigmatized along the latter dimension, which includes real or imagined traits of nation, race, and religion that "can be transmitted through lineages and equally contaminate all members of a family" (Goffman 1963:4).

Taking Goffman's early definition of stigma as an "attribute" that reduces an individual "from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one" (1963:4) as a

baseline, one might assert that Muslim Americans construct a stigmatized identity in the United States. Muslims' racial, religious, and nationality characteristics are deemed deficient, compared to norms constructed by larger American society (Slade 1981; Gerges 2003; Edgell, Gerteis, and Hartmann 2006).

Realizing that the stigmatization process is more complex than just establishing an association between "attribute and a stereotype" (Goffman 1963:4), Link and Phelan (1999) added the element of discrimination and produced a more comprehensive definition of stigma, which consists of the co-occurrence of four components: labeling, stereotyping, separation, and status loss/discrimination (Link and Phelan 2001:367). Considering discrimination/status loss, which brings detrimental consequences for life chances of stigmatized individuals, as a core component of the stigma process (Link and Phelan 2001), the present study looks at the prevalence and distribution of perceived discrimination among Muslim Americans to identify stigmatized racial/ethnic persons who are more likely to report having experienced discrimination.

Research shows that stigmatization varies across members of the stigmatized population (e.g. Carr and Friedman 2005; Carr, Jaffe, and Friedman 2008). Within a stigmatized group, some members are attributed with more denigrated traits than others. Given variations in experiencing discrimination that might exist among members of a stigmatized group, the study also controls for socio-demographic correlates of perceived discrimination and runs several interaction term analyses to further identify those stigmatized persons among Muslim Americans who, based on their demographic and socioeconomic status characteristics, are more likely to report having experienced

discrimination. Thus, the study explores stratification that might exist among Muslim Americans and determines systematic differences among this minority group.

Muslim Americans have been identified not only as a racial/ethnic minority group. They also comprise a religious minority. Previous research indicates that Muslim Americans are discriminated against this cultural identity (Freeland 2001; Allen and Nielsen 2002; Meer and Modood 2009; Greenhouse 2010; Aroian 2012). Expecting that Muslim would be a “master status” or an attribute that trumps all other attributes of person’s identity (Goffman 1963), the study further examines differences in perceived discrimination among Muslims based on their self-reported religious beliefs, practices, and identity.

Furthermore, using conceptualization of a tribal stigma as a property of a group, I examine Muslim Americans’ perceptions of discrimination at a group level. Muslims in general have been viewed as a crowd and violent group (Cainkar 2004; Gottschalk and Greenberg 2008; Tweed 2008). Thus, the study examines whether and to what extent there are racial/ethnic differences in perceived group discrimination among Muslim Americans.

## **OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION**

Following the Introduction (Chapter 1), the dissertation includes three analytic chapters and is surmised with another chapter on conclusion and implications for future research. Three analytic chapters are separate, free standing, and publishable articles combined under one overarching theme. Chapter 2, titled “Racial and Ethnic Differences in Perceptions of Discrimination among Muslim Americans,” examines the prevalence of perceived discrimination across Muslim American racial/ethnic groups (white, African

American, Asian, Hispanic, and other), assesses socio-demographic correlates of perceived discrimination, and evaluates whether the race effects vary significantly by gender. As discrimination functions primarily based on color, physical features, and socio-economic status, it is expected that Hispanic and African American Muslims will report higher levels of perceived discrimination.

Muslim Americans are not only members of a racial/ethnic minority group, but they also belong to a religious minority group. It is against this religious identity towards which Muslims are primarily defined as a social group. Scholars viewed phenotype as a source of racialization for other minority groups, whereas Muslim Americans are racialized according to religion. Considering the importance of the factor of religion for Muslims, Chapter 3 (“Differences in Perceived Discrimination among Muslim Americans Based on Their Religious Identity, Practices, and Beliefs”) focuses on differences in perceived discrimination among Muslim Americans based on their religious identity, practices, and beliefs. The main goal of the chapter is to determine whether race/ethnicity interacts with religious practices in shaping the experience of discrimination differently within Muslim American groups.

Since acts toward the targeted persons can be at an individual and/or at a group level, perceptions of Muslims are analyzed at both levels. After looking at Muslims’ personal perceptions of discrimination, the study examines the extent to which Muslims perceive discrimination directed at their group in general. Chapter 4 (“Racial and Ethnic Differences in Perceived Discrimination among Muslim Americans as a Group”) looks at perceptions of discrimination from the Muslim community perspective. Specifically, it

focuses on Muslim racial/ethnic differences concerning their beliefs of the treatment of the Muslim community as a whole.

Chapter 5 is the conclusion of the dissertation. In this chapter, I summarize the major findings of the study, highlight limitations of the study, outline policy implications, and discuss areas of future research.

The conceptual coherence of each chapter is established as follows. First, I establish whether or not there are racial/ethnic differences in reports of perceived discrimination among Muslim Americans. I also explore intersectionality (race by sex) to see which Muslims report higher levels of perceived discrimination. Second, after establishing these baseline connections, net of all controls, I ask the question of why or why not I find these differences. This permits me to introduce the religious measures (identity, practices, and beliefs) in my second chapter. I also run two-way interaction terms to examine whether the effect of orthopraxy on perceived discrimination differs across Muslim racial/ethnic groups and whether education and orthodoxy interact in shaping perceptions of discrimination among Muslim Americans. Third, I move beyond personal perceptions of discrimination and ask whether Muslim Americans differ racially and ethnically in their perceptions of the treatment of the Muslim community as a whole. For this purpose, I use a three-level categorical outcome measure to assess the effect of Muslim racial/ethnic group membership on the odds of no problem and any other problems relative to discrimination.

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## **CHAPTER 2: RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS OF DISCRIMINATION AMONG MUSLIM AMERICANS**

### **ABSTRACT**

Discrimination against Muslim Americans has been broadly researched and well documented. However, this group has been mainly looked at through an oversimplified homogenous lens. I know of no studies that have explored racial/ethnic differences in Muslim Americans' experiences of perceived discrimination. I use weighted data from the 2011 Pew Religion and Public Life Survey of 1,033 adult Muslim Americans to examine differences in the prevalence of perceived discrimination across Muslim racial/ethnic groups. I control for socio-demographic characteristics that may partly account for the observed association between racial/ethnic groups and perceived discrimination. I also evaluate two-way interaction terms to determine whether the effects of race/ethnicity on perceived discrimination differ by gender. Asian Muslims report the lowest frequency of perceived discrimination, compared to the other Muslim racial/ethnic groups. Nearly all Muslim racial/ethnic groups have a few times higher odds of reporting one or more types of perceived discrimination relative to white Muslims. After controlling for socio-demographic characteristics, the observed relationships persist for Hispanic Muslims but disappear for black and other/mixed race Muslims. Muslim women are less likely than Muslim men to report several forms of discrimination. Older Muslims report lower rates of perceived discrimination than younger Muslims. White Muslim men are more likely to report experiencing discrimination than white, black, and Asian Muslim women. The findings highlight the existence of varying degrees of perceived discrimination among Muslim American racial/ethnic groups and suggest that future

studies examine negative implications for Muslims who are at the greatest risk of mistreatment.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Muslim Americans face discrimination on multiple fronts. They are discriminated against based on color, ethnicity, and religion (Naber 2000; 2006; Allen and Nielsen 2002; Sheridan 2006; Read 2008; Padela and Heisler 2010). The prevalence of discrimination against Muslim Americans has been well documented in scholarly works, media outlets, national polls, and civil rights advocacy publications (e.g. Nimer 2001; CAIR 2004; Gallup 2009; Pew Research Center 2009; Knickerbocker 2010; Morgan 2011). A 2009 Gallup poll revealed that almost half of Muslim Americans (48 percent) reported experiencing some type of racial or religious discrimination (Gallup 2009). According to the same source, Muslim Americans are far more likely to be discriminated against than other major religious groups, including Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Mormons, and atheists. The U.S. public also believes that Muslims face more discrimination in the United States than other major religious and racial groups. A 2009 survey revealed that 58% of Americans believe that Muslims are subject to more discrimination than Jews, evangelical Christians, atheists, Mormons and racial minorities such as Hispanics and blacks (Pew Research Center 2009).

Discrimination has permeated all aspects of Muslim life and has been experienced in many domains of American society. These encounters with discrimination occur in workplaces (Kaushal, Kaestner, and Reimers 2007; Widner and Chicoine 2011; Sahgal 2013), schools (Khanlou, Koh, and Mill 2008; Aroian 2012), American courts (Freeland 2001), prisons (Marcus 2009), and leisure settings (Livengood and Stodolska 2004).

Muslim Americans face all forms of discrimination, ranging from verbal abuse to physical threats and to racial and religious profiling. For example, the Hamilton Muslim America Poll asked Muslim Americans about encountering discrimination, harassment, verbal abuse, or physical attack incidents and revealed that one in four reported being victimized after 9/11 and about half of respondents personally knew a person who experienced mistreatment (Gilbert 2002).

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001, the number of discriminatory acts, including violence and hate crime incidents against Muslims, spiked (e.g. FBI 2001; Cainkar 2004; Abu-Ras and Abu-Bader 2008). According to the Hamilton Muslim America Poll, Muslim Americans reported almost a threefold increase (from 21% to 60%) of anti-Muslim incidents in their communities since September 11 (Gilbert 2002). Since 9/11 Arab and Muslim Americans have been targeted by twenty-five (out of thirty-seven) U.S. government security measures (Cainkar 2004). Figures run as high as 100,000 Arabs and Muslims who were affected by post-September 11 security measures (Cainkar 2004). In 2001, the FBI reported 481 anti-Islamic incidents, representing an almost 1,700 percent increase from 28 cases reported in 2000 (FBI 2000; 2001). 2,467 civil rights complaints were reported to a Muslim advocacy group in 2006, a 687 percent increase, compared to 366 cases reported in 2001 (Nimer 2001; CAIR 2007).

Yet, Muslim Americans have been the targets of discrimination for a long time, dating back far earlier than 9/11 (Nimer 2001; CAIR 2004). In 1995, after the Oklahoma City bombing, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) reported 296 incidents, ranging from verbal abuse to workplace discrimination and to mosque vandalism (CAIR 2004). Over 200 of these incidents occurred just within a week after

the bombing. These reports have been on rise. In 1996, only 80 discrimination complaints were reported to CAIR, whereas in 2000, the number increased to 322, indicating a 400% increase in five years (Nimer 2001).

In general, Muslim Americans' experiences of discrimination have been well documented. Yet, most research uses a broad categorization of Muslims as a single group in reporting perceived experiences with discrimination. Given the entrenched nature of racism in the United States that adapts and takes modern forms, however, it is expected that white, black, yellow, and brown complected Muslims may become common targets of discrimination. In this respect, they might share the experiences of African Americans, South Asians, and Latinos. Thus, it is necessary to explore whether Muslims of various racial/ethnic backgrounds all perceive that they experience discrimination similarly or differently. The present study extends upon work that treats Muslim Americans as a dichotomous and monolithic category and identifies sources of heterogeneity in Muslim Americans' experiences of perceived discrimination. Specifically, I examine the prevalence of perceived discrimination across Muslim American racial/ethnic groups, assess socio-demographic correlates of perceived discrimination, and evaluate whether the race effects vary significantly by gender. This study does not ignore the fact that members of a disadvantaged group may underestimate or overestimate discriminatory incidents occurred against them. Rather, it emphasizes the importance of examining what subgroups among a devalued group are more likely to perceive themselves as targets of discrimination.

### **Muslim Americans: The neglected diversity**

Similar to other minority groups, Muslims are commonly viewed as homogenous.

However, most empirical research fails to consider that Muslim Americans may come from all over the world or that black, white, and Latino persons may convert to Islam from another religion. Rather, Muslims are seen most often as Arabs (Slade 1981; Suleiman 1988; Esposito 2002; Nasr 2002; Shaheen 2003; Ewing 2008). Figures run as high as 74% for Americans considering all Arabs as Muslims and all Muslims as Arabs (Slade 1981). However, population data reveal that Arabs account for only 12% of Muslim Americans (Power 1998) and of the world's Muslim population (Shaheen 2003). Higher estimates are given by some other studies. A 2002 nationwide poll of Arab Americans shows that the vast majority (63%) report a Christian affiliation (mostly Roman/Eastern Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestants), 24% Muslim, and 13% of other or no religious affiliation (Arab American Institute Foundation 2002). According to Ewing (2008), nearly a third of Arab Americans are Muslim. The consequence of seeing all Muslims as Arabs and all Arabs as Muslims is that both groups are commonly labeled with similar characteristics (Suleiman 1999).

Muslim Americans come from many different cultures, traditions, ethnicities, and countries. According to some estimates, the United States is a home for Muslim immigrants from 68 countries (Pew Research Center 2009; Esposito 2011). Other sources provide even higher estimates of 77 to 80 different ethnicities and nationalities from over the world to which Muslim Americans belong (Haniff 2003; McCloud 2006; Pew Research Center 2011). A 2009 Gallup poll revealed that among surveyed religions of the United States, such as Protestants, Catholics, Mormons, Jews, and Muslims, Muslim Americans were the most racially diverse religious group (Gallup 2009). The increasing diversity of the Muslim community is also reflected in the ethnic composition of mosques

in the United States. There was a sharp decrease in the number of mosques that had only one ethnic group as attendees. In 2000, 93% of mosques were ethnically diverse, whereas in 2011, the figure was as high as 97% (Bagby 2012).

Furthermore, polls reveal that diversity among Muslim Americans is not only racial but rather encompasses various economic, religious, political, and attitudinal factors, such as household income, educational attainment, and religious and political engagement (Gallup 2009; Pew Research Center 2009), reflecting the social, economic, and political diversity of larger American society.

### **Muslim Americans as a stigmatized identity**

Stigmatization of minority groups is not a new phenomenon. The enduring nature of the stigma process has persisted for generations and no racial or religious minority groups are spared from being labeled with denigrated traits in larger American society. The same is true about Muslim Americans who arguably comprise one of the stigmatized minority groups in the United States.

According to Goffman's (1963) theory of social stigma, a stigma is a possessor's "deeply discrediting" attribute that might manifest in one of three forms, namely, "abominations of the body" such as physical deformities, "blemishes of individual character" such as weak character traits, and "tribal stigma" such as race and religion (pp. 3-4). I argue that Muslims are stigmatized along the latter dimension, which includes real or imagined traits of nation, race, and religion that "can be transmitted through lineages and equally contaminate all members of a family" (Goffman 1963:4).

Taking Goffman's early definition of stigma as an "attribute" that reduces an individual "from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one" (1963:4) as a

baseline, one might assert that Muslim Americans construct a stigmatized identity in the United States. Muslims' racial, religious, and nationality characteristics are deemed deficient, compared to norms constructed by larger American society. Such prejudiced views about Muslims are prevalent in all levels of American society be it a political arena, mass media, or general American population. As noted by Gerges (2003), "Congress and the public hold 'simplistic' and 'prejudiced' views toward Islam and Muslims" (p.84). Studies show that compared to other conformist and nonconformist groups, Muslims are less accepted by Americans (Slade 1981; Edgell, Gerteis, and Hartmann 2006). In an analysis of more than 900 movies produced by Hollywood over the last century, Shaheen (2003) found that only 5 percent depict Arabs, prototypes of Muslims as a humanized and normal. The rest, which basically has been perpetuating stereotyping public image of Muslims, portrays Arabs as "other," different, cruel, menacing, money greedy, religious fanatics, and barbaric.

Realizing that the stigmatization process is more complex than just establishing an association between "attribute and a stereotype" (Goffman 1963:4), Jones et al. (1984) proposed another definition describing stigma as a "mark" that connects an individual to devalued features. Link and Phelan (1999) added the element of discrimination to this definition and later produced a more comprehensive definition, which defines stigma in the co-occurrence of four components, namely labeling, stereotyping, separation, and status loss/discrimination in a power situation (Link and Phelan 2001:367). Furthermore, discrimination/status loss has been considered an important component of the stigma process, which brings detrimental results for life chances of stigmatized individuals, including psychological, physical, and socioeconomic wellbeing (Link and Phelan 2001).

For instance, a number of studies report the association between Muslim racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination with increased level of psychological distress and poorer physical and mental health status (Rippy and Newman 2006; Abu-Ras and Abu-Bader 2008; Padela and Heisler 2010).

Research shows that stigmatization varies across members of the stigmatized population (e.g. Carr and Friedman 2005; Carr, Jaffe, and Friedman 2008). Within a stigmatized group, some members are attributed with more denigrated traits than others. Given harmful consequences and disadvantages caused by discrimination to various life domains of a stigmatized group and variations in experiencing discrimination that might exist among members of a stigmatized group, the present study examines how prevalent is reported discrimination in Muslim Americans and to what extent there are racial/ethnic differences within the group.

Since discrimination manifests itself mostly in a subtle form, many studies focus on perceptions of discrimination to get a minority group members' subjective perception of unjustified treatment. According to Major and Sawyer (2009), perceived discrimination is mostly referred to "the level or frequency of discriminatory incidents to which people perceive they (or members of their group) have been exposed" (p.90). Gee, Pavalko, and Long (2007) identified several important reasons for studying perceived discrimination, including the fact that perceptions are commonly reported, they are connected to structural discrimination, they serve as a "barometer for human rights," and they have detrimental effects on wellbeing.

Two caveats related to research on perceived discrimination are worth noting. First, although members of a stigmatized group may underestimate or overestimate

discriminatory incidents occurred against them (for a review, see Major and Sawyer 2009), it is more important to examine what subgroups among a purportedly devalued group are more likely to perceive themselves as targets of discrimination. Second, one might question whether differences found in perceived discrimination among a stigmatized group coincide with actual variations in experienced discriminatory acts. Yet, some scholars are confident of such parallel (e.g. Crocker, Major, and Steele 1998:523).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Muslim studies**

Empirical studies on discrimination against Muslims are growing. Yet, compared to other racial/ethnic group studies, they are still few in number, primarily based on small sample sizes, and mostly of qualitative nature. Sheridan and North (2004) reviewed 1,354 abstracts in the PsycINFO database that addressed Islam and/or Muslim samples for the period of 1925-2002. They found that studies that addressed attitudes toward and discrimination against Muslims were very limited making 0.8% and 0.4%, respectively.

Most studies examined the association between Muslim racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination with increased level of psychological distress and poorer physical and mental health status. Rippy and Newman's (2006) study of the sample of 152 Muslims of four ethnic groups from Oklahoma state found that perceived religious discrimination was associated with subclinical paranoia but not anxiety among Muslim Americans. In another study of 1,016 Muslim and Chaldean (Christian) Arabs from the 2003 Detroit Arab American Survey (DAAS), Padela and Heisler (2010) examined the effects of perceived post-September 11 abuse and discrimination on self-reported health status among Arab Americans and found that a quarter of the respondents reported

personal abuse or abuse of household members. Additionally, 15 percent reported negative ethnicity-related experiences and these were associated with higher levels of psychological distress and lower levels of happiness. Abu-Ras and Abu-Bader's (2008) exploratory work, based on focus groups with 83 Arab participants, also revealed the impact of the 9/11 events on the well-being of Arabs and Muslims in New York City. Another study of 180 Arab Americans by Moradi and Hasan (2004) found the direct association between perceived discrimination events and psychological distress and the mediating role of personal control in this relationship. The association between Muslim discrimination and their poor wellbeing has been also observed in other Western countries (Sheridan 2006; Rousseau et al. 2011). These studies underline the importance of tracking race/ethnic differences in perceived discrimination. Once it is determined which Muslims are at greatest risk of mistreatment resulting in distress, targeted programs can be tailored to minimize unfair treatment.

Another set of studies examined how some Muslim group members responded to the experiences of discrimination by illuminating their coping strategies (Byng 1998; Livengood and Stodolska 2004). For example, Byng's (1998) qualitative study of twenty African-American Muslim women showed that these women mediated the effects of discrimination through self-definition, maintaining a humanist vision, and association with the safe social space of the Muslim community. Livengood and Stodolska's (2004) qualitative semi-structured interviews with 25 first generation Muslim Americans revealed that the respondents' strategies towards discrimination in leisure settings ranged from restricting and changing travel patterns to remaining vigilant and walking in groups, and to establishing a closer association with their own communities.

Despite a growing body of literature on discrimination against Muslim Americans, the racial and ethnic differences within this relatively large and fast growing heterogeneous group have been largely neglected. A few qualitative studies examined differences of perceived mistreatment and problems faced by Arab Americans (Read 2008; Baker et al. 2004). These studies found that Arab Muslims experienced far more harassment, felt more vulnerable (Read 2008), and were less likely to identify themselves as white than Arab Christians (Baker et al. 2004; Read 2008). A similar pattern was observed in a limited number of quantitative studies that compared Muslim Arab Americans with their Christian counterparts. Padela and Heisler (2010) found that 15 percent of respondents reported that they personally had a bad experience associated with their ethnicity with significantly higher rates among Muslims than Christians.

Several important aspects that have been overlooked in previous research on the discrimination against Americans Muslims can be identified. First, the prevalence of studies on Arab Americans shows that other Muslim ethnic groups received less scholarly attention. It could unintentionally foster a homogenous impression of equating all Muslims with Arabs. Second, most studies focusing on perceived discrimination among Muslims examine how discrimination is related to self-reported psychological distress and coping. They are limited in evaluating the rates of discrimination that differ across Muslim racial/ethnic groups. Third, most studies that illustrate Muslim individuals' self-perceptions of mistreatment are primarily qualitative, use regional small samples, and focus on specific communities. With an exception of very few empirical works that focus on Arab Americans (e.g. Padela and Heisler 2010), studies that use nationally

representative samples of Muslim Americans to explore racial and ethnic differences in perceived discrimination among Muslims are absent.

### **Other racial/ethnic studies**

Racial discrimination is persistent in various social settings (for a review of racial discrimination in employment, housing, credit and consumer markets see Pager and Shepherd 2008). Yet, a large body of research on perceived discrimination has focused on African Americans and their greater perceived discrimination relative to whites (e.g. Feagin 1991; Krieger and Sidney 1996; Kessler, Mickelson, and Williams 1999; Barnes et al. 2004). A number of previous studies indicate that the prevalence of perceived discrimination varies by ethnic groups, such as African Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanic Americans (Naff 1995; Bobo and Suh 1995 and Klugel and Bobo 2001 as cited in Harris 2004; Ayalon and Gum 2011). These studies find that rates of perceived discrimination among Hispanics and Asians tend to be lower than those reported by blacks. Nevertheless, these studies fail to show differences that exist within ethnic minority groups treating them as uniform groups. Harris's (2004) study of a nationally representative sample from the Commonwealth Fund Minority Health Survey (CMHS) is worth noting. She disaggregated three large racial/ethnic groups and looked at the prevalence of perceived discrimination among blacks (African Americans and Caribbean Americans), Hispanics (Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans), and Asians (Chinese, Koreans, and Vietnamese Americans). Compared to previous studies (e.g. Bobo and Suh 1995 and Klugel and Bobo 2001 as cited in Harris 2004), Harris's (2004) sample of Asian Americans reported higher levels of perceived discrimination than Hispanics and blacks. Harris (2004) associates this difference with "an artifact of these data" and

partially with the CMHS survey questioning, which is focused on racial discrimination, whereas the previous studies asked about workplace discrimination (p.82). Another nationally representative study is Perez, Fortuna, and Alegria's (2008) work that examines the prevalence and correlates of perceived discrimination among a sample of 2,554 Latinos from the National Latino and Asian American Study (NLAAS). The authors found that among the four analyzed Latino subgroups of Cuban, Puerto Rican, Mexican, and other Latino, Cubans and Latinos with high ethnic identity were less likely to perceive discrimination than Latinos with low ethnic identity. Thus, Harris's (2004) and Perez et al.'s (2008) works are among very few studies that focus on racial/ethnic differences in perceived discrimination among disaggregated minority groups by using a national sample.

The present study intends to make a contribution to general literature on perceived discrimination among minority groups and, more specifically, to literature on discrimination against Muslim Americans. First, I examine the prevalence of perceived discrimination among various Muslim groups in a nationally representative sample of Muslim adults living in the United States. Second, I assess the socio-demographic correlates of perceived discrimination. I also determine whether the observed relationship between racial/ethnic groups and perceived discrimination persists, once I control for possible socio-demographic factors, such as age, gender, marital status, education, and home ownership. Finally, I evaluate whether the effects of race/ethnicity on perceived discrimination differ by gender.

### **Patterns of perceived racial/ethnic discrimination and its correlates**

Research shows that stigmatization varies across members of the stigmatized

population (e.g. Carr and Friedman 2005; Carr et al. 2008). Within a stigmatized group, some members are attributed with more denigrated traits than others. Link and Phelan's (2001) observation is valuable that "stigma is a matter of degree... [meaning] that some groups are more stigmatized than others" (p.377). This observation is readily transferable to one of the core components of the stigmatization process identified by Link and Phelan (2001) as discrimination/status loss.

Prior research indicates that racial/ethnic minorities vary across groups in their perceptions of discrimination (Naff 1995; Kessler et al. 1999; Barnes et al. 2004; Bobo and Suh 1995 and Klugel and Bobo 2001 as cited in Harris 2004; Ayalon and Gum 2011). Most research on black-white differences reveal a greater perceived discrimination reported by blacks relative to whites (e.g. Feagin 1991; Krieger and Sidney 1996; Kessler et al. 1999; Barnes et al. 2004). With an exception of very few works (Ayalon and Gum 2011), a similar pattern is observed in studies on other minority groups. Most studies are consistent in their findings that other racial/ethnic minorities report higher levels of perceived discrimination compared to whites (Barnes et al. 2004; Harris 2004; Hirsh and Lyons 2010). As concerns findings on racial/ethnic differences in perceived discrimination among minorities, with an exception of very few works (Harris 2004), most studies show lower levels of perceived discrimination among Asians relative to Hispanics and blacks (Naff 1995; Bobo and Suh 1995 and Klugel and Bobo 2001 as cited in Harris 2004).

Consistent with previous studies, *I expect a differential pattern to be observed in perceived discrimination among different Muslim racial groups with Hispanics and blacks reporting perceptions of discrimination at a much higher rate than those reported*

*by other racial groups. I also expect that other racial groups report more discrimination compared to white Muslim Americans.*

I intend to test my proposition with two hypotheses. Since Hispanic and black Muslims encounter both racial and religious prejudice, they may constitute primary targets of discrimination. A rigorous explanation for the combined effects of race and religion on discrimination could be given by the double jeopardy hypothesis. On the other hand, research shows that the larger the minority group the more discrimination it encounters. An explanation for this phenomenon can be offered by the numerical strength of a minority group hypothesis (Fernandez 1981).

Given the nature of the data that focus solely on Muslims, I generate an alternative hypothesis to test *no race/ethnic differences in perceptions of discrimination*. It is expected that Muslim would be a “master status” or an attribute that trumps other attributes of person’s identity (Goffman 1963), to determine discrimination.

A stigmatized attribute does not exist alone. Usually other devalued traits are attached to a stigmatized individual (Link et al. 1997). Studies find that stigmatized groups possess disadvantaged demographic characteristics and come from lower socioeconomic status (Carr and Friedman 2005; Carr et al. 2008). On the same line, most previous research on perceived discrimination has identified demographic and socioeconomic status characteristics as correlates of perceived discrimination. Yet, findings are mixed, ranging from positive to negative and to curvilinear relationships. For example, findings are inconsistent concerning the effect of age on the likelihood of reporting discrimination (Sigelman and Welch 1991; Kessler et al. 1999; Harris 2004; Carr and Friedman 2005; Perez et al. 2008). Sigelman and Welch (1991) found that

exposure to discrimination was more common among old blacks than young blacks. On the contrary, most studies report that age is inversely related to perceived discrimination (Kessler et al. 1999; Carr and Friedman 2005; Perez et al. 2008) pointing to generational differences. A similar finding was reported by Harris (2004) but only among African Americans, whereas for Hispanics and Asians age was not a predictor of perceived discrimination. Similarly, findings on gender differences are also inconsistent. Studies in general find Muslim women to be more prone to become the target of discrimination due to their visibility from what they wear (Nimer 2001; Livengood and Stodolska 2004; Aroian 2012). According to CAIR, the *hijab* (Muslim women's headscarf) is the one of the strongest discrimination triggers among Muslim features. This resulted in the largest number of workplace discrimination complaints in the past five years for women wearing *hijab* (Nimer 2001). Yet, some studies reveal no gender differences between young Muslim men and women in perceived discrimination (Sirin and Katsiaficas 2011). Still other studies indicate that Muslim men are more likely to perceive the environment to be discriminatory than Muslim women (Rippy and Newman 2006). Marital status has also been shown to covariate with perceived discrimination. In general, never married persons are more likely to report experiencing discrimination than married persons (Kessler et al. 1999; Carr and Friedman 2005; Perez et al. 2008).

Education and various indicators of income (household income, employment or occupational status) are primarily employed as socioeconomic status correlates of perceived discrimination. Similar to demographic characteristics, previous studies reveal mixed findings on socioeconomic status differences in perceived discrimination. For example, some studies report that better educated respondents tend to report higher levels

of discrimination than the less educated respondents (Kessler et al. 1999; Carr and Friedman 2005; Hirsh and Lyons 2010) relating it to increased awareness and readiness to report discrimination, whereas other research finds a curvilinear relationship between education and discrimination (Forman, Williams, and Jackson 1997).

Consistent with prior research, *I expect socio-demographic characteristics as correlates of perceived discrimination*. Yet, considering the complexity of findings related to the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and perceived discrimination, no prior hypotheses are constructed. The magnitude and direction of the effect of socio-demographic correlates across the various Muslim racial groups will be evaluated through binary logistic regressions.

Some previous studies (e.g. Kessler et al. 1999; Carr and Friedman 2005; Carr et al. 2008) evaluated whether their key independent predictors varied in effecting perceptions of discrimination across demographic groups of the stigmatized population. Given findings of previous studies that Muslim women are more likely to become easy target of discrimination due to wearing a headscarf or traditional dress, I assess two-way interaction terms to determine whether the effects of race/ethnicity on perceived discrimination differ by gender. An extensive research considered stigmatized status of women of minority groups and found that these women encountered double jeopardy being discriminated against both as minorities and as women (Epstein 1973; Reid 1984; Chow 1987; King 1988; Garcia 1989). For Muslim women, religious affiliation might be added to the combined effects of sex and ethnicity on discrimination. Multiple jeopardy emerging from ethnic, sexual, and religious prejudice faced by Muslim women (e.g.

Karim 2006), allows me to *hypothesize that Muslim women of all racial/ethnic subgroups report more discrimination than white Muslim men.*

## **DATA, VARIABLES, AND METHODS**

### **Data**

The study draws on the 2011 Muslim American Survey conducted by the Pew Research Center. The dataset is publicly available from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life website (<http://www.pewforum.org/datasets>). The survey included landline and cell phone interviews with 1,033 Muslim adults 18 years old and older living in the United States conducted in English (925), Arabic (73), Farsi (19), and Urdu (16). Out of the total sample, 358 interviews were drawn from screening of a geographically stratified random digit dial (RDD) sample of the general public of 41,869 households, 501 were obtained from a commercial database of more than 600,000 households with likely Muslim names, and additional 174 interviews came through recontacting English-speaking Muslim households from previous nationwide surveys conducted since 2007 (Pew Research Center 2011). These sampling sources were used to address three important issues, namely, the high dispersion of the Muslim population throughout the United States, the low incidence (about 5 out of 1,000 respondents identify themselves as Muslim), and cell phone coverage. The response rates ranged from the lowest 18% for the list sample, to 20% for the cell RDD sample, to 22% for the geographic landline RDD sample, and to the highest 54% for the recontact sample (Pew Research Center 2011). Given challenges indicated by previous studies on surveying the Muslim population, which are primary associated with low return rates due to lack of trust (see Leonard

2003:44), the Pew study can be considered a success in surveying the Muslim American population.

## **Variables**

### *Dependent variables*

Perceived discrimination is assessed with the question that is phrased as follows:

“Here are a few things that some Muslims in the United States have experienced. As I read each one, please tell me whether or not it has happened to you *in the past twelve months*, because you are a Muslim, or not?”

This question is followed by a series of questions assessing six types of discrimination (1) “have people acted as if they are suspicious of you”; (2) “has someone expressed support for you”; (3) “have you been called offensive names”; (4) “have you been singled out by airport security”; (5) “have you been singled out by other law enforcement officers”; and (6) “have you been physically threatened or attacked.” Responses included “yes, has happened” and “no, has not happened.” I dropped questions #2 and #4. The former does not capture the assessment of perceived discrimination. The latter is a relevant measure only if the respondent took a trip by airplane during the past year.<sup>1</sup>

I constructed two sets of outcomes based on the remaining four questions. First, each question was recoded into “yes” = 1 as a separate dichotomous outcome. Second, all

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<sup>1</sup> I ran a preliminary analysis with this particular (have you been singled out by airport security) outcome. None of Muslim racial/ethnic groups are predictors of the perceived discrimination on being singled out by airport security. Similarly, none of socio-demographic characteristics have been identified as correlates of perceived discrimination on being singled out by airport security, except for only one of the age categories, which has a marginally significant inverse relationship with this outcome measure.

four answers were combined and recoded into a dichotomous variable signifying whether a person has experienced any of the four types of discrimination.

### *Independent variables*

All Pew participants were asked to report their race. Race has five categories, namely, black, non-Hispanic; Asian, non-Hispanic; Hispanic; other or mixed, non-Hispanic; and white, non-Hispanic as a reference category. It should be noted that Hispanic was not an answer choice in the previous wave of the Pew study conducted in 2007. The inclusion of Hispanic as a separate category could be related to the increasing number of converts to Islam among this group. In a 2009 Gallup poll depicting a national portrait of Muslim Americans only one percent indicated that they were Hispanic (Gallup 2009). In this 2011 wave of the Pew survey 6% of respondents described themselves as Hispanic. Various estimates put Latinos among the fastest growing ethnic minority group of the Muslim American population (Bagby 2012) with as many as a fifth of new converts to Islam nationwide (Diaz 2013; Padgett 2013).

### *Control variables*

I control for demographic and socioeconomic status characteristics that may confound the association between race/ethnic categories and perceived discrimination. Demographic measures include sex, age, and marital status. Age was coded in 4 categories – 18-29 years (reference category), 30-39 years, 40-54 years, and 55+ years. Sex was coded as a dummy variable (1 = female; 0 = male). Marital status was dichotomized as married = 1 and all other (living with a partner, divorced, separated, widowed, never been married) = 0.

I include two socioeconomic status variables. The first is respondent's education. It is asked by the question "What is the last grade or class that you completed in school?" I recoded the existing categories as a series of four dummy variables: high school or less (omitted category), some college, college graduate, and post graduate. The second measure is home ownership, which was dichotomized as 1 = yes.

## **Methods**

I use a series of analyses to address the objectives of the present study. First, I use a bivariate table to give descriptive statistics for all independent and control measures used in the study and to determine whether there are significant racial/ethnic differences on control variables. Second, I look at the distribution of perceived discrimination across Muslim racial/ethnic groups, in order to examine the prevalence of perceived discrimination. I assess whether the prevalence varies by race/ethnicity by doing significance tests in bivariate analysis. Finally, I run binary logistic regressions to predict each of five types of perceived discrimination as the outcomes of my dichotomous variables. I assess the socio-demographic correlates of perceived discrimination. I also control for demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, to examine whether these variables account for the observed relationship between racial and ethnic groups and perceived discrimination. And I evaluate whether the effects of race/ethnicity on perceived discrimination vary by sex.

I use STATA 13.0 for all analyses. Considering the complex sampling design, I use the weighted data for all analyses to better represent the U.S. Muslim population. Towards this goal, I employ the svy command suggested by the Pew Research Center.

Furthermore, I employ multiple imputation procedures using `mi estimate` chained commands to impute missing values on all variables.<sup>2</sup>

## RESULTS

### Descriptive statistics

Table 2.1 presents the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the sample. Muslim Americans represent a diverse group in terms of race/ethnicity. White Muslims comprise the largest racial group (30.43%), followed by blacks (23.23%), Asians (21.21%), other/mixed race (18.64%), and Hispanics (6.49%). Almost half of respondents are female (49%). Young Muslims comprise the largest age category. Over one third of adult Muslims (36%) are between the ages of 18 and 29. The largest proportion of respondents is married (56%). A 53% majority of Muslim Americans hold a high school diploma or less and one third (34%) are homeowners. Significant ethnic differences are observed on all measures used in the study except for the age variable. Compared to other ethnic groups, significantly higher proportions of white Muslims are married and hold home ownership. Significantly higher proportions of Asian Muslims have college and postgraduate degrees, relative to the other four ethnic groups. The lowest percentage of respondents who hold college and postgraduate degrees and home ownership is represented by Hispanic Muslims.

### Bivariate analysis

Table 2.2 displays the distribution of perceived discrimination by Muslim racial and ethnic groups. With the exception of one outcome (being called offensive names),

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<sup>2</sup> In the preliminary analysis, I used listwise deletion by dropping observations with “don’t know/refused” responses and excluding cases due to missing data on one or more variables. The multinomial regressions run with the listwise excluded cases produced similar results, suggesting that missing data do not have much impact on the analysis.

there are significant racial/ethnic differences on all outcomes. Nearly 30 percent (28.83%) of Muslim Americans report that in the past twelve months people have acted as if they were suspicious of them because they were Muslim. The percent of Muslim Americans who report two types of discrimination is relatively lower. While 12.92% say they have been singled out by law enforcement officers in the past twelve months, only 5.76% report that they have been physically threatened or attacked. Over one third of Muslim Americans (36.25%) report experiencing at least one of the four types of discrimination in the past year.

There are significant differences across the Muslim racial/ethnic groups on two outcomes (being suspected and any type of discrimination) with more Hispanic Muslims and Muslims of other/mixed race perceiving discrimination than the other three groups. Additionally, there are significant differences across the analyzed Muslim groups with more Hispanic and black Muslims perceiving being singled out by other law enforcement officers. A significantly higher proportion of Hispanic Muslims also perceive being physically threatened or attacked than the other four groups. No significant differences are found in the percentage distributions for the perception of being called offensive names between the race-ethnic groups overall. Yet, following the previous pattern, the percentage of Muslim Hispanics reporting this type of discrimination is the highest (35.64%), compared to the rest of the Muslim groups. Overall, among the five analyzed Muslim racial/ethnic groups, Hispanic Muslims are significantly more likely to report a great number of discriminatory events than the rest of the Muslim racial/ethnic groups.

### **Binary logistic regressions**

Table 2.3 presents results from five sets of binary logistic regression models.

Model 1 displays the logistic regression predicting perceived exposure to five types of discrimination by Muslim race and ethnicity. In Model 2, the dependent variables are regressed on the demographic variables. Model 3 builds upon the previous model while controlling for socioeconomic characteristics.

*Which race/ethnic persons are more likely to report discrimination?* On three outcomes of Models 1 (people suspicious of you, physically threatened or attacked, and any type of discrimination), Hispanic Muslims have almost 4, 5, and 4 times higher odds (3.73, 4.80, and 3.88, respectively) of reporting discrimination than white Muslims. On the first (people suspicious of you) and last (any type of discrimination) outcomes, the odds of being discriminated are 1.90 and twice (2.00) as high for Muslims of other or mixed race as they are for those in the reference category. A significant relationship is observed for black Muslims who are 2.77 times more likely than white Muslims to report discrimination on being singled out by law enforcement officers. None of Muslim racial/ethnic groups are predictors of the perceived discrimination on being called offensive names. Compared to white Muslims, the odds of reporting discrimination are not significant for Asian Muslims on any of the five outcomes.

*Do the observed race/ethnic differences persist after controlling for demographic and socioeconomic status characteristics?* Models 2 observe some changes, once the demographic variables are introduced. Initial racial/ethnic differences persist for Hispanic Muslims with Model 2 controls. The effects attenuate only slightly (over 5%) for Hispanic Muslims who report being physically threatened and attacked. Noticeable changes occur with the category of Muslims of other or mixed race and black Muslims. The magnitudes of Muslims of other/mixed race category's effects decrease almost by 15

percent for the two outcomes (people suspicious of you and any type of discrimination) turning the previously significant categories into non-significant (comparing the coefficients on the other/mixed category in Model 1 to Model 2 of the first and last outcomes). Similar changes in the magnitude of effects (about 15%) are observed for black Muslims for the outcome of being singled out by law enforcement officers.

Not all demographic characteristics are significant predictors of five types of perceived discrimination (Models 2). Women report significantly lower odds of being singled out by law enforcement officers ( $OR = 0.47, p \leq .01$ ), being exposed to any type of discrimination ( $OR = 0.65, p < .10$ ), and being called offensive names ( $OR = 0.66, p < .10$ ) relative to men. Compared to 18-29 years old respondents, those of 55 years of age and older report significantly lower odds of such outcomes as being suspected by people ( $OR = 0.37, p \leq .05$ ), being called offensive names ( $OR = 0.32, p \leq .05$ ), and any type of discrimination ( $OR = 0.26, p \leq .001$ ). Respondents of 30-39 years of age report significantly lower odds of being called offensive names ( $OR = 0.48, p < .10$ ), being physically threatened or attacked ( $OR = 0.33, p < .10$ ), and being exposed to any type of discrimination ( $OR = 0.43, p \leq .05$ ) relative to the reference group. Marital status is not a significant predictor of perceived discrimination on any of the five outcomes.

When the dependent variables are regressed on the socioeconomic variables (education and homeowner) in Models 3, education is the only significant predictor and only for one type of discrimination. Respondents with some college education and post graduates have significantly lower odds ( $OR = 0.39, p \leq .05$  and  $OR = 0.33, p < .10$ , respectively) of reporting being singled out by law enforcement officers, compared to respondents with high school diploma or less. The black/white difference disappears with

Model 3 controls, whereas the effects found in Models 2 remain mostly the same for the rest of the racial/ethnic groups after socioeconomic characteristics are controlled.

*Do the effects of race/ethnicity on perceived discrimination vary by gender?*

Finally, I evaluate whether the effects of race/ethnicity on perceived discrimination differ by gender. I estimate two-way interaction terms for each race/ethnic category and gender. Only very limited number of the two-way interaction terms is statistically significant, net of all socio-demographic controls. The effect of each of the five race/ethnic categories does not vary significantly by gender for the first three discrimination outcomes (people suspicious of you, called offensive names, and singled out by law enforcement officers). Yet, the effects of some race/ethnic categories differ significantly by sex for the discrimination outcomes of being physically threatened or attacked and any type of discrimination.

Figure 2.1 shows the odds of reporting being physically threatened or attacked, by race and gender, net of all demographic and socioeconomic status variables. Muslim women of white, black, and Asian racial/ethnic backgrounds report significantly lower odds of being physically threatened or attacked relative to white men. For example, black Muslim women are nearly half times ( $OR = 0.44$ ) less likely than white Muslim men to report this type of discrimination. As concerns the other two significant women groups, namely, white and Asian Muslim women, they have 77% and 98% less odds of reporting being physically threatened or attacked, compared to white men.

Figure 2.2 reveals the odds of reporting any type of discrimination by race and gender, net of all socio-demographic characteristics. The only significant categories are Hispanic men and women. Hispanic Muslim women are 1.05 times more likely than

white Muslim men to report any type of discrimination, although the effect is only marginally statistically significant.

## **DISCUSSION**

Several important sets of findings emerged from the present study. The first set of findings is associated with the prevalence of perceptions of racial/ethnic discrimination among Muslim Americans. There are significant differences in the percentage distributions across the Muslim racial/ethnic groups with more Hispanic Muslims perceiving discrimination on four outcomes (people suspicious of you; singled out by other law enforcement officers; physically threatened or attacked; and any type of discrimination). On the contrary, the prevalence of perceptions of discrimination is lowest for Asian Muslims on three outcomes (people suspicious of you; singled out by other law enforcement officers; and any type of discrimination) than for the rest of four groups. Overall, these findings do not support an earlier proposition offered by Fernandez (1981) and supported by other studies (Naff 1995) on the numerical strength of a minority group – the larger the group the more discrimination it encounters. Hispanics are the smallest in number (6.49%), but they perceive discrimination at significantly higher rates compared to other minority groups. The variations that exist within the Muslim race/ethnic groups accord with Link and Phelan's (2001) observation that "stigma is a matter of degree... [meaning] that some groups are more stigmatized than others" (p.377). They are also consistent with other studies (Carr and Friedman 2005; Carr et al. 2008) that perceptions of discrimination differ across members of the disadvantaged group and support the double jeopardy hypothesis suggesting that people who possess two stigmatized traits or statuses are discriminated at significantly higher rates than those

who employ one stigmatized status. Hispanic Muslims are discriminated against based on their disadvantaged status as minority groups and disadvantages arising from their affiliation with Islam. Prior research shows African-American Muslims experience more discrimination not only in American society at large but also within the *ummah* (Muslim community) (Karim 2006). Similarly, for Latino Muslims who are a new rising minority group among Muslim Americans this marginalization is extended beyond the double jeopardy status, as they might be discriminated not only by the Muslim community and larger society but also by the Latino community for converting into Islam. Narrative accounts of such discriminatory treatments are emerging (Padgett 2013). Studies also show that after Arab Muslims the sole right of representing and defining Islam in the U.S. lies with Asian Muslims<sup>3</sup> (McCloud 2006) leaving African American and Hispanic Muslims at a disadvantaged status within the larger Muslim community.

The second set of findings is related to correlates of perceived discrimination among Muslim racial/ethnic groups. Consistent with the proposed hypothesis, nearly all Muslim ethnic groups have a few times higher odds of reporting experiencing one or more types of discrimination, relative to white Muslims. The observed relationship between race and perceived discrimination persists for Hispanic Muslims but disappears for Muslims of other/mixed race after controlling for demographic and socioeconomic status characteristics. For black Muslims, this relationship attenuates with the adjustment for demographic measures and disappears with the introduction of socioeconomic characteristics. These findings highlight the importance of the existence and interplay of

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<sup>3</sup> For the current data, 91% of Pakistanis and 69% of those from other South Asian nations categorize themselves as Asian.

various demographic and socioeconomic factors influencing racial/ethnic differences among Muslim Americans.

Surprisingly, Asian Muslim Americans are exception from the above observation, as the odds of perceived discrimination are not significant for this group on any of the five outcomes. Somewhat similar findings, albeit with statistically significant results are revealed for Asian Muslims from the bivariate analysis on the prevalence of perceived discrimination among Muslim racial/ethnic groups. Asian Muslims report significantly lower levels of perceived discrimination relative to other Muslim ethnic groups. One explanation for these findings could be given by studies that suggest that Asian Muslims view larger American society tolerant of Muslims and for whom discrimination has not been an issue before the 9/11 events (Jamal 2005). Another explanation can be linked to the high socio-economic status hold by Asian Muslim Americans relative to other ethnic groups. Still another explanation could be associated with perceived high quality of life in the U.S. by Asian Muslims. Over three quarters of Muslim Americans born in Pakistan (76%), who comprise the majority of Asian Muslim Americans, view the quality of life for Muslims in the U.S. better than in most Muslim countries, compared to those born in the Middle East and North Africa (63%) (Pew Research Center 2011).

Non-significant differences among Muslim racial/ethnic groups in perceptions of discrimination related to being called offensive names need an explanation. Both empirical and non-empirical sources indicate the prevalence of calling Muslims offensive names among other discriminatory acts. A CAIR poll found that verbal abuse along with religious or ethnic profiling and job discrimination was among the most frequent form of discrimination experienced by Muslims after September 11, 2001 (CAIR 2004).

According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), calling Muslims offensive names is one of the most common complaints of religious bias encountered in the workplace (Greenhouse 2010). Rippy and Newman's (2006) study of 152 Muslim Americans found that verbal abuse was the most common form of discrimination. One speculation for the current observation is that Muslim Americans of all ethnic groups report equally and extensively about this type of discrimination. Additionally, on this particular type of discrimination, Muslim is a "master status" that overcomes all other devalued attributes and, consequently, does not vary by race.

Another interesting result is found while controlling for some demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, such as gender and age. Differences between older and younger Muslims in perceptions of discrimination with the former reporting experiencing discriminatory acts at significantly lower rates are in concurrence with some research on black-white differences in perceived discrimination (Forman et al. 1997; Adams and Dressler 1988) and stigmatized groups (Carr and Friedman 2005). While one explanation is sought in the older generation upbringing as more tolerant of discrimination (Adams and Dressler 1988), another explanation links this inverse relationship to generational differences with younger generations being more conscious of and ready to report discrimination (Carr and Friedman 2005). Related to this are increased practices of racial profiling against Muslims after the 9/11 terrorist acts. The main targets of racial profiling policies remain young Muslims. Still another explanation may be sought in the absence and usage of a term such as discrimination in the vocabulary of older generations of Muslims. It may resemble the experience of people raised in the pre-civil rights movement of the 1960s who may not have this as part of their consciousness.

Women are less likely than men to report several types of discrimination. This finding is inconsistent with prior studies on Muslim discrimination that found either no gender differences (Sirin and Katsiaficas 2011) or reported higher rates of experienced discrimination among women than men (Nimer 2001). It is consistent with Rippy and Newman (2006) who found gender differences among Muslims on subclinical paranoia. They linked it to suspicion and fear of Muslim men from a hostile environment in the aftermath of the 9/11 terror attacks. Studies show that Americans favor more strict security measures for Muslims, especially for Muslim men, compared to other U.S. citizens. Nearly one third of Americans (31%) would feel nervous if they noticed a Muslim man flying on the same plane (Saad 2006). Nearly four in ten Americans support the idea of requiring Muslims, including those who are U.S. citizens, to carry a special ID (39%) and undergo more intensive security checks at airports (Saad 2006). Another possible explanation is that women are more likely than men to deny their personal experience with discrimination and underestimate their encounters with discriminatory acts (Crosby 1984).

The final set of findings is associated with the effects of race/ethnicity on perceived discrimination by gender. I obtain mixed results in relation to the proposed hypothesis. I have not found support for my hypothesis related to double jeopardy faced by Muslim women compared to white Muslim men on the outcome of being physically threatened or attacked. Contrary to the proposed hypothesis, white Muslim men are more likely to report experiencing discrimination than white and other minority women. Yet, on the other outcome – any type of discrimination, Hispanic Muslim women are more likely to report this type of discrimination than white Muslim men.

On this particular set of findings, I took my analysis a step further to examine whether perceptions of discrimination among Muslim disaggregated racial/ethnic groups are similar or different from non-Muslim members of the same disaggregated categories. I replicated my study using data from the 2004-2006 National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States (MIDUS II). I could get as close as possible on two outcome measures, namely, being threatened or harassed and being called names or insulted. Figures 2.3 and 2.4 show the odds of reporting these two types of discrimination by race and gender, net of all demographic and socioeconomic status variables. The only significant categories are white women and black men. Compared to white men, white women are less likely to report experiencing discrimination on both outcomes, whereas black men have almost 3 times higher odds (2.55 and 2.70, respectively) of reporting discrimination.

With the exception of white women, the rest of the findings from the MIDUS dataset are either inconsistent with the findings from the Muslim population (black men in general population versus black Muslim men) or produce insignificant results. These differences indicate that there is something akin to a “Muslim factor” in the perception of discrimination in society. In other words, being a “Muslim,” especially white man makes a difference in perceptions of discrimination among racially and ethnically identified individuals. Several speculations can be made regarding this observation. Explanations can be sought in previous research that suggests that women underreport their experiences of discrimination (Crosby 1984), whereas white Muslims are less likely than other ethnic groups to believe that larger American society is just toward Muslims (Rippy and Newman 2006). Additionally, studies show that white Muslims, represented mostly

by Arabs<sup>4</sup>, are not well received and tolerated by mainstream society. Muslims and Arabs are seen as “not quite white” (Bakalian and Bozorgmehr 2009:30) and even as “poor white trash,” which became a popular belief after 9/11 (Dossa 2008). Furthermore, associating Arabs with terrorists (Suleiman 1999; McCloud 2006) leaves this group at disadvantaged position, compared to other Muslim racial/ethnic groups.

Concerning Hispanic Muslim women who are more likely to report experiencing any type of discrimination than white Muslim men, it could be speculated that Latina immigrants continue perceiving discrimination along phenotype. Because among potential reasons for conversion of these women, who make more than half of Latino converts, are such factors as higher status, protection, and respect offered by Islam (Diaz 2013; Padgett 2013).

These findings on the race/ethnicity and gender interaction terms should be interpreted with caution, as the overall proportion of Muslim Americans who report being physically threatened or attacked and the proportion of respondents who identify themselves as Hispanic are small (5.76% and 6.49%, respectively). They may be considered as an initiation for future research to investigate what might lead to such paradoxical variations in perceptions of discrimination among Muslim women of different race/ethnicity.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Limitations and future directions**

The study has several important limitations. First, one cannot eliminate the possibility of selection bias. It is possible that respondents who experienced

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<sup>4</sup> For the current data, one-in-six Muslim Americans (approximately 60%) from the Middle East and North Africa identify themselves as white.

discrimination did not participate in the survey. Associated with this is the issue of subjectivity, which is common for questions such as discrimination. The degree to which respondents were honest and possessed good ability to recall past discriminatory acts remains questionable. Second, the cross-sectional nature of the data does not allow inferring causal relationships. In order to assert that the analyzed socio-demographic factors are sole causes of reporting experienced discrimination for certain Muslim race/ethnic persons, longitudinal studies will be needed. Third, the study focused on demographic and socioeconomic predictors while neglecting cultural factors. For example, research has shown that religion plays a vital role in racialization of Muslim Americans (Naber 2000; 2006). Future studies might consider examining religion and other socioeconomic factors that have effect on shaping ethnic groups' perceptions of discrimination. Finally, the relatively small numbers of cases for some ethnic groups might challenge the generalizability of findings. Future studies should focus on potential differences that might exist within each ethnic group.

Despite these limitations, this is one of very few studies to examine the prevalence and correlates of perceived discrimination among Muslim racial/ethnic groups. It contributes to the growing body of literature on perceived discrimination among minority groups and, more specifically, to the existing body of knowledge on discrimination against Muslim Americans. The findings show that Muslim Americans continue comprising one of the disadvantaged minority groups in the U.S. They highlight the existence of varying degrees of discrimination among Muslim American racial/ethnic groups and suggest that future studies examine negative implications and develop tailored interventions for Muslims who are at the greatest risk of mistreatment.

Table 2.1. Descriptive statistics for socio-demographic characteristics of the sample by race/ethnicity, Pew 2011

	<b>Total sample</b>	<b>White non-Hispanic</b> (30.43%)	<b>Black non-Hispanic</b> (23.23%)	<b>Asian non-Hispanic</b> (21.21%)	<b>Hispanic</b> (6.49%)	<b>Other non-Hispanic</b> (18.64%)	<b>p</b>
<b>Gender</b>	<b>1,009</b>						
Female	48.70%	59.18%	33.75%	43.29%	58.51%	52.99%	
<b>Age</b>	<b>999</b>						
18-29	36.13%	28.53%	31.12%	41.06%	44.05%	46.49%	
30-39	23.42%	27.58%	25.68%	19.76%	32.16%	14.90%	
40-54	28.48%	30.36%	28.58%	29.90%	13.38%	28.89%	
55+	11.97%	13.53%	14.62%	9.27%	10.41%	9.71%	
<b>Marital status</b>	<b>1,005</b>						
Married	56.28%	66.03%	47.57%	60.37%	50.24%	48.74%	*
<b>Education</b>	<b>1,007</b>						
High school or less	53.47%	46.55%	63.91%	42.96%	57.72%	62.12%	***
Some College	19.25%	18.56%	23.38%	16.67%	38.21%	11.54%	
College Graduate	15.66%	18.55%	8.60%	21.66%	4.07%	16.99%	
Post Graduate	11.62%	16.34%	4.11%	18.70%	0%	9.35%	
<b>Homeowner</b>	<b>1,007</b>						
Yes	33.76%	40.42%	26.57%	39.02%	11.00%	33.79%	**

Notes: Racial/ethnic differences are examined using chi-squared analyses.

 $\chi^2$  significant at: \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$ , \*\*\* $p \leq .001$ .

Sample numbers and proportions (%) are based on weighted counts excluding non-responses.

Table 2.2. Proportion reporting each type of perceived discrimination due to Muslim identity, Pew 2011

	Total sample	White non-Hispanic	Black non-Hispanic	Asian non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Other non-Hispanic	p
People suspicious of you	994 28.83%	23.68%	30.43%	19.68%	54.27%	37.00%	*
Called offensive names	1,004 22.12%	18.42%	19.77%	20.67%	35.64%	28.09%	
Singled out by other law enforcement officers	1,005 12.92%	8.63%	20.77%	5.21%	25.19%	14.76%	*
Physically threatened or attacked	1,008 5.76%	6.08%	2.88%	5.86%	23.61%	2.47%	**
Any discrimination	997 36.25%	30.26%	36.84%	26.80%	61.66%	47.34%	*

Notes: Chi-square significant at: \* $p \leq .10$ , \*\* $p \leq .05$ , \*\*\* $p \leq .01$ , \*\*\*\* $p \leq .001$ .

Proportions (%) are given for answer "yes."

Sample numbers and proportions (%) are based on weighted counts excluding non-responses.

Table 2.3. Binary logistic regression predicting experienced discrimination across Muslim American racial/ethnic groups, Pew 2011

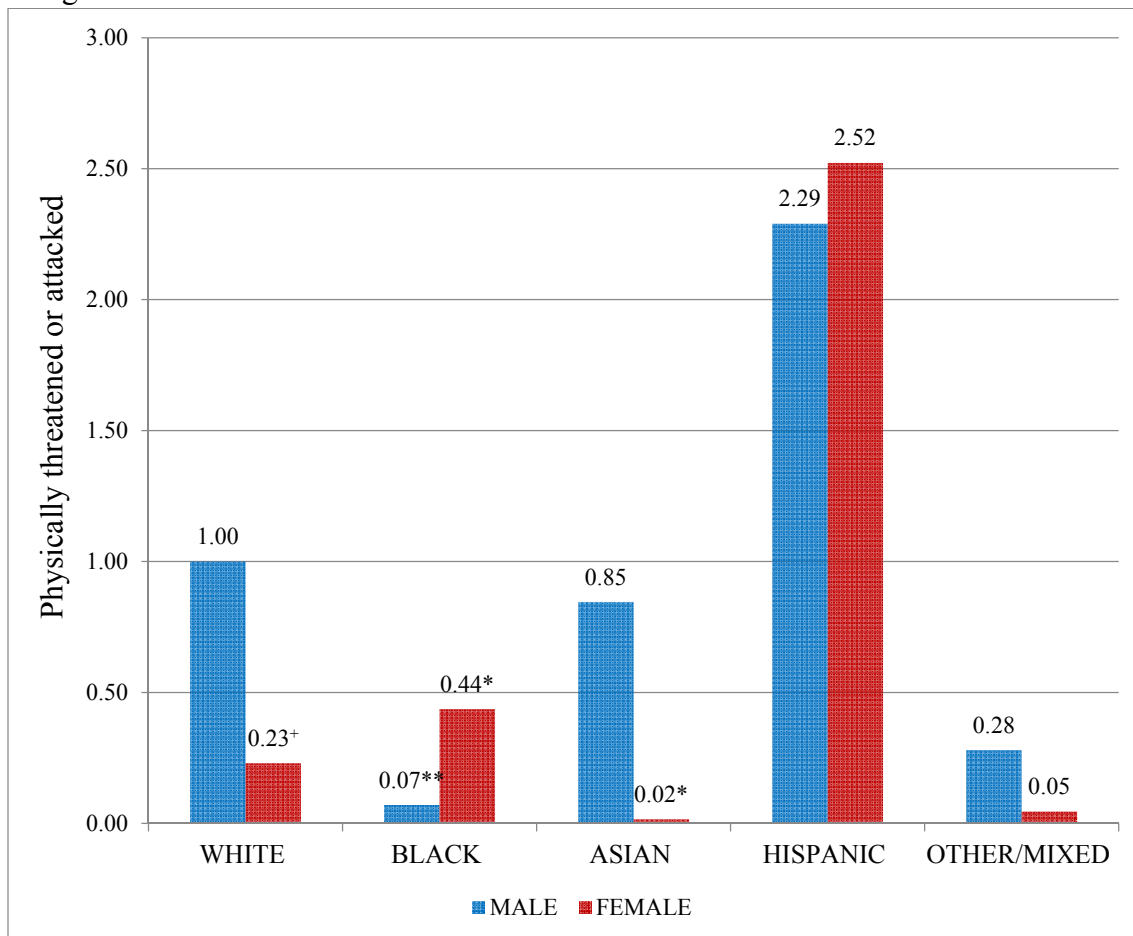
	People suspicious of you			Called offensive names			Singled out by other law enforcement officers			Physically threatened or attacked			Any discrimination		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Race</i>															
Black <sup>a</sup>	1.44 (.69-3.0)	1.28 (.60-2.74)	1.30 (.59-2.88)	1.08 (.47-2.52)	.94 (.38-2.32)	.89 (.37-2.16)	2.77* (1.12-6.89)	2.37* (.94-5.98)	2.00 (.75-5.29)	.46 (.12-1.72)	.37 (.08-1.64)	.33 (.07-1.46)	1.30 (.70-2.44)	1.14 (.59-2.22)	1.13 (.56-2.26)
Asian <sup>a</sup>	.83 (.43-1.59)	.70 (.37-1.34)	.68 (.36-1.30)	1.16 (.59-2.28)	.96 (.50-1.86)	.98 (.50-1.91)	.57 (.22-1.46)	.50 (.19-1.27)	.51 (.20-1.32)	.98 (.42-2.28)	.77 (.32-1.85)	.78 (.31-1.96)	.83 (.48-1.44)	.67 (.38-1.18)	.67 (.38-1.19)
Hispanic <sup>a</sup>	3.73* (1.18-11.84)	3.70* (1.11-12.32)	4.16* (1.26-13.73)	2.43 (.82-7.25)	2.24 (.65-7.68)	2.08 (.60-7.14)	3.51 (.77-16.03)	3.37 (.69-17.02)	2.90 (.62-13.52)	4.80* (1.02-22.56)	4.50* (.75-27.01)	4.80* (.74-31.14)	3.88* (1.37-11.0)	3.83* (1.37-10.68)	3.80* (1.34-10.77)
Other/Mixed <sup>a</sup>	1.90* (.99-3.66)	1.62 (.82-3.21)	1.57 (.78-3.14)	1.70 (.76-3.78)	1.41 (.63-3.13)	1.40 (.63-3.13)	1.78 (.73-4.33)	1.67 (.70-4.00)	1.48 (.62-3.56)	.39 (.08-1.88)	.30 (.06-1.51)	.29 (.05-1.50)	2.00* (1.0-3.96)	1.67 (.81-3.43)	1.68 (.82-3.43)
<i>Demographics</i>															
Sex (1=female)	.71 (.41-1.23)	.69 (.41-1.15)	.69 (.41-1.15)	.66* (.42-1.05)	.66* (.42-1.05)	.65* (.42-1.02)	.47** (.28-.81)	.47** (.28-.81)	.49** (.30-.81)	.46 (.16-1.27)	.41* (.14-1.19)	.41* (.14-1.19)	.65* (.41-1.01)	.64* (.41-1.01)	.64* (.41-1.01)
Age 30-39 <sup>b</sup>	.52 (.22-1.25)	.47* (.19-1.31)	.47* (.19-1.31)	.48* (.21-1.05)	.48* (.21-1.05)	.49* (.23-1.06)	.88 (.37-2.08)	.88 (.37-2.08)	.96 (.40-2.33)	.33* (.10-1.06)	.32* (.10-1.06)	.32* (.10-1.06)	.43* (.20-.93)	.42* (.20-.93)	.42* (.20-.93)
Age 40-54 <sup>b</sup>	.87 (.44-1.72)	.72 (.37-1.41)	.72 (.37-1.41)	.64 (.29-1.38)	.64 (.29-1.38)	.66 (.30-1.44)	.65 (.22-2.55)	.65 (.22-2.55)	.75 (.22-2.55)	.54 (.18-1.65)	.43 (.18-1.65)	.43 (.18-1.65)	.67 (.35-1.28)	.64 (.35-1.28)	.64 (.35-1.28)
Age 55+ <sup>b</sup>	.37* (.17-.83)	.30** (.13-.71)	.30** (.13-.71)	.32* (.11-.87)	.32* (.11-.87)	.33* (.12-.92)	.85 (.30-2.38)	.85 (.30-2.38)	.96 (.33-2.79)	.53 (.02-15.84)	.42 (.01-19.54)	.42 (.01-19.54)	.26*** (.13-.54)	.25*** (.13-.54)	.25*** (.13-.54)
Married	.79 (.44-1.42)	.71 (.38-1.32)	.71 (.38-1.32)	.79 (.42-1.49)	.79 (.42-1.49)	.80 (.39-1.63)	1.06 (.46-2.45)	1.06 (.46-2.45)	1.23 (.46-3.27)	.99 (.35-2.79)	.82 (.22-3.02)	.82 (.22-3.02)	.86 (.48-1.56)	.82 (.48-1.56)	.82 (.48-1.56)
<i>Socio-economic</i>															
Some College <sup>c</sup>	.78 (.37-1.64)	.78 (.37-1.64)	.78 (.37-1.64)	1.09 (.55-2.18)	1.09 (.55-2.18)	1.09 (.55-2.18)	.39* (.19-.82)	.39* (.19-.82)	.39* (.19-.82)	.78 (.26-2.34)	.78 (.26-2.34)	.78 (.26-2.34)	1.14 (.55-2.39)	1.14 (.55-2.39)	1.14 (.55-2.39)
College Grad <sup>c</sup>	.74 (.44-1.24)	.74 (.44-1.24)	.74 (.44-1.24)	.84 (.45-1.59)	.84 (.45-1.59)	.84 (.45-1.59)	.56 (.24-1.33)	.56 (.24-1.33)	.56 (.24-1.33)	.73 (.27-1.99)	.73 (.27-1.99)	.73 (.27-1.99)	.88 (.52-1.51)	.88 (.52-1.51)	.88 (.52-1.51)
Post Graduate <sup>c</sup>	1.04 (.53-2.03)	1.04 (.53-2.03)	1.04 (.53-2.03)	.75 (.36-1.54)	.75 (.36-1.54)	.75 (.36-1.54)	.33* (.10-1.06)	.33* (.10-1.06)	.33* (.10-1.06)	.23 (.03-1.49)	.23 (.03-1.49)	.23 (.03-1.49)	.93 (.50-1.74)	.93 (.50-1.74)	.93 (.50-1.74)
Homeowner (1=Yes)	1.64 (.87-3.09)	1.64 (.87-3.09)	1.64 (.87-3.09)	.99 (.52-1.89)	.99 (.52-1.89)	.99 (.52-1.89)	.60 (.23-1.58)	.60 (.23-1.58)	.60 (.23-1.58)	2.61 (.63-10.76)	2.61 (.63-10.76)	2.61 (.63-10.76)	1.22 (.69-2.15)	1.22 (.69-2.15)	1.22 (.69-2.15)
Constant	.30*** (.19-.49)	.58 (.29-1.17)	.64 (.29-1.39)	.22*** (.13-.37)	.51* (.24-1.08)	.53 (.24-1.17)	.09*** (.04-.19)	.16*** (.07-.37)	.23** (.08-.63)	.06*** (.03-.14)	.16** (.05-.53)	.18** (.05-.59)	.44*** (.30-.64)	1.01 (.56-1.84)	1.01 (.52-1.95)

Notes: N = 1,033. Effect estimates are presented as odds ratios. Confidence intervals are given in parentheses.

<sup>a</sup>White; <sup>b</sup>Age 18-29; <sup>c</sup>High school or less.

\*p &lt; .10, \*\*p &lt; .05, \*\*\*p &lt; .001.

Figure 2.1. Odds of reporting being physically threatened or attacked, by Muslims' race and gender



Race and Gender classification

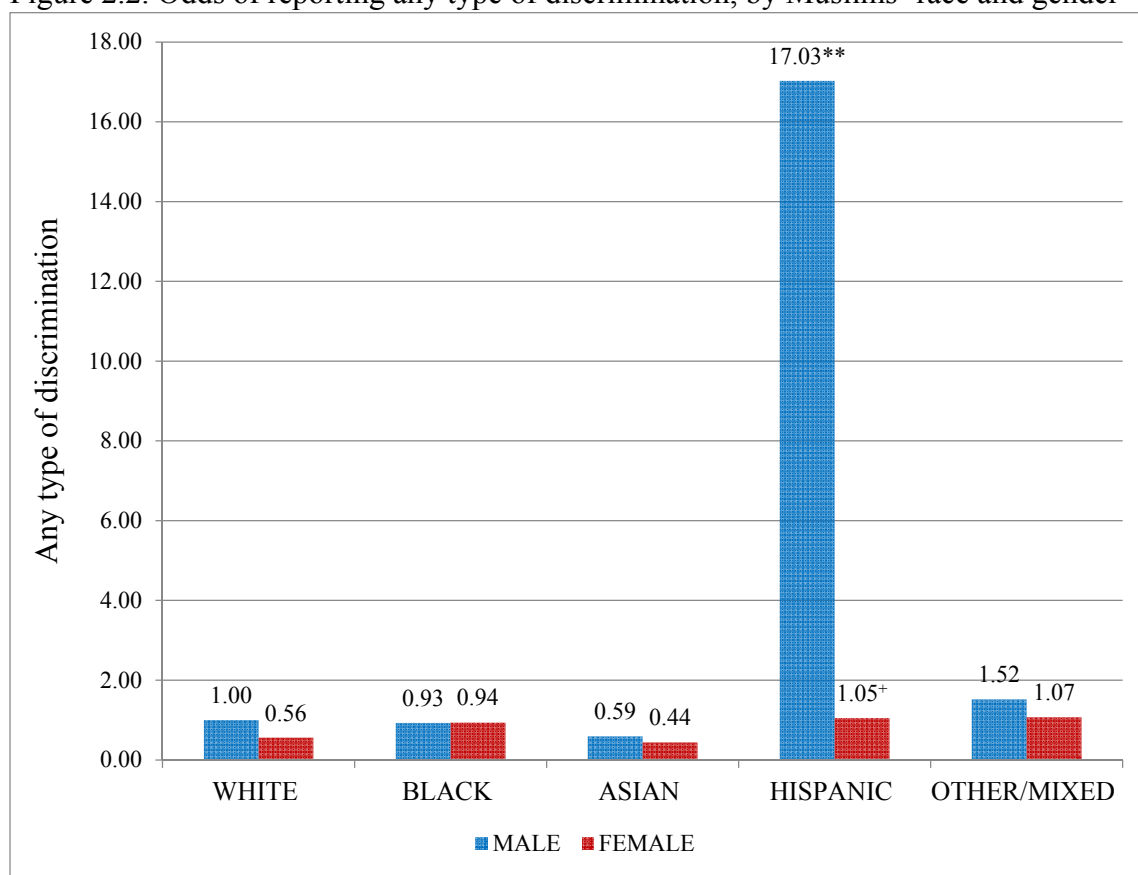
Source: Pew 2011

Notes: N = 1,033

Plotted values are net of demographic and socioeconomic status measures

<sup>+</sup>p < .10, \*p ≤ .05, \*\*p ≤ .01, \*\*\*p ≤ .001

Figure 2.2. Odds of reporting any type of discrimination, by Muslims' race and gender



Race and Gender classification

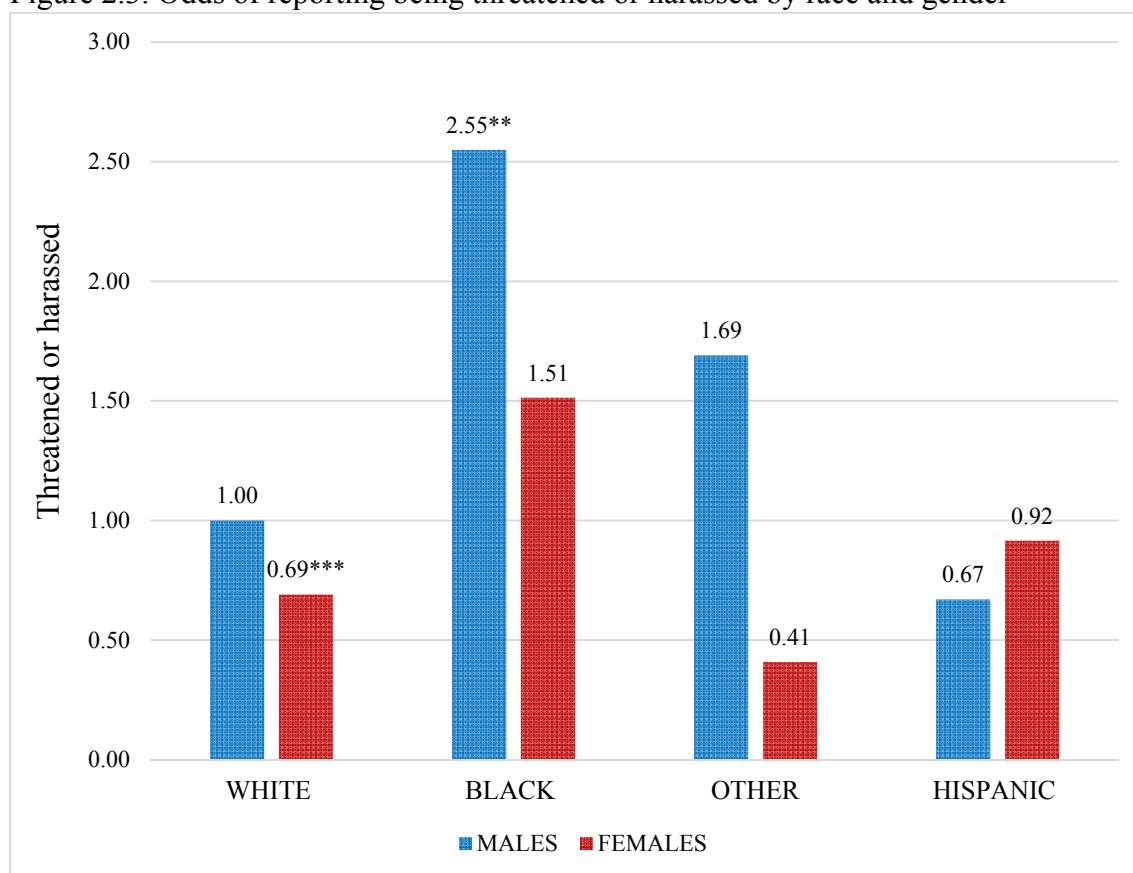
Source: Pew 2011

Notes: N = 1,033

Plotted values are net of demographic and socioeconomic status measures

<sup>+</sup>p < .10, \*p ≤ .05, \*\*p ≤ .01, \*\*\*p ≤ .001

Figure 2.3. Odds of reporting being threatened or harassed by race and gender



Race and Gender classification

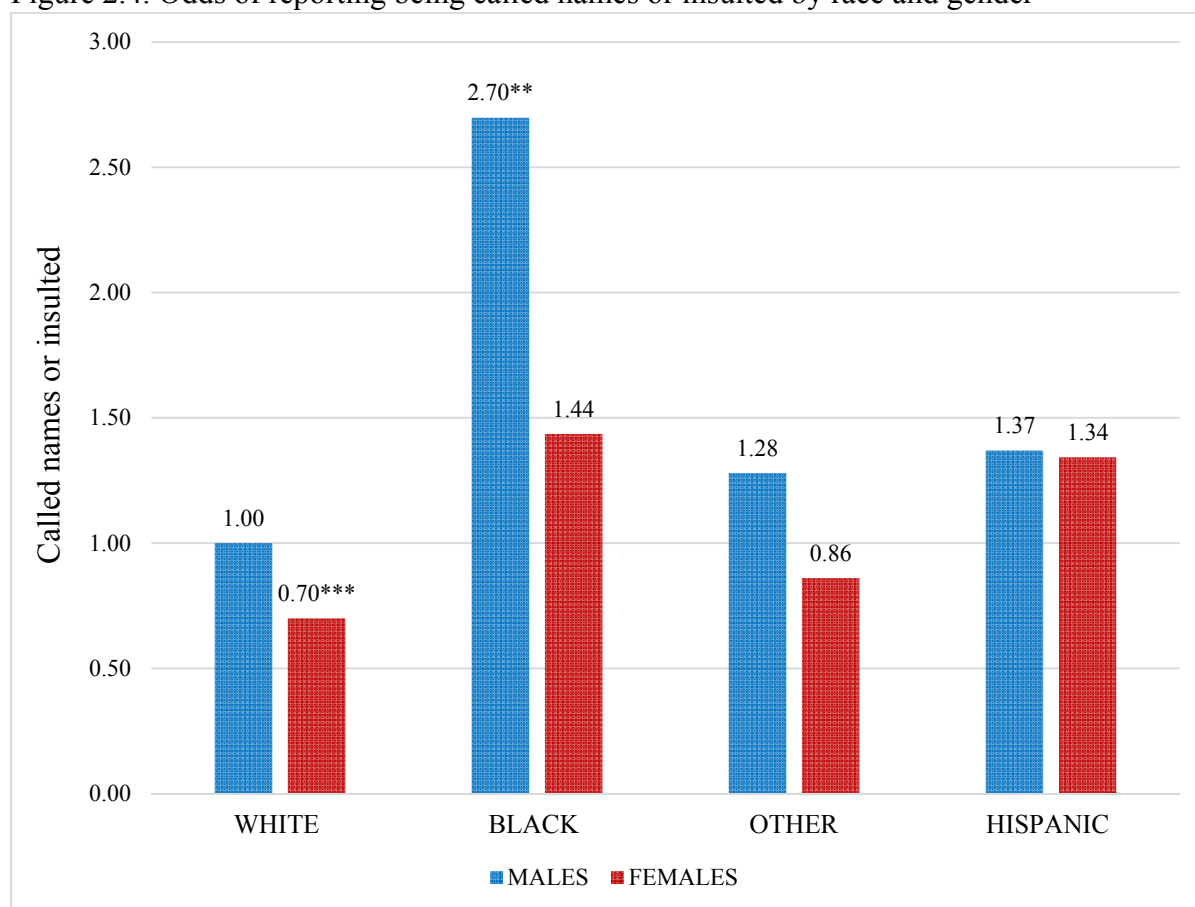
Source: MIDUS 2004-2006

Notes: N = 2,861

Plotted values are net demographic and socioeconomic status measures

<sup>+</sup>p < .10, \*p ≤ .05, \*\*p ≤ .01, \*\*\*p ≤ .001

Figure 2.4. Odds of reporting being called names or insulted by race and gender



Race and Gender classification

Source: MIDUS 2004-2006

Notes: N = 2,861

Plotted values are net of demographic and socioeconomic status measures

<sup>+</sup>p < .10, \*p ≤ .05, \*\*p ≤ .01, \*\*\*p ≤ .001.

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### **CHAPTER 3: DIFFERENCES IN PERCEIVED DISCRIMINATION AMONG MUSLIM AMERICANS BASED ON THEIR RELIGIOUS IDENTITY, PRACTICES, AND BELIEFS**

#### **ABSTRACT**

I employ data from the 2011 Pew Religion and Public Life Survey of 1,033 adult Muslim Americans, to examine the effects of religious identity, practices, and beliefs on Muslims' perceptions of discrimination and the extent to which these religious factors might shape the perception of discrimination differently within Muslim race/ethnic groups. Findings suggest that multiple aspects of religion affect the extent to which respondents perceive discrimination. Muslim Americans with high levels of religious practices are more likely and Muslim Americans with strong belief in religious tenets are less likely to report experiencing five different forms of discrimination. These effects sustain, net of all demographic and socioeconomic variables, suggesting that certain religious factors influence Muslims' perceptions of discrimination. Within group comparison shows that the pure extrinsic group reports higher rates of perceptions for all forms of discrimination than the pro-religious, pure intrinsic, and antireligious groups. Among the five Muslim racial/ethnic groups, black, Asian, and other/mixed race Muslims with high levels of religious practices report significantly higher odds on most forms of discrimination, compared to their white coreligionists. Less educated Muslims with low levels of orthodoxy are more likely to report experiencing discrimination than better educated counterparts with high levels of orthodoxy. The religious/national identity measure is not a prominent factor in shaping Muslims' perceptions of discrimination. The study draws attention to varying effects of religious factors on different Muslim

American groups in perceived discrimination and suggests researchers challenge a common perception of viewing religion as a “master status” for the Muslim identity.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Muslim Americans are not only members of a racial/ethnic minority group but they also belong to a religious minority group. It is this religious identity through which Muslims are primarily defined as a social group (Byng 1998: 662; Strabac and Listhaug 2008). This is partially related to a strong association that Muslims hold with their religion. According to a 2009 Gallup poll, among the surveyed religious groups, such as Protestants, Catholics, Mormons, Jews, and Muslims, the proportion who stated that religion played “an important role” in their lives was highest among Muslims (80%) and Mormons (85%) (Gallup 2009). Both waves of the Pew study of Muslims in the United States conducted in 2007 and 2011 show that about half of Muslim Americans see themselves first as a Muslim (47% and 49%) rather than thinking of themselves first as an American (26% and 28%) (Pew Research Center 2011). A similar observation is made by Americans, about two-thirds of whom believe that Muslims have a very or fairly strong sense of Islamic identity (Pew Global Attitudes Project 2005). Thus, compared to other religious groups, religion plays a vital role for Muslims.

Racialization has differed among minority groups. Scholars viewed phenotype as a source of racialization for other minority groups, whereas Muslim Americans are racialized according to religion (Naber 2000; Alsultany 2006). This type of racialization classifies Muslim born or raised individuals under the same religious category, although many, especially younger generations, might not share common characteristics of practicing Muslims.

Additionally, studies show that religious attributions serve as a source of discrimination against Muslim Americans. According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Muslims accounted for a quarter of the claims based on religion in 2009 while this group makes up less than 2 percent of the U.S. population (Greenhouse 2010). Religious discrimination claims filed by Muslims in 2009 with the EEOC increased by 20 percent from the previous year and by nearly 60 percent from 2005 (Greenhouse 2010). Within a five year period following the 9/11 events, the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division investigated seven hundred cases of religious bigotry against Muslims, Sikhs, Arabs, and South Asians (Bakalian and Bozorgmehr 2009). The most recent survey results, released by the California chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-CA) on October 30, 2015, showed that Muslim American students' experiences with bullying and discrimination were affected by their religious identity. This statewide survey of more than 621 Muslim American students ages 11 to 18 conducted in 2014 in public and non-Muslim private schools in California revealed that 55% of the respondents reported experiencing bullying based on their religious identity, which is twice as high as the percentage of students reporting being subjected to bullying at school nationwide (CAIR-CA 2015).

The effects of religion on people's beliefs about racial inequality and discrimination and variations that exist along these dimensions across different religious traditions have been shown by an emerging number of recent studies (see Mayrl and Saperstein 2013, for a review). The established association between religion and people's beliefs about racial inequality laid a ground for scholars to argue that religion might also affect people's perceptions of discrimination (Mayrl and Saperstein 2013). Additionally,

studies show that religion, especially some of its components, such as religious institutions, practices, and beliefs help people cope with discrimination and buffer its effects on health problems (Baer and Singer 1992; Byng 1998; Elaasar 2004; Hallak and Quina 2004; Bierman 2006).

Yet, a growing body of literature on discrimination against Muslims has lagged behind in examining the effects of religion on perceived discrimination by Muslims. Rather most previous research has focused on identifying whether religion or race is a primary source of discrimination. Thus a number of studies analyzed the impact of the 9/11 events on religious and ethnic discrimination in the UK and found that religion was a stronger predictor than ethnicity in determining the victims of discrimination (Sheridan and Gillet 2005; Sheridan 2006). Religion explained a larger percentage of variances than ethnicity in a stepwise linear regression in pre- and post-9/11 discriminatory change (Sheridan and Gillet 2005). Additionally, Muslims, a majority of whom (68%) were visible members of their faith, reported large increases in discriminatory experiences compared to Jews, Sikhs, Christians, and Hindus (Sheridan and Gillet 2005). On the same line, Read's (2008) study of Arab Americans in a mosque and a church in Houston revealed that both Christian Arab Americans and Muslim Arab Americans thought that one of the primary reasons for discrimination of Arabs was equating Arab ethnicity with Islam.

Given the fact that religion shapes people's perceptions and behaviors through rendering a particular lens for perceiving discrimination and equipping with coping strategies to shield detrimental effects of discrimination, the present study attempts to bridge the existing gap in the literature on discrimination against Muslims. Using a

nationally representative sample, I examine the effects of religious factors on Muslim Americans' perceptions of discrimination and assess the extent to which religion might shape the perception of discrimination differently within Muslim racial and ethnic groups.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Religious components and perceived discrimination**

Studies of discrimination against Muslims show that among different religious components, such as practices, beliefs, institutions, material expressions, emotions, and so forth some matter more for discrimination than others. Two of these components, namely, religious beliefs and practices stand out from the rest. Muslims with strong beliefs and high degrees of religious practices are visible in the public space because of their strong commitment to expressing religious tenets, wearing religious dress, and praying five times a day. According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the most common complaints of religious bias encountered by Muslims in the workplace include coworkers calling Muslims "terrorist" or "Osama" and employers prohibiting them taking prayer breaks or banning Muslim women from wearing headscarves (Greenhouse 2010). Similarly, Allen and Nielsen's (2002) report from 15 European Union countries showed that Islamic visual identifiers, such the *hijab* (Muslim women's headscarf), turban, physical appearance, and Islamic cultural centers and mosques were primary factors in determining targets of hostility and violent acts. A large body of literature examines the Islamic attire as a major source of discrimination against Muslims (Freeland 2001; Sirin and Katsiaficas 2011; Aroian 2012). Another significant body of research demonstrates a strong association between religious attire and

discrimination for Muslim women in the job market (Ghumman and Jackson 2010; Unkelbach et al. 2010; Foroutan 2011; Ghumman and Ryan 2013). Some studies even considered the *hijab* (Muslim women's headscarf) a "stigma symbol" against which Muslim women are discriminated (Ghumman and Ryan 2013). The trend is well summarized by Foroutan (2011) echoing previous research that discrimination in the job market usually takes place against culturally and visibly distinct people.

A similar association but between discrimination and another component of religion, which is religious identity, has been reported by other studies. Muslim Americans' strong identification with religion, for example, has always raised the question of their patriotism to the U.S. and served as a basis for being viewed as an alienated minority. According to a 2006 Gallup poll, slightly fewer than half Americans (49%) believed Muslim Americans were loyal to the U.S. (Saad 2006). The consequences are reflected in numerous cases when Muslims change their names in full conformity with the mainstream culture to conceal their identity. The practice was especially common with early Muslim immigrants when Muslim names such as Muhammad and Ali used to be changed into "Mo" and "Al" (Khan 2003). Similarly, Widner and Chicoine (2011) found the prevalence of discrimination on religious basis in the labor market, where Arab Americans having Muslim names faced discrimination during the employment process. Wallace, Wright, and Hyde's (2014) recent experimental study on fictitious job applications sent for job openings throughout the American South with affiliation in one of seven religions (Muslims, pagans, atheists, a fictitious religious group, Catholics, evangelical Christians, and Jews) showed that Muslims encountered the

most consistent and severe hiring discrimination and were the lowest in the employer preference scale.

The association between Muslims' religious identity and discrimination was also supported by studies on Muslims in Europe. For example, Fleischmann, Phalet, and Klein (2011) found that Turkish and Moroccan Muslims in five European cities who perceived more discrimination identified more strongly as Muslims than Muslims who reported fewer discriminatory incidents. Another study revealed that among five religious groups, namely, Jews, Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus, the adherents of Islam were the only group who reported significant increases in post-9/11 discriminatory treatments (Sheridan and Gillet 2005).

Overall, studies on discrimination against Muslim Americans show that such components of religion as Islamic visual identifiers and Islamic names serve as a source for discrimination against Muslims. Yet, these studies failed to examine the effects of other important religious predictors, such as Islamic practices, beliefs, and self-identification in perceived discrimination among Muslims. Despite a strong association existing between Muslims and their religious practices, beliefs, and identity, there are only few studies that use these religious factors as predictors of discrimination (Strabac and Listhaug 2008; Sirin and Katsiaficas 2011). Furthermore, previous researchers limit their analysis to the examination of the effects of one religious component on discrimination. Studies that employ several religious components to identify which components are the most prominent factors in shaping Muslims' perceptions of discrimination are limited.

### **Racial perceptions of discrimination**

Another body of empirical work examines the effect of religion on racial groups' perception of discrimination. One of the first attempts is made by Hartman et al. (2011), who in contrast to their expectations, found smaller differences in Americans' perception of religion as a source of discrimination (23%) versus race as a source of discrimination (40%). These differences were also small across religious groups in their experience of racial discrimination. Yet, they analyzed religion and race separately and did not look at the effect of religion for different racial groups. Mayrl and Saperstein's (2013) study is the only prior research that considered the above mentioned shortcoming. The authors examined the effects of region, political party, and religion on whites' perception of discrimination and found that in the South the prevalence of reports of discrimination differed by religious affiliation, whereas outside the South that difference was due to political affiliation.

Following the general trend of previous studies on perceived discrimination, research on Muslims also lags behind in examining the influence of religion on different race/ethnic groups' perceptions of discrimination. Yet, a small number of studies touched indirectly on the effect of religious identifiers on ethnic differences in experiencing discrimination. For example, Foroutan (2011) found that variations in the employment level among different ethnic groups of Muslim women in Australia were partially explained by discrimination resulting from respondents' religious identity. The employment rate was lower for Muslim women from the Middle East and North Africa who carry Islamic attire and names, compared to their coreligionists from Eastern Europe who did not display their religious identity. Another interesting finding was revealed by

another study that looked at the interaction of ethnicity and religious attire. Unkelbach et al. (2010) found in their lab experiment in Germany that white women applicants wearing the traditional Muslim headscarf were rejected more frequently than non-white women wearing *hijabs*.

Overall, these studies either compared Muslims on their country and region of origin or assumed that Muslim is a monolithic category limiting their analysis only to white and non-white Muslims. Empirical studies that examine the effects of religious factors on the perception of discrimination among Muslim racial/ethnic groups are nearly absent. The present study attempts to address this shortcoming by identifying the relationship between religious factors and Muslims' perceptions of discrimination and examining the extent to which religion might shape the perception of discrimination differently within Muslim racial and ethnic groups. Towards this goal, the study has three objectives. First, I examine whether there is any relationship between religious beliefs, practices, and self-identification and perceived discrimination by Muslims. Second, I assess whether any religion effects persist, once I control for socio-demographic predictors. Third, I determine whether race/ethnicity interacts with religious practices (orthopraxy) in shaping the experience of discrimination differently within Muslim race/ethnic groups.

### **Correlates of perceived discrimination**

Previous research on perceived discrimination has identified a number of socio-demographic characteristics as correlates of perceived discrimination. Most studies are consistent in their findings that other racial/ethnic minorities report higher levels of perceived discrimination compared to whites (Feagin 1991; Kessler, Mickelson, and

Williams 1999; Barnes et al. 2004; Harris 2004; Hirsh and Lyons 2010). As concerns findings on racial/ethnic differences in perceived discrimination among minorities, with an exception of very few works (Harris 2004), most studies show lower levels of perceived discrimination among Asians relative to Hispanics and blacks (Naff 1995; Bobo and Suh 1995 and Klugel and Bobo 2001 as cited in Harris 2004). While among other demographic characteristics age, gender, and marital status have been shown to covariate with perceived discrimination, education and various indicators of income (household income, employment or occupational status) have been primarily employed as socioeconomic status correlates of perceived discrimination (Forman, Williams, and Jackson 1997; Kessler et al. 1999; Nimer 2001; Harris 2004; Carr and Friedman 2005; Rippy and Newman 2006; Perez, Fortuna, and Alegria 2008; Sirin and Katsiaficas 2011). Yet, findings are mixed, ranging from positive to negative and to curvilinear relationships. For example, findings are inconsistent concerning the effect of education on the likelihood of reporting discrimination. Most studies report positive relationship between discrimination and education attainment. Better educated respondents tend to report higher levels of perceived discrimination than the less educated respondents due to greater exposure to mistreatments, increased awareness, and readiness to report discrimination (Kessler et al. 1999; Carr and Friedman 2005; Hirsh and Lyons 2010). Some studies found a curvilinear relationship between education and discrimination (Forman et al. 1997). Still other studies reported an inverse relationship between education and perceived discrimination for certain minority groups. Harris (2004) found that education was negatively associated with perceptions of discrimination for African

Americans and Puerto Ricans but the relationship was positive among Mexican Americans.

### **Theoretical framework and hypotheses**

As was argued in the previous chapter, out of three forms of stigma identified by Goffman's (1963) theory of social stigma, Muslims are primarily stigmatized against the third form – a “tribal stigma.” Tribal stigma includes real or imagined traits of nation, race, and religion that “can be transmitted through lineages and equally contaminate all members of a family” (Goffman 1963:4). An important component of the tribal stigma is religion against which a person may be stigmatized through the attribution of discredited traits. Since Islam has been viewed as a violent, blood thirsty, barbaric, and backward religion (Slade 1981; Suleiman 1988; Shaheen 2003; Alatas 2007), its adherents have been stigmatized against the long list of vilified characteristics attributed to this faith. Not surprisingly, as argued by previous studies, the stigmatizing side is aware of Muslims' status and their religious affiliation (Sheridan 2006).

Furthermore, a stigmatized individual encounters “varieties of discrimination” (Goffman 1963:5). As a stigmatized group, Muslims arguably face multiple forms of discrimination in various social settings (Livengood and Stodolska 2004; Widner and Chicoine 2011; Aroian 2012). Building on the previous chapter, the present study examines the influence of religion on five types of perceived discrimination (people suspicious of you, being called offensive names, being physically threatened or attacked, being singled out by law enforcement officers, and any type of discrimination) by Muslim Americans.

Muslim Americans might stand out from a general crowd and other minority religious groups due to their differences in religious attire, physical appearance, and way of worship. A person with a visible stigma encounters more discrimination, compared to a person whose stigma is hidden (Goffman 1963:48-51). A number of studies on anti-Muslim prejudice and discrimination found that various Islamic visible signifiers, such as clothing, name, and physical appearance serve as primary factors in identifying targets of discrimination (e.g. Allen and Nielsen 2002; Widner and Chicoine 2011). *Similarly, I expect that Muslims with high levels of religious practices (orthopraxy) and strong belief in major religious tenets (orthodoxy) are more likely to report experiencing discrimination.* The logic behind this argumentation is that Muslims with strong beliefs and high degrees of religious practices are visible in the public space because of their strong commitment to observing religious duties five times a day and under all circumstances. These Muslims are visible through reading religious texts, wearing their religious attire, or through offering *salahs* (prayers) in workplaces, at airports, on planes, in malls, in parks, and in other public settings. A number of incidents have been reported in the media and taken to courts when practicing Muslims were suspended from flights, apprehended at airports, or harassed in workplaces (e.g. Freeland 2001).

Alternatively, *I expect that Muslims with high levels of orthopraxy will perceive more discrimination compared to Muslims with high levels of orthodoxy.* Exploration can be guided by adopting an intrinsic-extrinsic framework conceptualized in Allport and Ross' (1967) seminal work. As argued by Allport and Ross (1967), extrinsic religiosity is correlated with racial prejudice, whereas intrinsic religiosity is correlated with tolerance. Given that intrinsic dimension also measures "rigid adherence to doctrinal orthodoxy"

(Batson 1976, Batson and Ventis 1982 as cited in Kirkpatrick and Hood 1990:447), I will use my orthodoxy scale as a measure of intrinsic religious orientation. While intrinsic dimension measures religious commitment, extrinsic dimension is mostly associated with “a selfish/utilitarian motivation for religious involvement” (Kirkpatrick and Hood 1990:447). This allows me to use the orthopraxy scale as a measure of extrinsic religious orientation. In Allport and Ross’ (1967) own words “the extrinsically motivated person *uses* his religion, whereas the intrinsically motivated *lives* his religion” (p. 434). Similarly, it could be expected that respondents with high levels of orthopraxy or with extrinsic religious orientation use religion for their personal and political purposes to enhance their personal security and social status. They might perceive more discrimination by viewing larger society less tolerant. Respondents with intrinsic religious orientation or high levels of orthodoxy live their lives according to the core principals of religion that teaches tolerance, love toward one’s neighbor, and respect of others. They might perceive less discrimination. Although the original theory on the intrinsic-extrinsic religious orientation classified bipolar opposites, other studies came up with a threefold (Allport and Ross 1967) and fourfold (Hood 1978) classification of religiosity to address the issue of continuity and curvilinearity (see Kirkpatrick and Hood 1990, for a review). Given the established observation that people fall on a continuum between the two opposite poles, I will further construct four religious groups (high orthopraxy high orthodoxy; high orthopraxy low orthodoxy; low orthopraxy low orthodoxy; and low orthopraxy high orthodoxy) similar to Hood’s (1978) fourfold classification of religiosity, in order to further determine which religious groups are more likely to report higher rates of perceived discrimination.

Muslims have a strong association with their religion. Studies show that even after facing discrimination due to the 9/11 terror events, Muslims, in general, did not defer from their Muslim identity but rather asserted it in various ways ranging from changing their physical appearance to educating themselves and others about Islam to becoming an active participant in the Muslim community and political arena (Kundnani 2002; Peek 2003; Gupta 2004; Nagra 2011). Since religion is viewed more as an achieved status, especially for adults, Muslims are blamed for not leaving Islam, so called a “violent” religion. As argued by some scholars, the concept of racial discrimination is not spread on Muslims due to their voluntarily selection of religion (Meer and Modood 2009:353). A voluntarily chosen religious identity could be identified as a controllable stigma, which in Goffman’s (1963) view stipulates more stigmatization, because their possessors are responsible for their own choice. *I expect that respondents who give preference to religious identity over national identity and think of themselves first as a Muslim report encountering more discriminatory acts relative to those who consider themselves first as an American.*

I will use the concept of “master status,” coined by Hughes (1945), to test the above mentioned propositions. One might assume that if a certain aspect of religion is a “master status” or a primary identifying characteristic that overrides all other characteristics of person’s identity (Goffman 1963), it may single-handedly elicit discriminatory treatment regardless of one’s other traits. The master status of holding strong religious beliefs, actively practicing one’s religion, or classifying oneself first as a Muslim might increase chances of a person to experience discrimination.

Several characteristics may interact jointly in forming a stigmatized Muslim identity. Studies show that a stigmatized individual may also possess other devalued traits (Link et al. 1997). Some stigmatized groups have poor demographic characteristics and come from lower socioeconomic status (Carr and Friedman 2005; Carr, Jaffe, and Friedman 2008), whereas others belong to minority ethnic groups. Most studies are consistent in their findings that other racial/ethnic minorities report higher levels of perceived discrimination compared to whites (Barnes et al. 2004; Harris 2004; Hirsh and Lyons 2010). A similar pattern was observed in a limited number of studies that looked at the interaction of religious signifiers and Muslim ethnicity. Foroutan (2011) found that the employment rate was lower for Muslim women from the Middle East and North Africa (mostly Lebanese, Somalis, Egyptians, and Syrians) who are visible members of their religion, compared to Muslim women from Eastern Europe (mostly from Bosnia and Herzegovina). The established difference among race/ethnic groups in perceptions of discrimination against religiously visible people calls for interaction term analyses. Given low religious status held by non-white race/ethnic groups to represent Islam in the United States (see McCloud 2006 on who has the right to define Islam), *I expect that non-white Muslims with high levels of religious practices are more likely to report experiencing discrimination, compared to their white coreligionists who are mostly comprised of Arabs with the sole right of representing Islam.* This proposition is tested by intersectional theory, which argues that a marginalized person's identity is constructed through overlap of multiple simultaneously functioning systems of oppression and could not be limited to the examination of any particular category of identity alone (e.g. Crenshaw 1989; 1991; Collins 1990). Thus, the theory might predict that some combos of

traits, such as being religiously distinct and from lower minority group expose a person to higher levels of discrimination.

The intersectional theory might also predict similar outcomes for another group with combined devalued characteristics. The group includes less educated respondents with low levels of orthodoxy. Some studies demonstrated negative relationship between education and perceived discrimination (Harris 2004). Furthermore, strong religious beliefs are correlated with tolerance (Allport and Ross 1967). *I expect that less educated Muslims with low levels of religious beliefs are more likely to report experiencing discrimination, compared to their better educated counterparts with higher levels of religious beliefs.* Alternatively, it could be argued that among religious people, there are individuals who may be more secularly minded than others. Secularization theory suggests that religion declines with the rise of education. Much research has shown a negative relationship between education and religiosity (see Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi 1975, for a review). The higher a person's education, the less likely the person is to be orthodox. Additionally, a number of studies demonstrated a positive relationship between education attainment and perceived discrimination (Kessler et al. 1999; Carr and Friedman 2005; Hirsh and Lyons 2010). Grounding my proposition in secularization theory, *I expect that better educated respondents with low levels of religious beliefs perceive more discrimination than less educated counterparts with low levels of religious beliefs.*

## **DATA, VARIABLES, AND METHODS**

### **Data**

The study draws on the 2011 Muslim American Survey conducted by the Pew

Research Center. The dataset is publicly available from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life website (<http://www.pewforum.org/datasets>). The survey included landline and cell phone interviews with 1,033 Muslim adults 18 years old and older living in the United States conducted in English (925), Arabic (73), Farsi (19), and Urdu (16). Out of the total sample, 358 interviews were drawn from screening of a geographically stratified random digit dial (RDD) sample of the general public of 41,869 households, 501 were obtained from a commercial database of more than 600,000 households with likely Muslim names, and additional 174 interviews came through recontacting English-speaking Muslim households from previous nationwide surveys conducted since 2007 (Pew Research Center 2011). These sampling sources were used to address three important issues, namely, the high dispersion of the Muslim population throughout the United States, the low incidence (about 5 out of 1,000 respondents identify themselves as Muslim), and the cell phone issue. The response rates ranged from the lowest 18% for the list sample, to 20% for the cell RDD sample, to 22% for the geographic landline RDD sample, and to the highest 54% for the recontact sample (Pew Research Center 2011). Given challenges indicated by previous studies on surveying the Muslim population, which are primary associated with low return rates due to lack of trust (see Leonard 2003:44), the Pew study can be considered a success in surveying the Muslim American population.

## **Variables**

### *Dependent variables*

Perceived discrimination is assessed with the question that is phrased as follows:

“Here are a few things that some Muslims in the United States have experienced. As I

read each one, please tell me whether or not it has happened to you *in the past twelve months*, because you are a Muslim, or not?”

This question is followed by a series of questions assessing six types of discrimination (1) “have people acted as if they are suspicious of you”; (2) “has someone expressed support for you”; (3) “have you been called offensive names”; (4) “have you been singled out by airport security”; (5) “have you been singled out by other law enforcement officers”; and (6) “have you been physically threatened or attacked.” Responses included “yes, has happened” and “no, has not happened.” I dropped questions #2 and #4. The former does not capture the assessment of perceived discrimination. The latter is a relevant measure only if the respondent took a trip by airplane during the past year.

I constructed two sets of outcomes based on the remaining four questions. First, each question was recoded into “yes” = 1 as a separate dichotomous outcome. Second, all four answers were combined and recoded into a dichotomous variable signifying whether a person has experienced any of the four types of discrimination.

All outcome variables have small percentages of missing values. The missing values fall into DK/Refused category on each dependent variable and range from 2.4 percent for the outcome of discrimination associated with suspecting Muslims to 0.49 percent for being called offensive names, to 0.44 percent for being single out by law enforcement officers, and to 0.26 percent for being physically threatened or attacked. Given the small amount of missing data, I employed a listwise deletion and dropped them from future analyses. A different method of handling missing data was implemented for the outcome of any type of discrimination. Respondents who did not answer or refused to

answer the question on any type of discrimination comprise 2.23 percent. I used a combination of logic checks<sup>5</sup> and listwise deletion to handle the missing data for this outcome. I kept those cases with one missing value and at least one “yes” answer, knowing that a missing case would not change the value if there was at least one “yes” answer. On the contrary, I dropped those cases (about 1.16%), which had a missing value but everything else was 0 (answer “No”), as a missing case could change the value either to 1 or 0.

### *Independent variables*

My key independent variables measure various aspects of respondents’ religiosity. The Pew study provides a number of variables that measure respondents’ religious beliefs, practices, involvement, affiliation, and identity. I constructed three variables to measure respondents’ religious beliefs (orthodoxy), practices (orthopraxy), and identity.

Following the practice of previous studies (e.g. Sirin and Katsiaficas 2011), I created a new religious orthopraxy scale by integrating three items associated with the respondent’s religious practices. Mosque attendance was measured using a question: “On average, how often do you attend the mosque or Islamic Center for salah and Jum’ah Prayer?” Responses ranged from 1 (more than once a week) to 6 (never). The frequency of prayer was based on a question: “Concerning daily salah or prayer, do you, in general, pray all five salah daily, make some of the five salah daily, occasionally make salah, only make Eid Prayers, or do you never pray?” Responses ranged from all five salahs (1) to never (5). Additionally, respondents’ participation in mosque activities was measured using a question: “And outside of salah and Jum’ah prayer, do you take part in any other

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<sup>5</sup> A method of handling missing data assuming that there is a logical reason to prove that the value that you have is correct.

social or religious activities at the mosque or Islamic Center?” Answer categories were “yes,” “no,” and “don’t know/refused.” Given the small percentage of “don’t know/refused” responds that ranged from .46% to 1.33% and to 1.49% on these three items, I dropped them from the analysis. All the items were standardized before summing and calculating a reliability coefficient. The scale had a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.64.

Adopting a method from prior studies (e.g. Strabac and Listhaug 2008), I created a composite variable of religious orthodoxy. It is a four-item scale measured using questions whether respondents believe or not in: “one God, Allah,” “the Prophet Muhammad,” “the Day of Judgment,” and “angels.” Responses were “yes,” “no,” and “don’t know/refused.” On any of the three measures, the “don’t know/refused” responses constructed no more than 1.39% of the overall sample. Considering that the “don’t know/refused” responses could be a sign of weak or conflicted commitment, I merged them with the negative responses, before summing the score for each item. Since the individual items of these variables were measured on the same scale, there was no need to standardize the items. The newly created measure is a continuous variable, ranging from 0 to 4, with a higher score representing stronger belief in religious tenets. The scale had a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.66.

Adopting Hood’s (1978) fourfold classification that in addition to pure intrinsic (those who agree with intrinsic but disagree with extrinsic statements) and pure extrinsic (those who agree with extrinsic but disagree with intrinsic statements) categories, includes indiscriminately pro-religious (those who agree with both with intrinsic and extrinsic statements) and indiscriminately antireligious (those who disagree with both statements) categories, I collapsed my continuous measures of orthopraxy and orthodoxy

into dichotomies and constructed four categories. Respondents with high orthopraxy and high orthodoxy were classified as “pro-religious.” Those with high orthopraxy and low orthodoxy were classified as “pure extrinsic.” Those with low orthopraxy and high orthodoxy were classified as “pure intrinsic.” And those with low orthopraxy and low orthodoxy were classified as “antireligious.”

Religious/national identity of respondents was asked based on the following question: “Do you think of yourself first as an American or first as a Muslim?” Answers included American, Muslim, both equally, neither, other, don’t know/refused. Due to the small cell sizes, the two categories of “neither” and “other” were combined into one category “neither/other.” Since the “don’t know/refused” respondents (2.24%) could have a more fully integrated identity, I combined them with the “neither/other category.”<sup>6</sup> The category “American” serves as a reference.

#### *Control variables*

Given that demographic and socioeconomic status variables influence perceptions of discrimination, I employ a set of such factors as potential controlling measures. They are controlled to see whether the effects of religious factors persist, net of all demographic and socioeconomic variables. Demographic measures include race, age, sex, and marital status. Race is a self-reported measure with five categories, namely, black, non-Hispanic; Asian, non-Hispanic; Hispanic; other or mixed, non-Hispanic; and white, non-Hispanic as a reference category. Age has 4 categories – 18-29 years, 30-39 years, 40-54 years, and 55+ years. I maintained the original coding and created dummy variables for each category. The category of 18-29 years serves as a reference category.

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<sup>6</sup> In preliminary analyses, I dropped “don’t know/refused” responses for the religious orthodoxy and religious/national identity measures and merged them with the negative responses for the religious orthopraxy measure. Regression analyses revealed similar results.

Sex was coded as a dummy variable (1 = female; 0 = male). Marital status has six categories – married (55%), living with a partner (2%), divorced (5%), separated (1%), widowed (2%), never been married (35%). It was dichotomized as married = 1 and all other (living with a partner, divorced, separated, widowed, never been married) = 0.

I include two socioeconomic status variables. The first is respondent's education. It is asked by the question "What is the last grade or class that you completed in school?" I recoded the existing categories as a series of four dummy variables: high school or less (omitted category), some college, college graduate, and post graduate. The second measure is home ownership, which was dichotomized as 1 = yes.

## **Method**

I employ a series of analyses to address the objectives of the present study. First, I use univariate analyses to give descriptive statistics for all variables used in the study. Second, I use bivariate analyses to determine whether there are significant racial/ethnic differences on key independent and control variables, and examine the distribution of perceived discrimination by religious factors. I also use a bivariate table to show the distribution of perceived discrimination across four religious groups. The bivariate analyses are followed by pairwise comparisons of marginal linear predictions using logistic regression and post hoc Bonferroni test to present subgroup differences. Finally, I run binary logistic regressions to determine what religious factors affect Muslims' perception of discrimination. I assess whether any religion effects persist, once socio-demographic characteristics are controlled. I also run two-way interaction terms to examine whether the effect of orthopraxy on perceived discrimination differs across

Muslim racial/ethnic groups and whether education and orthodoxy interact in shaping perceptions of discrimination among Muslim Americans.

I use STATA 13.0 for all analyses. Considering the complex sampling design, I use the weighted data for all analyses to better represent the U.S. Muslim population. Towards this goal, I employ the svy command suggested by the Pew Research Center. For univariate and bivariate analyses, I use weighted data with exclusion of non-response cases. For multivariate analyses, I employ multiple imputation procedures using mi estimate chained commands to impute missing values on all variables.

## **RESULTS**

### **Descriptive statistics**

Table 3.1 presents descriptive statistics for all variables used in the study. Among five forms of perceived discrimination, Muslim Americans report more often on two forms. Over one third of Muslim Americans (35.90%) report experiencing any type of discrimination in the past year. Nearly 30 percent (28.38%) of Muslim Americans report that in the past twelve months people have acted as if they were suspicious of them because they were Muslim. These relatively high percentages are followed by more than one-fifth (21.99%) of respondents who report that they have been called offensive names. The percent of Muslim Americans who report the remaining two types of discrimination is relatively lower. While 12.70% say they have been singled out by law enforcement officers in the past twelve months, only 5.66% report that they have been physically threatened or attacked. Nearly half of Muslim Americans (49.11%) think of themselves first as a Muslim. The second largest group includes Muslim Americans who consider

themselves first as an American (26.23%), followed by respondents who think of themselves both American and Muslims (17.93%) and neither or other (6.73%).

Muslim Americans represent also a diverse group in terms of race/ethnicity. White Muslims comprise the largest racial group (30.43%), followed by blacks (23.23%), Asians (21.21%), other/mixed race (18.64%), and Hispanics (6.49%). Almost half of respondents are female (48.88%). Young Muslims comprise the largest age category. Over one third of adult Muslims (36.03%) are between the ages of 18 and 29. The largest proportion of respondents (53.82%) holds a high school diploma or less, a 56.90% majority is married, and one third (33.54%) are homeowners.

### **Bivariate analysis**

Table 3.2 displays chi-square and t-test results of race/ethnic differences on socio-demographic characteristics and religious predictors. Significant race/ethnic differences are observed on all measures except for the age variable. Significantly higher proportions of white and Asian Muslims are female, married, hold home ownership, and have college and postgraduate degrees, relative to the other three ethnic groups. Significantly higher proportions of black Muslims possess a high school diploma or less and think of themselves first as an American than the other four ethnic groups. Compared to other ethnic groups, significantly higher proportions of Muslims of other or mixed race think of themselves first as a Muslim. Hispanic Muslims comprise the lowest percentage of respondents who hold college and postgraduate degrees and home ownership. Hispanic was not an answer choice in the 2007 Pew survey. Its inclusion as a separate category could be related to the increasing number of Latino converts to Islam. Various estimates put Latinos among the fastest growing ethnic minority group of the Muslim American

population (Bagby 2012) with as many as a fifth of new converts to Islam nationwide (Diaz 2013; Padgett 2013). Islam offers a higher status, protection, and respect to Latina immigrants who make more than half of converts (Diaz 2013; Padgett 2013). The current study reflects this general trend. There are more women (60.09%) than men among Hispanic Muslims.

Chi-square and t-tests are followed with post hoc comparisons showing significant race/ethnic subgroup differences by socio-demographic characteristics and religious predictors. There are significantly more white and other/mixed female Muslims than black female Muslims. Significantly more white Muslims are married than black Muslims. Significantly more black Muslims hold a high school diploma or less, relative to white and Asian Muslims, whereas significantly more white and Asian Muslims are college graduates than black Muslims. Muslim Americans of other/mixed race are less college graduates (11.74%) than black Muslims (24.44%). Black Muslims report higher levels of religious practices than white Muslims. Significantly more Asian Muslims (12.38%) think of themselves first as neither American nor Muslim compared to white (2.81%) and black Muslims (2.42%).

Table 3.3 shows the association between the five outcome measures and key predictors. Compared to Muslims with lower levels of religious practices (orthopraxy), Muslims with high levels of orthopraxy report significantly higher rates of perceptions of discrimination on all outcomes, except for being physically threatened or attacked for which the relationship is marginally significant. For example, Muslims with high levels of orthopraxy report two times higher rates of being singled out by law enforcement officers than Muslims with lower levels of orthopraxy (16.58% versus 8.13%).

On the contrary, relative to Muslims with weak belief in religious tenets (orthodoxy), Muslims with strong belief in religious tenets report significantly lower rates of discrimination on all outcome measures except for being singled out by law enforcement officers. For example, the percentage of respondents with lower levels of orthodoxy is over five times higher (22.94%) in perceptions of being physically threatened or attacked than for those with higher levels of orthodoxy (4.23%). No significant differences are found in the percentage distributions for all five discrimination outcomes across Muslim Americans' groups based on their religious/national identity.

Table 3.4 shows a series of chi-square analyses with discrimination measures as the dependent variables and religious categories as the independent variables. The main effects of religious categories were significant for all outcome measures, including people suspicious of you ( $\chi^2 = 58.39, p \leq .001$ ), being called offensive names ( $\chi^2 = 56.15, p \leq .001$ ), being singled out by other law enforcement officers ( $\chi^2 = 40.29, p \leq .05$ ), being physically threatened or attacked ( $\chi^2 = 72.22, p \leq .001$ ), and any type of discrimination ( $\chi^2 = 50.18, p \leq .001$ ). In general, there are significant differences across the religious groups with more pure extrinsic respondents perceiving all forms of discrimination than the other three groups. The chi-square tests are followed by post hoc comparisons showing a significant difference between the pure extrinsic group and the pro-religious, pure intrinsic, antireligious groups for being suspected by people and being called offensive names. The pure extrinsic group reports significantly higher rates of being suspected by people and being called offensive names than the pro-religious, pure intrinsic, antireligious groups. For example, the percentage of pure extrinsic respondents is over four times higher (84.09%) in perceptions of being suspected by people than for

pure intrinsic respondents (19.91%). Similarly, the percentage of pure extrinsic respondents is over five and half times higher (78.00%) in perceptions of being called offensive names than for those with antireligious orientation (13.83%). The subgroup significant differences are also found between the pure extrinsic group and the pure intrinsic and antireligious groups for any type of discrimination. The pure extrinsic group reports more any type of discrimination (84.09%) than the pure intrinsic (26.15%) and antireligious groups (28.66%). Another subgroup difference is between the pure intrinsic group and the pro-religious group with the former reporting less any type of discrimination (26.15%) than the latter (41.20%).

### **Binary logistic regressions**

Table 3.5 reports results from five sets of binary logistic regression models. Model 1 displays the logistic regression predicting perceived exposure to five types of discrimination by Muslims' orthopraxy, orthodoxy, and religious/national identity. Model 2 adds race/ethnic categories. Model 3 builds upon the previous model while controlling for demographic and socioeconomic characteristics.

*Which religious persons are more likely to report discrimination?* Among the religious predictors, effects are very strong for orthopraxy and orthodoxy variables (Models 1). Both measures are significant predictors of all five types of perceived discrimination. The odds of reporting perceived discrimination are significantly higher for Muslim respondents with higher levels of religious practices. They are significantly lower for Muslim respondents with stronger religious beliefs. Across all five outcome measures, Muslims with higher levels of religious practices are over 1.2 times more likely to perceive discrimination than Muslims with lower levels of religious practices,

although for the outcome of being singled out by other law enforcement officers the effect is marginally significant. Similarly, Muslims with strong religious beliefs are about or over 50% less likely to report experiencing discrimination relative to their coreligionists. As concerns religious/national identity, it has very little or no influence on various forms of perceived discrimination. A statistically significant relationship ( $p \leq .05$ ) is observed only for respondents who think of themselves equally both American and Muslim on the last outcome. They are 1.87 times more likely than Muslims who think of themselves first as an American to report experiencing any type of discrimination.

*Do race/ethnic categories have impact on religious predictors and which race/ethnic persons are more likely to report discrimination?* Models 2 do not observe substantial changes, once race/ethnic categories are included. The effects attenuate slightly (over 10%) for Muslims with strong religious tenets who report being singled out by law enforcement officers ( $OR = .47, p \leq .01$  vs  $OR = .52, p \leq .05$ ). The magnitudes of effects for respondents who think of themselves first as a Muslim increase by nearly 5 percent for the same outcome turning the previously insignificant category into marginally significant (comparing the coefficients on the Muslim category in Model 1 to Model 2 for the outcome of being singled out by law enforcement officers). Slightly moderate changes in the magnitudes of effects (over 8%) are observed for Muslims who think of themselves equally both American and Muslim on the last outcome (any type of discrimination). A decrease in the magnitudes of effects turns this previously significant category into marginally significant.

Among the five race/ethnic categories, Muslim Americans of Hispanic and other/mixed racial background are more likely to report being suspected and experiencing

any type of discrimination compared to white Muslims. On these two outcomes, the odds of being discriminated are 2.41 and 2.61 times as high for Hispanic Muslims and 1.80 and 1.90 times as high for Muslims of other/mixed race as they are for those in the reference category. Black Muslims have over two times higher odds ( $OR = 2.37, p \leq .05$ ) and a 73% lower odds ( $OR = 0.27, p \leq .05$ ) of reporting discrimination than white Muslims on being singled out by law enforcement officers and being physically threatened or attacked, respectively.

*Do effects of any religious predictors persist when controlling for socio-demographic characteristics?* Next, I assess whether any religious effects persist when I control for socio-demographic characteristics. Models 3 across all outcomes show that overall the effects of two religious predictors (orthopraxy and orthodoxy) persist when the socio-demographic controls are introduced. A noticeable change occurs with respondents who think of themselves equally both American and Muslim on the outcome of any type of discrimination, compared to those who think of themselves first as an American. The magnitudes of effects increase by over 20 percent turning the marginally significant category into significant (comparing the coefficients in Model 2 to Model 3).

After controlling for socio-demographic characteristics, the previously observed relationships across Muslim racial/ethnic groups persist for Hispanic Muslims but disappear for Muslims of other/mixed race. For black Muslims, the effects disappear on the outcome of being singled out by other law enforcement officers and persist on the outcome of being physically threatened or attacked.

Models 3 also show that some of socio-demographic characteristics are significant predictors of five types of perceived discrimination. Women report significantly lower

odds of being singled out by law enforcement officers ( $OR = 0.49, p \leq .01$ ) and being exposed to any type of discrimination ( $OR = 0.65, p < .10$ ) than men. Compared to 18-29 years old respondents, those of 55 years of age and older report significantly lower odds on such outcomes as being suspected by people ( $OR = 0.28, p \leq .001$ ), being called offensive names ( $OR = 0.31, p \leq .05$ ), and any type of discrimination ( $OR = 0.21, p \leq .001$ ). Respondents of 30-39 years of age report significantly lower odds of being called offensive names ( $OR = 0.51, p < .10$ ) and being exposed to any type of discrimination ( $OR = 0.41, p \leq .05$ ) relative to the reference group. Relative to respondents with a high school diploma or less, post graduates report significantly lower odds of being singled out by law enforcement officers ( $OR = 0.30, p \leq .05$ ) and being physically threatened or attacked ( $OR = 0.14, p \leq .05$ ). College graduate respondents and those with some college degree report significantly lower odds of being suspected by people ( $OR = 0.63, p < .10$ ) and being singled out by law enforcement officers ( $OR = 0.42, p \leq .05$ ) than those who have a high school diploma or less. Marital status and home ownership are not significant predictors of perceived discrimination on any of the five outcomes.

*Do race and religion interact in shaping perceived discrimination?* My goal here is to determine whether religious practices interact with race/ethnicity in shaping the experience of discrimination differently within Muslim groups. Towards this goal I added two-way interaction terms for race by orthopraxy to explore whether the effect of orthopraxy on perceived discrimination differs across Muslim ethnic/racial groups. Only a few of the two-way interaction terms were statistically significant, net of all controls. The effect of each of the five race/ethnic categories did not vary significantly by religious practices for three discrimination outcomes (people suspicious of you, called offensive

names, and physically threatened or attacked). The exception are black Muslims with high levels of religious practices who report significantly higher odds on being called offensive names ( $OR = 1.80, p < .10$ ), compared to white Muslims with low levels of religious practices (see Figure 3.1).

As concerns the other two discrimination outcomes, namely, being singled out by law enforcement officers and any type of discrimination, effects of some race/ethnic categories differed significantly by religious practices. Figure 3.2 presents the odds of reporting being singled out by other law enforcement officers, by race and orthopraxy net of all demographic and socioeconomic status variables. Black and Asian Muslims with high levels of religious practices report significantly higher odds of being singled out by other law enforcement officers relative to white Muslims with low levels of religious practices. While black Muslims are four and half times ( $OR = 4.53, p \leq .05$ ) more likely to report being singled out by other law enforcement officers than white Muslims, Asian Muslims are one and half times ( $OR = 1.53, p \leq .05$ ) more likely to report this type of discrimination. Interestingly, Asian Muslims with low levels of religious practices have a 53% lower odds of reporting being singled out by other law enforcement officers, compared to their white coreligionists.

Figure 3.3 shows that the odds of reporting any type of discrimination are significant for Muslims of black, Asian, and other/mixed racial background with high levels of religious practices, relative to white Muslims with low levels of religious practices. Compared to white Muslims, on this type of discrimination, higher odds are reported by Muslims of other/mixed race ( $OR = 4.52, p < .10$ ), followed by black ( $OR = 2.38, p \leq .05$ ) and Asian Muslims ( $OR = 1.61, p < .10$ ). Additionally, two opposing

results are found for Asian and Hispanic Muslims with low levels of religious practices relative to white Muslims with similar characteristics. As in the previous case, Asian Muslims with low levels of religious practices report significantly lower odds on the outcome of any type of discrimination ( $OR = 0.60, p < .10$ ), compared to their white coreligionists. On the contrary, Hispanic Muslims with low levels of religious practices are over three times ( $OR = 3.36, p \leq .05$ ) more likely than white Muslims to report any type of discrimination.

*Do education and religion interact in shaping perceived discrimination?* To address this question, I added two-way interaction terms for education by orthodoxy to explore whether the effect of orthodoxy on perceived discrimination differs across Muslim Americans with various levels of education. The two-way interaction terms, net of all demographic and socioeconomic status characteristics, reveal a consistent pattern (Figures 3.4 – 3.7). The effects of two education categories (college graduates and postgraduates) vary significantly by religious beliefs for four discrimination outcomes (people suspicious of you, being called offensive names, being singled out by other law enforcement officers, and any type of discrimination). The odds of reporting these four forms of discrimination are significantly lower for college graduate and postgraduate Muslims with both high and low levels of religious beliefs, relative to those holding a high school degree or less with low levels of religious beliefs. For example, college graduates with low and high levels of orthodoxy have respectively 98% and 97% less odds of reporting any type of discrimination, compared to those with low levels of education and religious beliefs (Figure 3.7). The interaction term analyses additionally reveal that the effect of the less educated category with high levels of religious beliefs is

significant for three outcome measures, including people suspicious of you, being called offensive names, and any type of discrimination (Figures 3.4, 3.5, and 3.7). Muslims holding a high school degree or less with high levels of orthodoxy are less likely to report being suspected ( $OR = 0.44, p \leq .01$ ), being called offensive names ( $OR = 0.44, p < .10$ ), and any type of discrimination ( $OR = 0.51, p \leq .05$ ), compared to those at the same level of education but with low levels of orthodoxy.

## **DISCUSSION**

Unlike many other ethnic minority groups, Muslim Americans also constitute a religious minority group. Prior research has paid little attention to the effects of religion on Muslims' perceptions of discrimination and differences that exist within Muslim race/ethnic groups. The present study has examined both the effects of religiosity on Muslims' perceptions of discrimination and differences that exist within Muslim race/ethnic groups when religion interacts with race/ethnicity. An important finding is that religious practices (orthopraxy) and belief in major religious doctrines (orthodoxy) are the key predictors in Muslims' perceptions of discrimination. It is in contrast to some previous research that revealed weak or no effects of such religious factors on anti-Muslim prejudice (Strabac and Listhaug 2008). Yet, the finding provides a partial support for the first proposed hypothesis. The odds of reporting perceived discrimination are significantly higher for Muslim respondents with high levels of religious practices. The findings are consistent with some previous studies (e.g. Allen and Nielsen 2002; Sheridan and Gillet 2005; Foroutan 2011; Sirin and Katsiafiscas 2011) showing that respondents who are visible members of their religion report higher odds of perceptions of discrimination. The frequency of prayer, mosque attendance, and involvement in social or

religious activities of the mosque increases the visibility of practicing Muslims and turns them in the targets of discrimination. Thus, high levels of religious practices function as a visible stigma that increases a stigmatized person's encounters with discrimination (Goffman 1963).

Contrary to the first proposed hypothesis, Muslim respondents with strong religious beliefs report significantly lower odds of perceived discrimination. An explanation for lower degrees of perceived discrimination for Muslims with strong belief in religious tenets can be sought in people's search for comfort in religion, including religious involvement, willingness to forgive the oppressor, and seeking strength from God that might help buffer negative effects of discrimination on health (see Bierman 2006, for a review). This explanation resonates well with Muslim studies showing that respondents mediated the effects of discrimination through turning to their faith for spiritual meaning (Hallak and Quina 2004). Another explanation can be provided by the nature of the orthodoxy measure, which is less visible unless proclaimed openly. In other words, it is a hidden stigma that lessens encounters with discrimination for a stigmatized person (Goffman 1963).

Overall, the findings support my alternative hypothesis that respondents with intrinsic religious orientation are less likely to report perceptions of discrimination, compared to those with extrinsic religious orientation. The intrinsic religious orientation might increase Muslim Americans' tolerance toward discriminatory treatments and consequently reduce their reports of perceptions of discrimination. The findings are further supported by chi-square and post hoc comparison analyses with four religious subgroups (Table 3.4). The pure extrinsic group (those with high religious practices but

low religious beliefs) reports significantly higher rates of perceptions for all forms of discrimination than the pro-religious, pure intrinsic, antireligious groups. Except for being called offensive names, the percentage of respondents who report experiencing other four forms of discrimination is lowest for the pure intrinsic group. The findings complement the foundational thesis of intrinsic-extrinsic religious orientation theory suggesting that intrinsic people are more tolerant, follow religion solely intrinsically, and lack the social aspect of religion (Allport and Ross 1967; Paloutzian 1996). The significant difference between the pure intrinsic group and the pro-religious group for any type of discrimination could be due to the same lack of the social aspect of religion for the pure intrinsic group. For the pure intrinsic people, religion is internalized (Paloutzian 1996). Yet, turning to religion for comfort while dealing with discrimination does not mean that these people tolerate maltreatments, rather they escape resentment and its possible negative health implications by forgiving oppressors (Bierman 2006).

No support was found for the second hypothesis predicting higher degrees of perceived discrimination for respondents who think of themselves first as a Muslim. The insignificant effects of religious identity suggest that this religious measure is not a prominent factor in shaping Muslims' perceptions of discrimination.

Taken together, the findings on three religious measures show varied effects of these measures on Muslims' perceptions of discrimination. The identity measure does not relate religion to discrimination, whereas the orthodoxy measure (belief in religious tenets) decreases odds of perceptions of discrimination. The orthopraxy measure (religious practices) is the only key predictor that increases the likelihood of perceptions of discrimination for Muslim Americans. Furthermore, the persistence of the effects of

orthopraxy on Muslim Americans' perception of discrimination, net of all socio-demographic factors, suggests that this religious component plays a vital role in generating and sustaining perceived discrimination. For Muslim Americans, orthopraxy is a master status or a primary identifying trait that trumps all other traits of their identity (Goffman 1963) and increases their chances of encountering discriminatory treatments.

With the exception of Asian Muslims for whom the odds of perceived discrimination are not significant on any of the five outcomes, all Muslim ethnic groups (black, Hispanics, and other/mixed) have a few times higher odds of reporting experiencing one or more types of discrimination, compared to white Muslims. These findings are in accord with previous studies on other non-Muslim race/ethnic groups (Naff 1995; Kessler et al. 1999; Barnes et al. 2004; Harris 2004; Hirsh and Lyons 2010) and support Link and Phelan's (2001) observation that "stigma is a matter of degree... [meaning] that some groups are more stigmatized than others" (p.377). They are also consistent with studies on other stigmatized groups (Carr and Friedman 2005; Carr et al. 2008) that perceptions of discrimination differ across members of the disadvantaged group and suggest that people who hold two stigmatized statuses are discriminated at significantly higher rates than those who possess one stigmatized status. White Muslims' perceptions of discrimination at significantly lower rates could be due to their high socioeconomic status that they hold relative to Muslims of black, Hispanic, and other/mixed racial background. As the bivariate analysis (Table 3.2) shows significantly higher proportions of white Muslims are married, hold home ownership, and have college and postgraduate degrees, relative to the other three race/ethnic groups.

Findings on the effects of demographic and socioeconomic characteristics on perceptions of discrimination resemble closely those in the previous chapter. Reporting experiencing discriminatory acts at significantly lower rates by older Muslims indicates that age is negatively correlated to perceived discrimination. The finding is in accord with some research on black-white differences in perceived discrimination (Adams and Dressler 1988; Forman et al. 1997) and stigmatized group (Carr and Friedman 2005). While one explanation is sought in the older generation upbringing as more tolerant of discrimination (Adams and Dressler 1988), another explanation links this inverse relationship to generational differences with younger generations being more conscious of and ready to report discrimination (Carr and Friedman 2005). Related to this are increased practices of racial profiling against Muslims after the 9/11 terrorist acts. The main targets of racial profiling policies remain young Muslims. Still another explanation may be sought in the absence and usage of a term such as discrimination in the vocabulary of older generations of Muslims. It may resemble the experience of people raised in the pre-civil rights movement of the 1960s who may not have this as part of their consciousness.

An inverse relationship is also found between education and perceived discrimination. Muslims with some-college and post-graduate education are less likely than those with a high school degree or less to report experiencing discrimination. The finding is consistent with a limited number of studies that report a negative relationship between education and perceived discrimination for other minority groups (e.g. Harris 2004). One explanation for the observed relationship is that highly educated respondents, alike older generation, may be tolerant toward discrimination.

Given the fact that most previous studies find Muslim women to be more prone to become the target of discrimination (Nimer 2001; Allen and Nielsen 2002; Livengood and Stodolska 2004; Aroian 2012), it is somewhat surprising to find that women are less likely than men to report several forms of discrimination. One possible explanation is linked to suspicion and fear of Muslim men from a hostile environment in the aftermath of the 9/11 terror attacks (Rippy and Newman 2006). Studies show that Americans favor more strict security measures for Muslims, especially for Muslim men, compared to other U.S. citizens. Nearly one third of Americans (31%) would feel nervous if they noticed a Muslim man flying on the same plane (Saad 2006). Nearly four in ten Americans support the idea of requiring Muslims, including those who are U.S. citizens, to carry a special ID (39%) and undergo more intensive security checks at airports (Saad 2006). Another possible explanation is a difference in the degree of severity of stereotypes that Muslim men and women experience. Muslim women's typical stereotypes may include "weak" or "maltreated," whereas Muslim men usually deal with stereotypes of the "terrorist or oil sheikh" (Salari 2002:582). Similarly, as argued by Moallem, the Muslim other is singled out "in its irrational, morally inferior and barbaric masculinity and its passive, victimized, and submissive femininity" (2005:8). Still another explanation is that women are more likely than men to deny their personal experience with discrimination and underestimate their encounters with discriminatory acts (Crosby 1984).

The other main finding of the study is that religion and race/ethnicity interact in important ways in generating and maintaining Muslims' perception of discrimination. In the line with the proposed hypothesis, I found that among Muslim race/ethnic groups, highly practicing black, Asian, and other/mixed race Muslims report significantly higher

odds on most forms of discrimination, compared to their white co-believers. Religion, especially its orthopraxy factor plays a key role in determining racial inferiority. This finding corroborates previous research (Carr and Friedman 2005; Carr et al. 2008; Foroutan 2011) and supports a thesis that a stigmatized individual possesses multiple devalued traits (Link et al. 1997) that might lead to experiencing more discrimination. It is also consistent with the intersectional theory showing that perceptions of discrimination are the result of interplay of multiple oppression systems, such as race and religion. This is vividly demonstrated by the example of Asian Muslims for whom an increase in religious practices raises their perceptions of discrimination, whereas being less practicing Muslims make them less likely to report experiencing discrimination compared to their white co-believers (see Figures 3.2 and 3.3).

Among Muslims of black, Asian, and other/mixed racial background, black Muslims perceive discrimination on three outcome measures, followed by Asian Muslim who perceive discrimination on two outcomes and Muslims of other/mixed race who perceive discrimination on one outcome. Such variations could be explained by the notion of the ranking of ethnic groups or “ethnic hierarchies” (Hagendoorn 1995). Research shows that the more disadvantaged positions a person holds, the more forms of discrimination he experiences (Grollman 2012). Perceiving more forms of discrimination by blacks might be linked to the history of slavery and racism (Iceland and Wilkes 2006), their political activism, and being the largest minority group (Jones 1997). For the present data, of four non-white Muslim race/ethnic groups, African American Muslims comprise the largest minority group (23%), followed by Asians (21%), other/mixed (19%), and Hispanic Muslims (6%). Additionally, previous studies show that compared to other

ethnic Muslim communities, black Muslim communities are more involved in “specific issues of local prejudice” (Sonn 1994:291).

The intersectional theory has also offered a better explanation than secularization theory to the education and orthodoxy interaction term outcomes. As predicted by the intersectional theory, less educated Muslims with low levels of religious beliefs are found to be more likely to report experiencing discrimination, compared to their better educated counterparts with higher levels of religious beliefs. The interplay of multiple oppression systems, such as less education and low levels of orthodoxy may decrease tolerance and yield high rates of perceptions of discrimination. It is consistent with stigmatization theory suggesting that a stigmatized individual experiences more discrimination due to the possession of multiple devalued traits (Link et al. 1997). Interestingly, identical results are found for better educated respondents with both low and high levels of religious beliefs. Both groups are less likely to report perceptions of discrimination than the less educated with low levels of orthodoxy. The finding suggests that education with or without a secularizing influence on Muslims does not produce higher levels of perceived discrimination, as argued by previous research, which links educational attainment with greater exposure to mistreatments, increased awareness, and readiness to report discrimination (Kessler et al. 1999; Carr and Friedman 2005; Hirsh and Lyons 2010). One possible explanation for the observed relationship is that the less educated could over-report discriminatory incidents. Another explanation is that highly educated respondents may be tolerant toward discrimination.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Limitations and future directions**

The study has several limitations pertinent to the nature of the dataset. First, I cannot determine causality due to the cross-sectional nature of the data. I cannot state that religious factors are sole causes of reporting experienced discrimination for certain Muslim race/ethnic groups. Since the dataset does not provide information on the temporal ordering of outcome and key independent measures, the possibility of reverse causation could not be eliminated in studies of this nature. It is difficult to determine that religious factors are the “cause” but not the “effect” of perceptions of discrimination among Muslim Americans. It is possible that experiences of discrimination could drive Muslim Americans toward or away from religion. Those who have been discriminated against may seek refuge at mosque or in their religious community. Similarly, those who face discrimination most may tend to choose “Muslim” over “American” as their primary identity, because Americans make them feel unwelcomed. A number of studies have demonstrated that once faced with discrimination Muslim Americans have turned to their faith and communities for spiritual and physical protection (Byng 1998; Elaasar 2004; Hallak and Quina 2004; Sirin and Katsiaficas 2011). Longitudinal studies will be needed to infer the causality.

Second, the religious measures used in the study do not tell how the respondents dress, what their names are, and so forth. These measures could be proximate factors that relate religion to discrimination. I also included two other religious measures of religiosity, namely, affiliation (Shi’a, Sunni, other, nonspecific Muslim) and importance of religion, in pretested regression models, but none produced significant effects on any of the outcomes. Future survey studies designed to expand other potential variables

would be useful in this attempt and could lead to the identification of stronger predictors that link religion to discrimination.

Finally, the Pew survey is based on self-reported incidents of discrimination. The reports of discrimination may not coincide with real discriminatory acts. As emphasized by previous studies (Kaiser and Major 2006; Quillian 2006; Mayrl and Saperstein 2013), it is possible for respondents to underestimate or overestimate the actual occurrence of discrimination. Since the Pew survey only captures self-reported discrimination of Muslims, I refrain from asserting the authenticity of reporting actual incidences of discrimination by Muslim respondents. On the same note with previous studies (Mayrl and Saperstein 2013), the goal of the present study was to see whether any social patterns stand out while examining the effects of religious factors on Muslim Americans' perceptions of discrimination.

Despite these limitations, the present study is the first attempt to use a nationally representative sample to explore what religious factors have effect on Muslim Americans' perceptions of discrimination and whether race/ethnicity interacts with religious practices in shaping the experience of discrimination differently within Muslim race/ethnic groups. My findings suggest that irrespective of strong association that Muslims have with their religion (Gallup 2009; Pew Research Center 2011), not all religious measures are key predictors of Muslims' perceptions of discrimination. The varied effects of religious factors and interaction terms on perceived discrimination by Muslim ethnic/racial groups challenge a general perception of viewing religion as a "master status" for this stigmatized minority group.

The findings also help extend our understanding of racial inferiority and experience with multiple forms of perceived discrimination among stigmatized race/ethnic groups. The goal and the scope of the present study do not allow me to further explore intersectionality. Individuals with a number of disadvantaged statuses become more frequently targets of discriminatory treatments and experience more forms of discrimination (Grollman 2012). Prior research shows, for example, that African American Muslim women experience more discrimination due to the combined effects of sex, ethnicity, and religion (e.g. Karim 2006). Future research might analyze multiple interactions between religious factors and such socio-demographic predictors of perceived discrimination as gender, age, region, and urban area to highlight the construction of a stigmatized person's identity as a result of multiple simultaneously functioning systems of oppression.

Table 3.1. Descriptive statistics for all variables used in analysis, Pew 2011

	$\bar{x}$ or %	SD	Valid <i>n</i>
<b>Dependent Variables</b>			
People suspicious of you (1=yes)	28.38		1,016
Called offensive names (1=yes)	21.99		1,027
Singled out by law enforcement officers (1=yes)	12.70		1,029
Physically threatened or attacked (1=yes)	5.66		1,031
Any discrimination (1=yes)	35.90		1,021
<b>Independent variables</b>			
<i>Religious practices</i>			1,007
Orthopraxy (std)	-.004	2.20	
<i>Religious tenets</i>			1,033
Orthodoxy	3.78	.68	
<i>Religious/national identity</i>			1,033
American	26.23		
Muslim	49.11		
Both	17.93		
Neither/other	6.73		
<i>Race</i>			1,009
White	30.43		
Black	23.23		
Asian	21.21		
Hispanic	6.49		
Other or mixed race	18.64		
<b>Control variables</b>			
<i>Gender</i>			1,033
Sex (1=female)	48.88		
<i>Marital status</i>			1,024
Married (1=Yes)	56.90		
<i>Age</i>			1,019
18-29	36.03		
30-39	23.44		
40-54	28.28		
55+	12.25		
<i>Education</i>			1,028
High school or less	53.82		
Some College	19.24		
College Graduate	15.47		
Post Graduate	11.47		
<i>Ownership</i>			1,031
Homeowner (1=yes)	33.54		

Notes: Means and standard deviations are presented for continuous variables.

Proportions (%) are presented for categorical variables.

Sample numbers and proportions are weighted and exclude non-responses.

Table 3.2. Racial/ethnic differences by socio-demographic characteristics and religious predictors, Pew 2011

	Total	White Non-Hispanic <sup>a</sup>	Black Non-Hispanic <sup>b</sup>	Asian Non-Hispanic <sup>c</sup>	Hispanic <sup>d</sup>	Other Non-Hispanic <sup>e</sup>	p	Significant Subgroup Differences
<b>Gender</b>							**	
Female	48.32%	59.32%	32.25%	42.98%	60.09%	53.05%		ab, be
<b>Age</b>								
18-29	35.89%	23.27%	20.55%	25.03%	6.61%	24.54%		
30-39	24.04%	36.03%	26.07%	17.48%	9.25%	11.18%		
40-54	28.37%	33.96%	23.77%	21.89%	2.90%	17.49%		
55+	11.70%	32.99%	27.84%	17.36%	6.15%	15.66%	*	
<b>Marital status</b>								
Married	54.89%	66.74%	45.39%	59.06%	48.29%	44.72%		ab, ae
<b>Education</b>							***	
High sch. or less	52.54%	45.31%	62.17%	42.80%	60.73%	60.78%		ab, bc
Some College	19.52%	19.16%	24.44%	16.46%	36.33%	11.74%		be
College Graduate	16.14%	19.39%	9.06%	21.25%	2.94%	18.34%		ab, bc
Post Graduate	11.80%	16.14%	4.33%	19.50%	0%	9.14%	*	
<b>Homeowner</b>								
Yes	34.40%	41.46%	26.22%	38.98%	12.48%	35.18%		
<b>Religious practices</b>							**	
Orthopraxy	-.05 2.17	-.53 2.16	.60 1.81	-.02 2.41	.34 .96	-.28 2.43		ab
<b>Religious tenets</b>							*	
Orthodoxy	3.72 .69	3.76 .64	3.70 .57	3.86 .69	3.29 .62	3.68 .75		
<b>Relig/national identity</b>							*	
First American	27.50%	28.43%	33.72%	24.11%	29.86%	21.13%		
First Muslim	49.20%	50.06%	49.21%	49.59%	25.00%	55.43%		
Both equally	17.00%	18.70%	14.65%	13.92%	39.84%	13.12%		
Neither/other	6.30%	2.81%	2.42%	12.38%	5.29%	10.32%		ac, bc
N	949	949	949	949	949	949		
Percent	100%	30.50%	23.64%	21.43%	6.14%	18.29%		

Notes: Means and standard deviations are presented for continuous variables; proportions (%) are presented for categorical variables. t-tests are used to assess significant differences between means for continuous variables;  $\chi^2$  are used for categorical variables. Post estimations were conducted using pairwise comparisons of marginal linear predictions; significant ( $p \leq .05$ ) subgroup differences are shown as ab: white versus black; ac: white versus Asian; ad: white versus Hispanic; ae: white versus other/mixed race; bc: black versus Asian; bd: black versus Hispanic; be: black versus other/mixed race; cd: Asian versus Hispanic; ce: Asian versus other/mixed race. \* $p \leq .10$ , \*\* $p \leq .05$ , \*\*\* $p \leq .001$ . Sample numbers and proportions are based on weighted counts excluding non-responses.

Table 3.3. Proportion reporting each type of perceived discrimination by religious practices, tenets, and identity, Pew 2011

	Total	People suspicious of you	Called offensive names	Singled out by other law enforcement officers	Physically threatened or attacked	Any discrimination
<b>Religious practices</b>						
Low orthodoxy	51.80%	20.50% <sup>**</sup>	16.67% <sup>*</sup>	8.13% <sup>*</sup>	3.80% <sup>+</sup>	26.36% <sup>**</sup>
High orthodoxy	48.20%	35.32%	28.00%	16.58%	7.34%	43.54%
<b>Religious tenets</b>						
Low orthodoxy	6.82%	49.14% <sup>**</sup>	38.58% <sup>*</sup>	26.48%	22.94% <sup>**</sup>	50.04% <sup>*</sup>
High orthodoxy	93.18%	26.07%	20.93%	11.16%	4.23%	33.51%
<b>Relig/national identity</b>						
American	27.50%	26.02%	21.06%	8.51%	8.50%	30.07%
Muslim	49.20%	27.06%	23.47%	14.67%	3.65%	36.32%
Both	17.00%	32.60%	19.45%	11.84%	6.18%	40.26%
Neither	6.30%	25.93%	23.57%	10.03%	5.15%	26.29%
N	949	949	949	949	949	949
Percent	100%	27.64%	22.13%	12.20%	5.51%	34.64%

Notes: Chi-square significant at: <sup>+</sup>p ≤ .10, <sup>\*</sup>p ≤ .05, <sup>\*\*</sup>p ≤ .01, <sup>\*\*\*</sup>p ≤ .001.  
Sample numbers and proportions (%) are based on weighted counts excluding non-responses.  
Proportions (%) are given for answer "yes."

Table 3.4. Proportion reporting each type of perceived discrimination by religious categories, Pew 2011

Religious categories	Total	People suspicious of you	Called offensive names	Singled out by other law enforcement officers	Physically threatened or attacked	Any discrimination
Pro-religious	45.57%	32.51% <sup>b</sup>	25.11% <sup>b</sup>	14.80%	5.32%	41.20% <sup>c</sup>
Pure extrinsic	2.63%	84.09% <sup>a,c,d</sup>	78.00% <sup>a,c,d</sup>	47.39%	42.45%	84.09% <sup>c,d</sup>
Pure intrinsic	47.61%	19.91% <sup>b</sup>	16.92% <sup>b</sup>	7.67%	3.19%	26.15% <sup>a,b</sup>
Antireligious	4.19%	27.19% <sup>b</sup>	13.83% <sup>b</sup>	13.35%	10.70%	28.66% <sup>b</sup>
N	949	949	949	949	949	949
Percent	100%	27.64%	22.13%	12.20%	5.51%	34.64%

Notes: Chi-square significant at: \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$ , \*\*\* $p \leq .001$ .

Post estimations are conducted using pairwise comparisons of marginal linear predictions.

<sup>a, b, c, d</sup> Denote a significant difference from each other.

<sup>a</sup>pro-religious; <sup>b</sup>pure extrinsic; <sup>c</sup>pure intrinsic; <sup>d</sup>anti-religious.

Sample numbers and proportions (%) are based on weighted counts excluding non-responses.

Proportions (%) are given for answer "yes."

Table 3.5. Binary logistic regression predicting religious factors on perceived discrimination by Muslim Americans, Pew 2011

	People suspicious of you			Called offensive names			Singled out by other law enforcement officers		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Orthopraxy	1.32*** (1.15-1.50)	1.32*** (1.15-1.50)	1.33*** (1.15-1.52)	1.25*** (1.08-1.45)	1.26*** (1.09-1.46)	1.28*** (1.09-1.50)	1.22* (.99-1.49)	1.18* (.98-1.42)	1.18* (.97-1.44)
Orthodoxy	.51*** (.37-.69)	.54*** (.40-.73)	.51*** (.37-.72)	.58*** (.40-.83)	.59*** (.41-.85)	.55*** (.35-.86)	.47*** (.27-.82)	.52* (.30-.90)	.52* (.30-.91)
Muslim <sup>a</sup>	1.14 (.58-2.21)	1.10 (.56-2.15)	1.24 (.63-2.45)	1.10 (.52-2.32)	1.04 (.48-2.23)	1.08 (.49-2.37)	2.13 (.79-5.75)	2.22* (.89-5.55)	2.14* (.91-5.03)
Both <sup>a</sup>	1.53 (.76-3.08)	1.40 (.67-2.92)	1.69 (.79-3.61)	1.10 (.55-2.19)	1.01 (.49-2.05)	1.17 (.53-2.61)	2.20 (.52-9.32)	2.16 (.57-8.17)	2.09 (.58-7.61)
Neither <sup>a</sup>	1.38 (.55-3.49)	1.33 (.51-3.43)	1.27 (.47-3.39)	1.22 (.39-3.86)	1.08 (.36-3.22)	1.03 (.31-3.64)	2.15 (.44-10.57)	2.58 (.57-11.56)	2.71 (.50-14.79)
Race/ethnicity									
Black <sup>b</sup>		1.06 (.54-2.09)	.92 (.43-1.95)		.80 (.37-1.73)	.63 (.28-1.41)		2.37* (1.01-5.56)	1.68 (.66-4.28)
Asian <sup>b</sup>		.76 (.40-1.41)	.65 (.34-1.25)		1.08 (.55-2.12)	.96 (.48-1.91)		.53 (.20-1.39)	.50 (.19-1.36)
Hispanic <sup>b</sup>		2.41* (.92-6.34)	2.45* (.88-6.83)		1.67 (.55-5.05)	1.26 (.35-4.50)		2.31 (.68-7.85)	1.83 (.45-7.51)
Other/Mixed <sup>b</sup>		1.80* (.96-3.37)	1.48 (.75-2.93)		1.61 (.68-3.82)	1.36 (.56-3.31)		1.55 (.64-3.78)	1.33 (.54-3.30)
Socio-demographics									
Sex (1=female)			.73 (.43-1.25)			.68 (.43-1.10)			.49** (.29-.82)
Age 30-39 <sup>c</sup>			.49 (.20-1.22)			.51* (.24-1.09)			.98 (.39-2.46)
Age 40-54 <sup>c</sup>			.78 (.39-1.58)			.72 (.32-1.62)			.84 (.24-2.91)
Age 55+ <sup>c</sup>			.28*** (.13-.59)			.31* (.12-.77)			.92 (.34-2.45)
Married			.66 (.36-1.20)			.77 (.40-1.51)			1.18 (.53-2.62)
Some College <sup>d</sup>			.85 (.41-1.73)			1.20 (.63-2.29)			.42* (.21-.83)
College Grad <sup>d</sup>			.63* (.37-1.09)			.78 (.41-1.48)			.53 (.22-1.24)
Post Graduate <sup>d</sup>			.81 (.38-1.71)			.59 (.26-1.35)			.30* (.09-.95)
Homeowner (1=Yes)			1.63 (.84-3.15)			.94 (.48-1.87)			.62 (.24-1.58)
Constant	3.91* (1.27-12.07)	2.76* (.99-7.69)	6.58** (1.85-23.43)	1.89 (.50-7.05)	1.64 (.43-6.20)	4.86* (.81-29.28)	1.22 (.18-8.34)	.61 (.10-3.91)	1.47 (.19-11.33)

Notes: N = 1,033. Effect estimates are presented as odds ratios. Confidence intervals are given in parentheses.

<sup>a</sup>American; <sup>b</sup>White; <sup>c</sup>Age 18-29; <sup>d</sup>High school or less. \*p < .10, \*\*p ≤ .05, \*\*\*p ≤ .001.

Table 3.5 (continued). Binary logistic regression predicting religious factors on perceived discrimination by Muslim Americans, Pew 2011

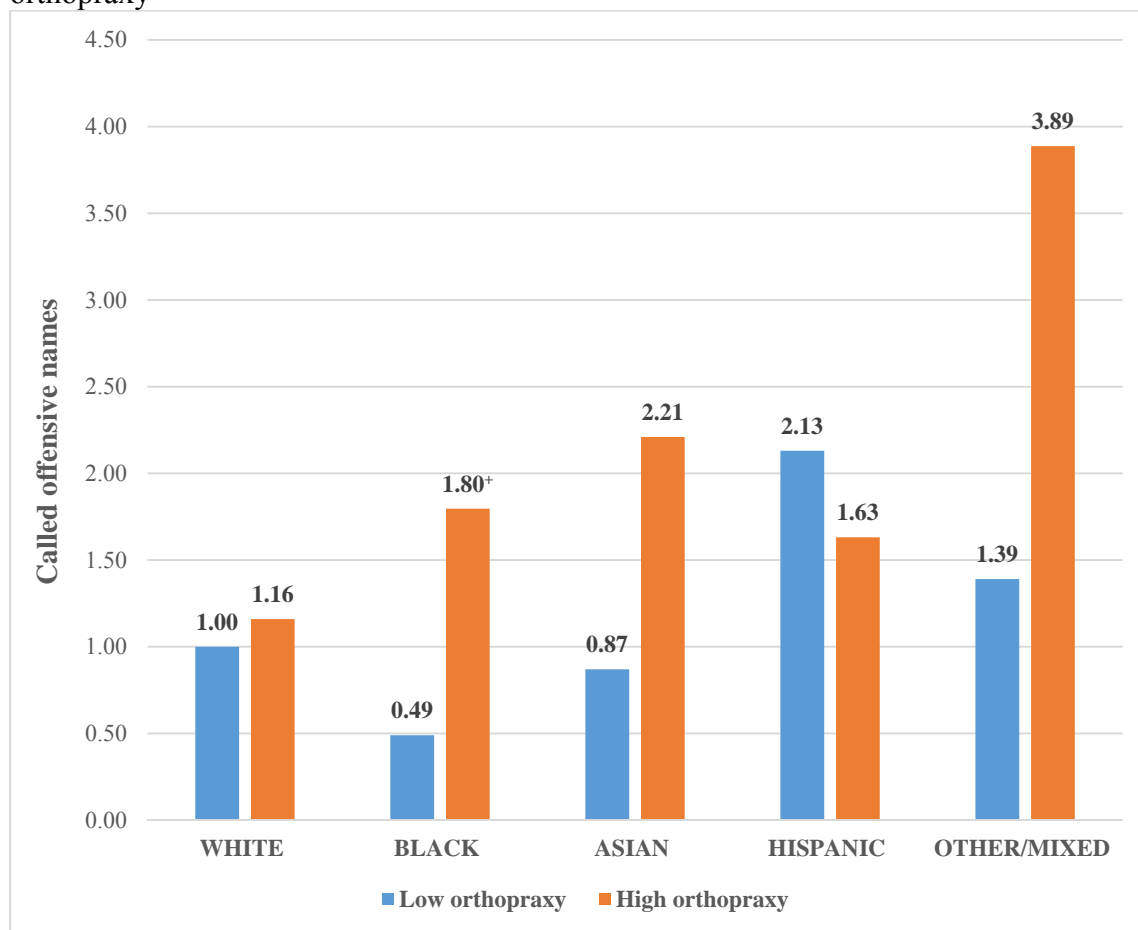
	Physically threatened or attacked			Any discrimination		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Orthopraxy	1.38** (1.09-1.75)	1.44** (1.11-1.85)	1.40* (1.08-1.82)	1.29*** (1.18-1.42)	1.30*** (1.17-1.43)	1.31*** (1.17-1.46)
Orthodoxy	.47** (.26-.83)	.48* (.25-.91)	.43* (.19-.95)	.57*** (.44-.74)	.61*** (.47-.79)	.58*** (.43-.76)
Muslim <sup>a</sup>	.40 (.11-1.51)	.40 (.10-1.65)	.50 (.12-2.12)	1.44 (.76-2.72)	1.39 (.73-2.64)	1.54 (.81-2.95)
Both <sup>a</sup>	1.14 (.36-3.57)	.91 (.30-2.78)	1.15 (.39-3.44)	1.87* (1.05-3.33)	1.71+ (.95-3.09)	2.09* (1.11-3.93)
Neither <sup>a</sup>	.73 (.33-1.59)	.60 (.23-1.53)	.72 (.27-1.91)	1.14 (.45-2.90)	1.06 (.41-2.72)	.99 (.35-2.81)
<i>Race/ethnicity</i>						
Black <sup>b</sup>		.27* (.08-.96)	.21* (.06-.76)		1.00 (.52-1.92)	.81 (.37-1.77)
Asian <sup>b</sup>		.95 (.47-1.93)	.91 (.41-2.05)		.76 (.44-1.32)	.63 (.35-1.13)
Hispanic <sup>b</sup>		2.54 (.66-9.72)	2.13 (.40-11.26)		2.61+ (.96-7.06)	2.36+ (.85-6.53)
Other/Mixed <sup>b</sup>		.35 (.07-1.80)	.30 (.06-1.61)		1.90+ (.94-3.84)	1.57 (.73-3.37)
<i>Socio-demographics</i>						
Sex(1=female)			.55 (.20-1.51)			.65+ (.40-1.04)
Age 30-39 <sup>c</sup>			.37+ (.12-1.19)			.41* (.18-.91)
Age 40-54 <sup>c</sup>			.45 (.12-1.61)			.67 (.34-1.30)
Age 55+ <sup>c</sup>			.31 (.01-7.05)			.21*** (.11-.42)
Married			1.02 (.29-3.58)			.74 (.41-1.35)
Some College <sup>d</sup>			.85 (.30-2.37)			1.26 (.62-2.54)
College Grad <sup>d</sup>			.60 (.21-1.77)			.77 (.45-1.33)
Post Graduate <sup>d</sup>			.14* (.02-.97)			.82 (.39-1.70)
Homeowner (1=Yes)			2.40 (.72-7.99)			1.22 (.66-2.22)
Constant	1.12 (.13-9.41)	1.36 (.12-14.84)	4.18 (.20-87.09)	3.23* (1.18-8.80)	2.25 (.80-6.32)	6.56** (1.79-23.98)

Notes: N = 1,033. Effect estimates are presented as odds ratios. Confidence intervals are given in parentheses.

<sup>a</sup>American; <sup>b</sup>White; <sup>c</sup>Age 18-29; <sup>d</sup>High school or less.

+p < .10, \*p ≤ .05, \*\*p ≤ .01, \*\*\*p ≤ .001.

Figure 3.1. Odds of reporting being called offensive names, by Muslims' race and orthopraxy



Race and orthopraxy classification

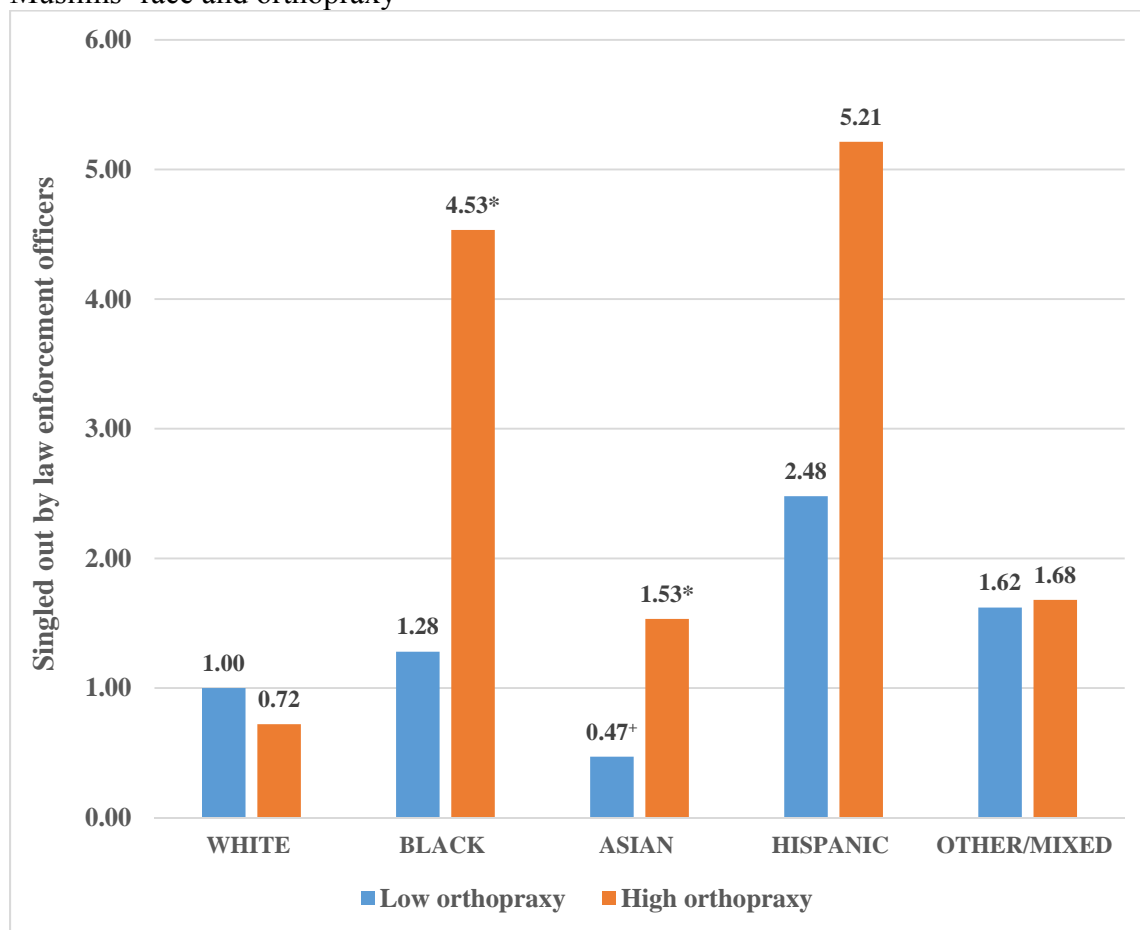
Source: Pew 2011

Notes: N = 1,033

Plotted values are net of demographic and socioeconomic status measures

<sup>+</sup>p < .10, \*p ≤ .05, \*\*p ≤ .01, \*\*\*p ≤ .001

Figure 3.2. Odds of reporting being singled out by other law enforcement officers, by Muslims' race and orthopraxy



Race and orthopraxy classification

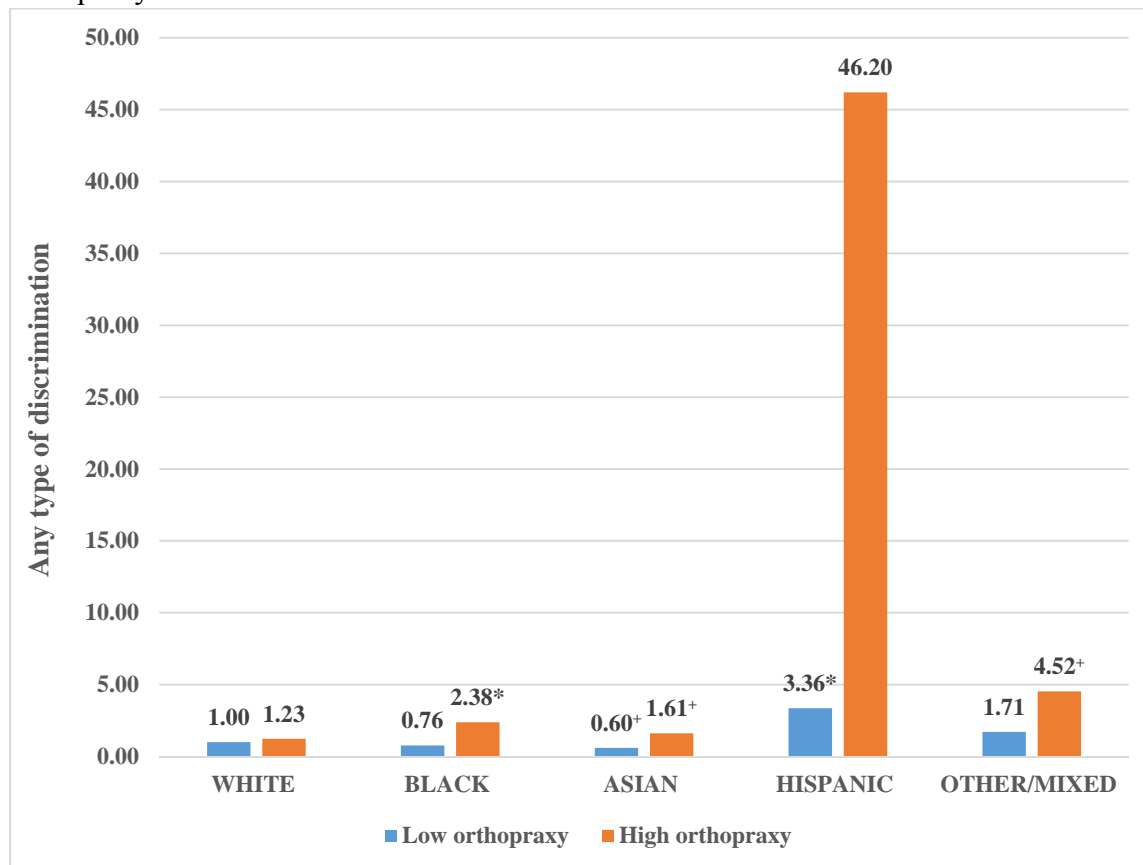
Source: Pew 2011

Notes: N = 1,033

Plotted values are net of demographic and socioeconomic status measures

<sup>+</sup>p < .10, \*p ≤ .05, \*\*p ≤ .01, \*\*\*p ≤ .001

Figure 3.3. Odds of reporting any type of discrimination, by Muslims' race and orthopraxy



Race and orthopraxy classification

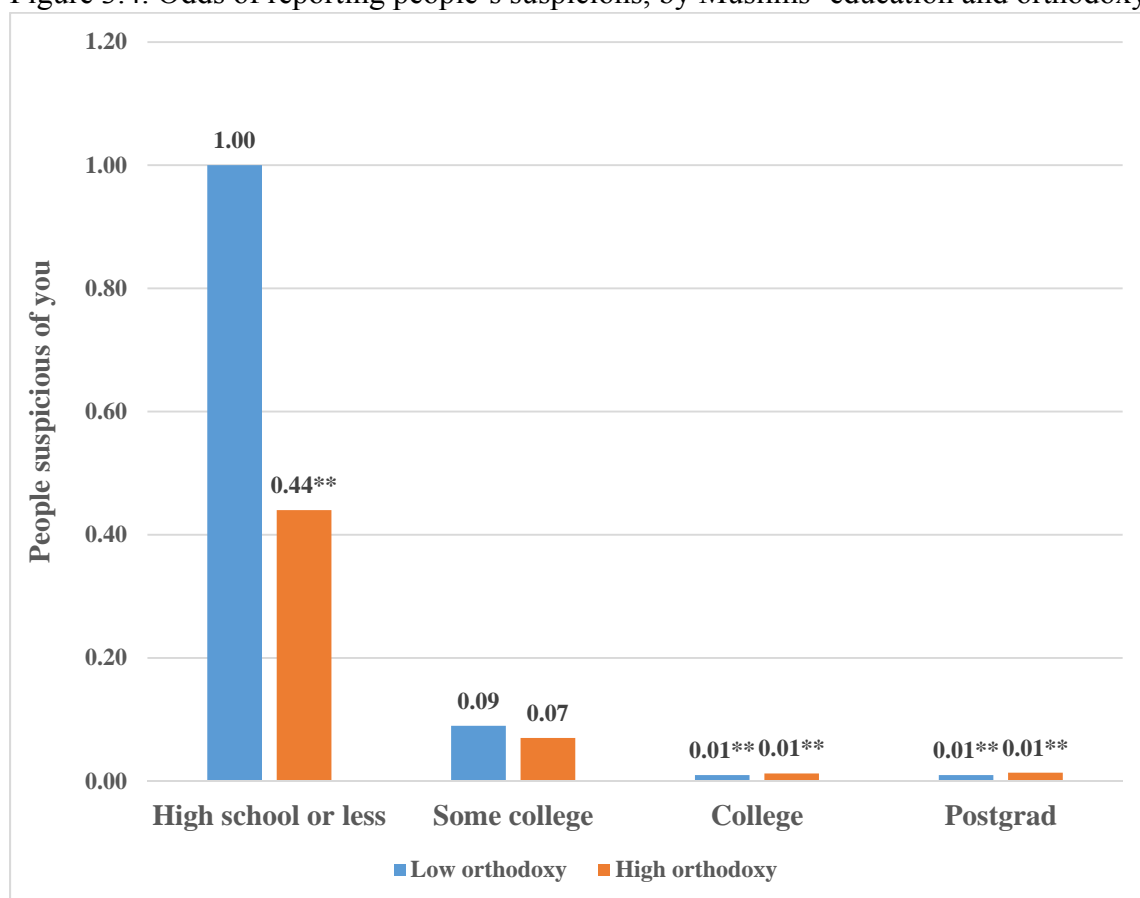
Source: Pew 2011

Notes: N = 1,033

Plotted values are net of demographic and socioeconomic status measures

<sup>+</sup>p < .10, \*p ≤ .05, \*\*p ≤ .01, \*\*\*p ≤ .001

Figure 3.4. Odds of reporting people's suspicions, by Muslims' education and orthodoxy



Education and orthodoxy classification

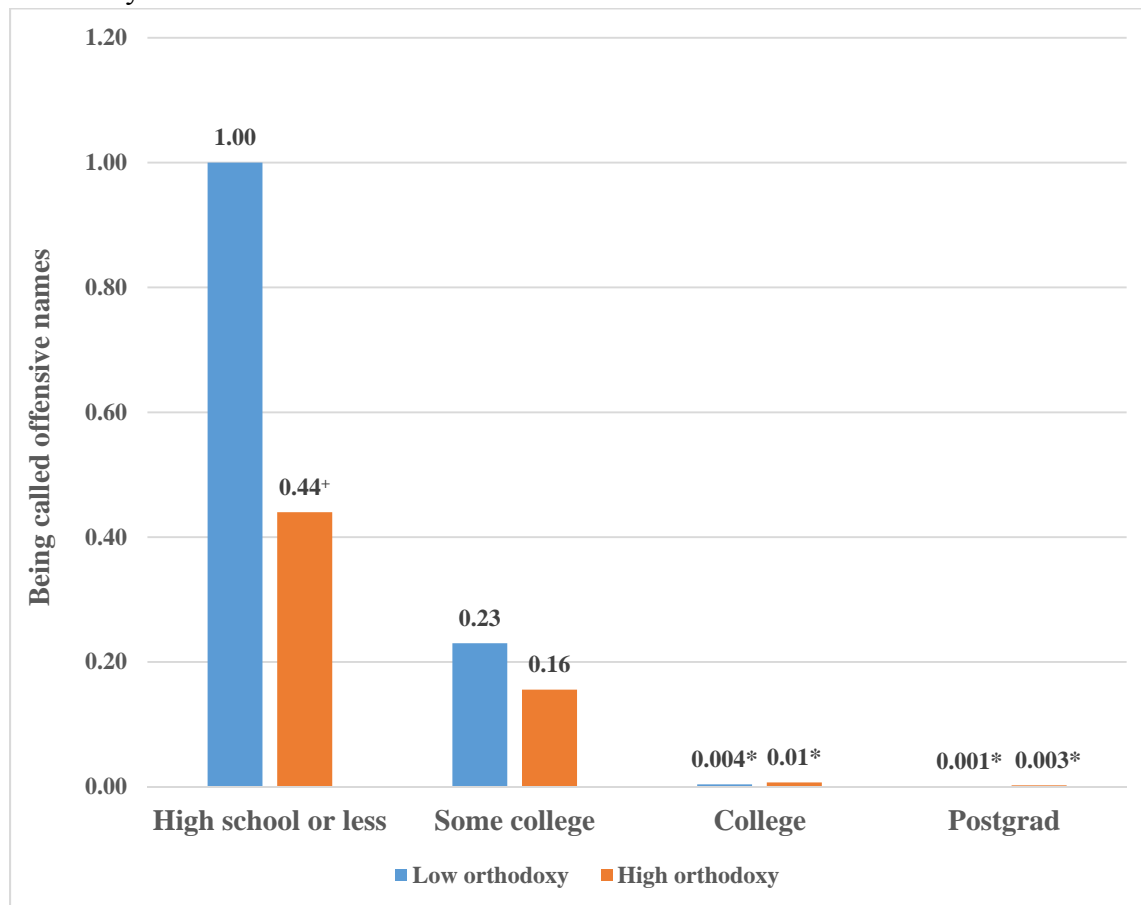
Source: Pew 2011

Notes: N = 1,033

Plotted values are net of demographic and socioeconomic status measures

<sup>+</sup>p < .10, \*p ≤ .05, \*\*p ≤ .01, \*\*\*p ≤ .001

Figure 3.5. Odds of reporting being called offensive names, by Muslims' education and orthodoxy



Education and orthodoxy classification

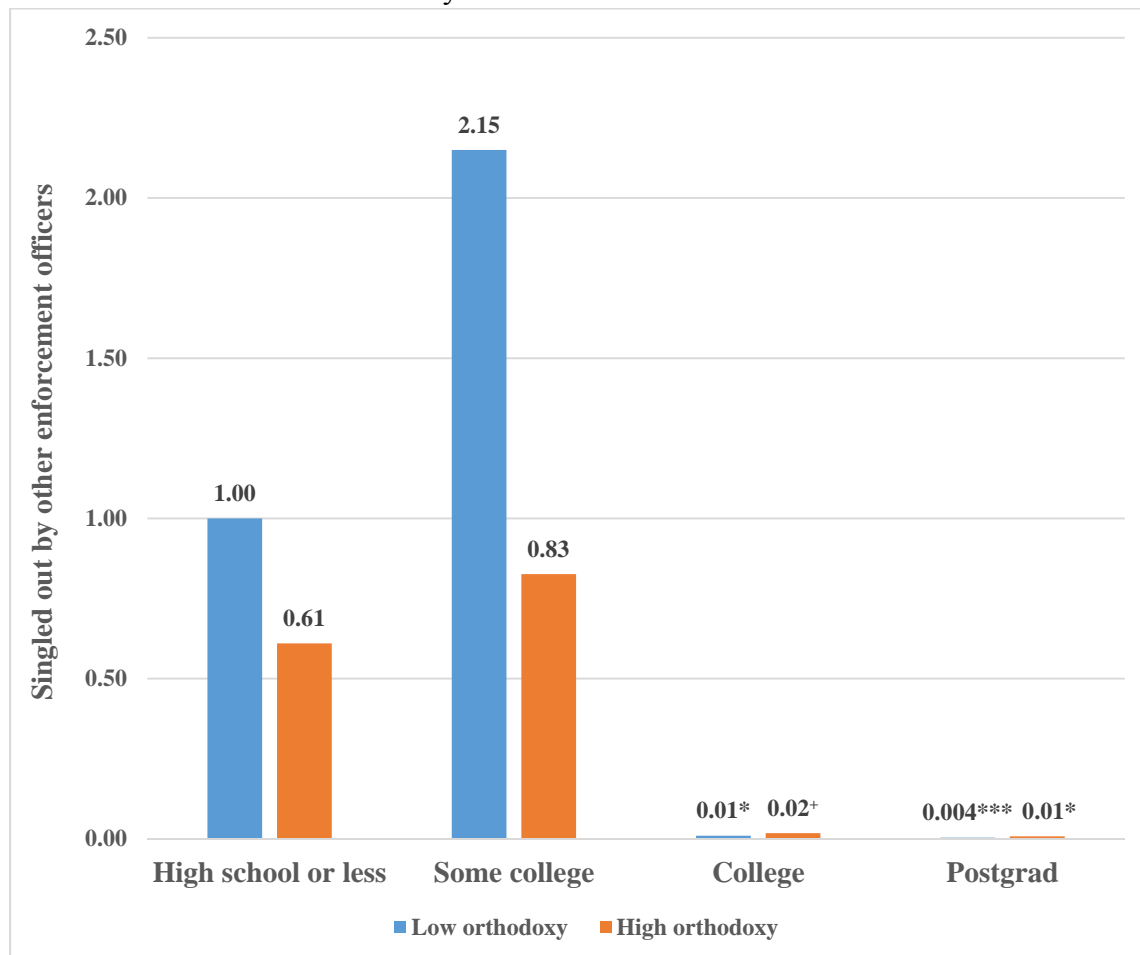
Source: Pew 2011

Notes: N = 1,033

Plotted values are net of demographic and socioeconomic status measures

<sup>+</sup>p < .10, \*p ≤ .05, \*\*p ≤ .01, \*\*\*p ≤ .001

Figure 3.6. Odds of reporting being singled out by other law enforcement officers, by Muslims' education and orthodoxy



Education and orthodoxy classification

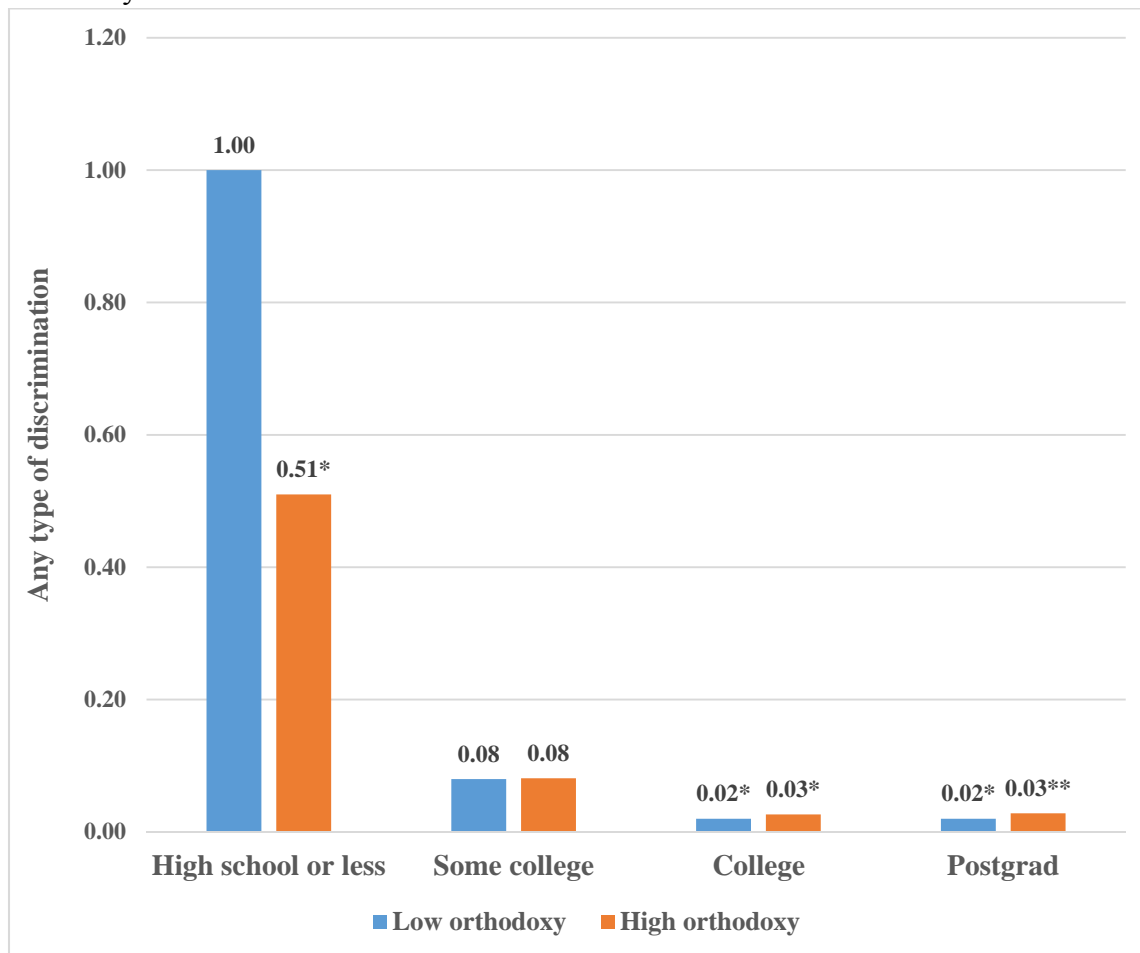
Source: Pew 2011

Notes: N = 1,033

Plotted values are net of demographic and socioeconomic status measures

<sup>+</sup>p < .10, \*p ≤ .05, \*\*p ≤ .01, \*\*\*p ≤ .001

Figure 3.7. Odds of reporting any type of discrimination, by Muslims' education and orthodoxy



Education and orthodoxy classification

Source: Pew 2011

Notes: N = 1,033

Plotted values are net of demographic and socioeconomic status measures

<sup>+</sup>p < .10, \*p ≤ .05, \*\*p ≤ .01, \*\*\*p ≤ .001

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## **CHAPTER 4: RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIFFERENCES IN PERCEIVED DISCRIMINATION AMONG MUSLIM AMERICANS AS A GROUP**

### **ABSTRACT**

Using conceptualization of a tribal stigma as a property of a collective entity, I examine Muslim Americans' perceptions of being discriminated against as a group. I use weighted data from the 2011 Pew Religion and Public Life Survey of 1,033 Muslim Americans 18 years old and older to evaluate the extent to which race/ethnicity affects perceived group discrimination among Muslim Americans. I assess whether the observed relationship between racial/ethnic groups and perceived group discrimination persists after controlling for socio-demographic characteristics. I also explore whether involvement in social or religious activities at the mosque or Islamic Center outside of prayers has effect on racial/ethnic differences among Muslims in perceptions of group discrimination. The bivariate analysis shows that Hispanic Muslims and Muslims of other/mixed race report perceptions of group discrimination at much higher rates than white, black, and Asian Muslims. The multinomial logistic regressions reveal that compared to white Muslims, Muslim Americans who identify as Hispanic and other/mixed race are significantly more likely to perceive group discrimination. The effects of racial/ethnic differences persist, net of all socio-demographic factors. The community involvement measure is a prominent factor in shaping perceptions of group discrimination for Muslim Americans, emphasizing the well-established observation that stigma is pertinent to a certain social context. I conclude with recommendations for future researchers to explore other dimensions of community involvement and for program developers to create programs targeted to Muslim American communities experiencing a

dearth of such interventions. I also call upon future research to examine various social and economic outcomes for the stigmatized group following discriminatory experiences.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Muslim Americans face discrimination at both individual and group levels. Most discrimination experienced at the group level is rooted in viewing Muslims by larger American society as a crowd and violent mass (Cainkar 2004:215; McCloud 2006; Tweed 2008:91). Assigning collective negative traits to Muslims have been perpetuated through media portrayal, caricatures, government policies, actions of law enforcement bodies, and sweeping declarations made by some prominent contemporary political figures (Cainkar 2004; Tweed 2008; Gottschalk and Greenberg 2008; Reilly 2015). The tendency to demonize Islam and visualize its adherents as a collective doing harm spikes high in the U.S. and other Western countries when some individuals or groups, not representative of Islam as a whole, commit terror acts. For example, following the Paris terrorist attacks of November 13, 2015, almost all 2016 GOP presidential candidates called for stopping bringing Syrian Muslim refugees to the U.S. and more than half of the country's governors said they wouldn't let these refugees settle in their states (Reilly 2015). Guilt by association is spread even to children, when the New Jersey governor Chris Christie calls for blocking Syrian refugees, "even 3-year-old orphans," from entering the U.S. (Reilly 2015). If the distant event had more negative impact on one particular segment of the Muslim population, in particular, Syrian refugees fleeing their war torn country to find a safe home in the U.S., a recent terrorist act on the U.S. soil, the San Bernardino mass shooting in Southern California on December 2, 2015 caused a larger repercussion. It ranged from a sweeping declaration made by politicians such as

the Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump calling for a “total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States” (Johnson 2015) to threats and violent attacks against Muslims in the U.S., which based on the compilation of news reports, numbered 14 only for a short period between December 8 and 12, 2015 (Greenwald 2015).

Since not all negative attitudes translate into discrimination (Allport 1954), one way to measure discrimination against Muslim Americans is to examine this minority group’s perceptions of being discriminated against as a whole group. Most previous studies on Muslim Americans’ perceptions of discrimination are focused on personal discrimination (e.g. Moradi and Hasan 2004; Abu-Ras and Abu-Bader 2008; Padela and Heisler 2010). Studies that examine perceived group discrimination among the Muslim minority are limited and sporadic. A few qualitative and mixed method works explore or have a cursory touch on the differences among Muslim minorities in their perceptions of group discrimination (e.g. Sonn 1994; Bruss 2008).

Prior research indicates that Muslim ethnic minorities vary across groups in their perceptions of group discrimination. For example, Bruss (2008) surveyed and interviewed 563 individuals from three Muslim groups, namely Turkish Muslims from Berlin, Bangladeshi Muslims from London, and Moroccan Muslims from Madrid to identify to what extent they report belonging to a minority that is discriminated against and factors associated with perceived discrimination experiences. Compared to Bangladeshi Muslims, Turkish and Moroccan Muslims more often reported that they belong to a minority that is discriminated against. Sonn’s (1994) qualitative work examined three ethnically different Muslim groups in the Rochester’s Sunni Islamic

community and found that unlike the immigrant Turkish and South Asian communities, the African American Muslim community identified dealing with racial prejudice as one of its major problems. Yet, these studies examine perceived discrimination in specific contexts with a limited number of ethnic groups. Studies with nationally representative samples that examine racial/ethnic differences in perceived group discrimination among Muslim Americans are absent.

Within racial/ethnic minority groups, perceptions of discrimination differ by socio-demographic status characteristics. Yet, studies on perceived group discrimination among Muslim Americans lag behind in identifying whether the experience of perceived group discrimination is related to the Muslim racial identity alone or exists in the association of other factors, such as gender, age, and social status characteristics. In the above mentioned study by Bruss (2008), contributing factors, which accounted for differences among three analyzed groups of Turkish, Bangladeshi, and Moroccan Muslims, ranged from everyday experiences to respectful treatment and to socio-demographic characteristics. Similarly, previous research has identified age, gender, education, and income as established socio-demographic characteristics to affect perceptions of discrimination (e.g. Forman, Williams, and Jackson 1997; Kessler, Mickelson, and Williams 1999; Nimer 2001; Harris 2004; Carr and Friedman 2005; Rippy and Newman 2006; Perez, Fortuna, and Alegria 2008; Sirin and Katsiaficas 2011).

Emerging meta-analyses show that perceptions of discrimination are more harmful at the personal level than at the group level linking it to successful coping (Schmitt et al. 2014). Related to this, a number of studies show the importance of a specific social context in fighting discrimination. Community involvement is one such

important context. As argued by Britt and Heise (2000), community engagement may protect from stigmatization and help combat discrimination. Similarly, studies examining Muslims' community involvement demonstrate the usage of community engagement as a coping mechanism to deal with discrimination (Byng 1998; Elaasar 2004; Hallak and Quina 2004; Sirin and Katsiaficas 2011). Although community involvement is theorized to be an important factor in fighting discrimination, no studies examined the impact of the community involvement measure on racial/ethnic differences among Muslim Americans in perceptions of group discrimination.

Using a nationally representative sample and drawing broadly on Goffman's (1963) notion of a tribal stigma,<sup>7</sup> I intend to accomplish three goals in this study. First, I explore whether and to what extent there are racial/ethnic differences in perceived group discrimination among Muslim Americans. Second, I assess whether the observed relationship between racial/ethnic groups and perceived group discrimination persists after controlling for potential socio-demographic characteristics. Finally, I determine whether a community involvement characteristic has effect on Muslim Americans' perceptions of group discrimination and helps account for racial/ethnic differences among this group.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Are Muslim Americans stigmatized as a group?**

Muslim Americans may be considered a stigmatized group if one uses Goffman's (1963) definition of a "tribal stigma." The tribal stigma includes real or imagined traits of

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<sup>7</sup> Many of the negative views of Muslims, such as violent, radical, cruel, unreasonable, and intolerant reflect perceptions about character and could be associated with a stigma of character traits. Yet, this type of stigma, which is defined by Goffman (1963) as "blemishes of individual character" along with another type of stigma "abominations of the body" referring to physical deformities of the body focuses on individuals' experience of stigma.

nation, race, and religion that “can be transmitted through lineages and equally contaminate all members of a family” (Goffman 1963:4). The definition suggests that a tribal stigma is a group phenomenon. Not an individual but an entire race, nation, and religion are stigmatized. Conceptualization of stigma as an individual property has been challenged by a number of scholars. According to Becker and Arnold (1986) and Ainlay and Crosby (1986), stigma is socially constructed, whereas most sociological and psychological studies focused on individuals’ experience of stigma.

Muslim Americans fit well into conceptualization of stigma as a property of a group. Muslims in general have been viewed as a crowd and a violent group (Cainkar 2004; Gottschalk and Greenberg 2008, Tweed 2008; Jasser 2012). Portrayal of Muslims in media will be a good place for such search. For instance, Tweed (2008) analyzed the media representation of Muslims and Buddhists in the U.S. since 1945 and found that individualistic and peaceful portrayal of followers of Buddhism diverged sharply from the depiction of communal and intense driven Muslims. Tweed (2008) concluded that “Buddhist images of the solitary meditator and the righteous protester and contrasting Muslim images of the crowd in prayer and the crowd doing harm” were main determinants for associating Muslims with public violence (p.92). It is not surprising that following this reasoning, violent acts committed by adherents of other religions than Muslims are not generalized but rather directed to individual psychosocial deficiencies. For example, drawing comparison between Islamist terrorism and terrorist acts committed by Christians and Jews, Jasser (2012) calls the former “a widespread, organized [current] movement that has caused the deaths of many thousands of people” and labels the atrocities of the latter “isolated acts of terrorism” of the past (pp. 208-209).

An interesting observation is made by some scholars who show that “acts of German atrocities were attributed to evil *individuals* while the Japanese acts were attributed to an evil *race*” (Daniel 1971 as cited in Sue and Kitano 1973: 89-90). Similarly, acts of Muslims are solely endorsed on the entire group. Assigning collective guilt to the whole Muslim community has become prominent in post 9/11 American political context. A vivid example is the New York Police Department’s recent discriminatory surveillance. It was directed not to individual Muslims, rather targeted their communities, such as mosques and Muslim student associations in New York City and various areas of New Jersey, thus attributing the characteristics of terrorists to the entire population. The similar practice was also observed in other countries of the Western Europe (Allen and Nielsen 2002). Overall, as noted by Cainkar (2004), government policies towards Muslims are generalized to the entire group and intend to “single them out *as a group* that is dangerous and potentially subversive” (p.215).

Looking at Muslims through the collective lens is also extended beyond media portrayal and actions of law enforcement bodies. Gottschalk and Greenberg (2008), who examined political caricatures to demonstrate the presence of Islamophobia — anxiety toward Islam deeply ingrained in Americans, showed how caricatures perpetuated Muslim stereotypes by leaving the realm of physical and behavioral features of an individual and assuming general characteristics of an entire group.

Social desirability and acceptance by society is another important component in Goffman’s (1963) definition of stigma. Muslim Americans are stigmatized along the lines of this perception too. Studies show that Muslims are not well accepted by Americans. For example, Edgell, Gerteis, and Hartmann (2006) used the 2003 American Mosaic

Project Survey to analyze boundaries of Americans' tolerance towards atheists and found that the second most striking group that was less publicly and privately accepted after atheists were Muslims. For the public acceptance measure, Americans rejected Muslims (77.6%) almost equally to atheists (78.6%) when the "somewhat" and "not at all" responses were combined (Edgell et al. 2006). Another study based on an analysis of a telephone poll of 600 Americans showed that irrespective of viewing Mexicans as filthy, backward, illiterate, drug dealers, and dishonest, most Americans considered them friendly (51%) and held a high opinion (66%) about them (Slade 1981). On the contrary, only 20 percent of respondents saw Arabs [prototypes of Muslims] as friendly and 36 percent had a high opinion about them associating frequently with this group "characteristics connoting cruelty" (Slade 1981:148).

Conceptualization of stigma as a socially constructed group phenomenon also suggests that stigma should be studied in social, cultural, and historical contexts (Ainlay and Crosby 1986; Becker and Arnold 1986). The stigmatization process is inseparable from social context (Coleman 1986). Studies show that not only domestic but also international events contribute to further discrimination of a stigmatized group. For example, Sheridan and Gillet (2005) and Sheridan (2006) found that major world events such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks increased discrimination of Muslims in the UK.

### **Perceived discrimination**

Discrimination, which brings detrimental results for life chances of stigmatized individuals, including psychological, physical, and socioeconomic wellbeing, has been identified as a key component of the stigma process (Link and Phelan 2001). Yet, not all negative attitudes, referred to as prejudice, translate into discrimination (Allport 1954)

and cause stigmatization. Research demonstrating a weak relationship between attitudes and actual behaviors starts as early as the 1930s (LaPiere 1934). Empirical studies on stigmatized groups posit similarly that prejudicial attitudes alone might not always bring stigmatization (e.g. Carr and Friedman 2005). As argued by Link and Phelan (2001), stigma-related processes are comprised of both denigrating behaviors practiced against a stigmatized group by individuals and social institutions, as well as the reactions of the stigmatized group.

Given that discrimination manifests itself mostly in a subtle form, one way to assess the reaction of a stigmatized group will be focusing on perceptions of discrimination to get the stigmatized group members' subjective perception of unjustified treatment. According to Major and Sawyer (2009), perceived discrimination is mostly referred to "the level or frequency of discriminatory incidents to which people perceive they (or members of their group) have been exposed" (p.90). Gee, Pavalko, and Long (2007) identified several important reasons for studying perceived discrimination, including the fact that perceptions are commonly reported, they are connected to structural discrimination, they serve as a "barometer for human rights," and they have detrimental effects on wellbeing. Some scholars even emphasized the importance of examining perceptions of discrimination of minority groups to evaluate their successful incorporation into society (Gordon 1971; Breton et al. 1990). Minorities that perceive higher levels of discrimination report more issues concerning their integration into larger society (Dion 2001). Studies have also identified that perceptions of personal and group discrimination predict "different types of criteria" (Dion 2001:525). Perceived group discrimination is more associated with an oppressed group's willingness to participate in

collective actions, whereas perceptions of personal discrimination predict “personal stress reactions” (see Dion 2001:525, for a review).

Studies focusing on minorities’ perceptions of discrimination have identified differential effects of two levels (personal and group) of perceived discrimination. Researchers found that minority group members report experiencing discrimination more for their group than for themselves (see Moghaddam and Studer 1997; Crocker, Major, and Steele 1998; Schneider 2004, for reviews). Initially noted by Crosby (1982) and later labeled by Taylor et al. (1990) as the *personal/group discrimination discrepancy*, this robust phenomenon has been observed in different minority and stigmatized groups (see Taylor, Wright, and Porter 1994, for a review). Among potential explanations for reporting lower levels of discrimination for the self than for the group, are minimizing personal discrimination and exaggerating group discrimination (Crosby 1982; Moghaddam and Studer 1997; Schneider 2004).

The personal/group discrimination discrepancy has been also observed among Muslim Americans as a minority group. For example, the Hamilton Muslim America Poll found that following the 9/11 terrorist attacks Muslim Americans reported high levels of anti-Muslim discrimination and harassment incidents. While almost two thirds of respondents (60%) reported anti-Muslim discriminatory acts in their communities, about half knew someone who has been victimized, and one in four experienced discrimination themselves (Gilbert 2002). As noted by Moghaddam and Studer (1997), such discrepancy could not be the result of generally believed denial of personal discrimination, but rather due to “a culturally derived heuristics that leads people to estimate the magnitude of the effect of events as increasing with the size of the social unit being affected” (p.164).

A few empirical studies on the discrimination of Muslims have also indicated to the tendency of the Muslim minority group to report higher levels of discrimination for their group than for themselves personally. For example, Rippy and Newman's (2006) study of 152 Muslim Americans on the association of perceived discrimination and subclinical paranoia and anxiety revealed that following the 9/11 events many respondents reported lower levels of personal discrimination than group discrimination.

### **Patterns of perceived group discrimination**

Prior studies reveal that stigmatization varies across members of the stigmatized population (e.g. Carr and Friedman 2005; Carr, Jaffe, and Friedman 2008). Within a stigmatized group, some members are attributed with more denigrated traits than others. Becoming a target of discrimination is a pervasive characteristic of stigmatization process (Goffman 1963; Jones et al. 1984). Since a core component of the stigma process involves a stigmatized person's experience of discrimination/status loss (Link and Phelan 2001), it is essential to examine whether the prevalence of experienced discrimination varies by racial and ethnic groups. Prior research indicates that ethnic minorities vary across groups in their perceptions of discrimination (e.g. Naff 1995; Harris 2004; Ayalon and Gum 2011). Most studies are consistent in their findings that ethnic minorities report higher levels of perceived discrimination compared to whites (Barnes et al. 2004; Harris 2004). As concerns comparisons across other racial/ethnic groups, most findings show lower levels of perceived discrimination among Asians relative to Hispanics and blacks (Bobo and Suh 1995 and Kruegel and Bobo 2001 as cited in Harris 2004). Consistent with previous studies, *I expect that non-white Muslim racial groups report more group discrimination compared to white Muslim Americans. A differential pattern is also*

*expected to be observed in perceived discrimination among different Muslim racial groups with Hispanics and blacks reporting perceptions of group discrimination at a much higher rate than those reported by other racial groups.*

Various estimates put Hispanics among the fastest growing ethnic minority group of the Muslim American population. According to the 2011 U.S. Mosque Survey, which interviewed leaders at 524 mosques across the country, the conversion rate over the past decade remained the same for other racial/ethnic groups except for Latinos who witnessed a growth from 6% of all converts in 2000 to 12% of all converts in 2011 (Bagby 2012). Some other estimates show that Latinos make every fifth of new converts to Islam nationwide (Diaz 2013; Padgett 2013). Recent migration trends and Latino's cultural and historical kinship with the Muslim culture and the Arab world are thought to account for this phenomenon (Padgett 2013). As stated by Smith, Hispanic converts have "found much in Islamic culture that is akin to their own cultural heritage... [and] think that they are reclaiming their lost Muslim and African heritage" (2010:68). Additionally, for Latina immigrants, who make up more than half of converts, a higher status, protection, and respect offered by Islam are also mentioned among potential reasons that bring these women to Islam (Diaz 2013; Padgett 2013). Yet, many Latino Muslims are still looked down by immigrant Muslims for not being genuine and by the Latino community for leaving their Hispanic culture (Wakin 2002; Padgett 2013).

African American Muslims construct one of the largest minority groups among the Muslim American population. Estimates range from 23% to 40% and to 42% (Jackson 2005; Smith 2010; Pew Research Center 2011). African Americans' affiliation with Islam goes back to the antebellum era when among slaves brought to the U.S. from

sub-Saharan Africa every fifth was Muslim. Large-scale conversions of African Americans to Islam, or so called returning to their original roots, took place during the Black Nationalist movements of the 1920s and the rise of the Nation of Islam in the 1960s. Despite their prominent role in building first mosques in the U.S., spreading Islam, and fighting racism, African Americans have not been considered authentic representatives of Islam. A sole right to define Islam is claimed by immigrant Muslims from the Arab world and South Asia (Jackson 2005; McCloud 2006).

Since Hispanic and black Muslims encounter both racial and religious prejudice, they may constitute primary targets of discrimination. I adopt an intersectional perspective to test my proposition. This perspective posits that a marginalized person's identity is constructed through overlap of multiple simultaneously functioning systems of oppression and could not be limited to the examination of a single social category or a simple sum of several disadvantaged statuses (e.g. Collins 1991; Crenshaw 1991).

The present study also examines whether racial/ethnic differences in perceptions of group discrimination persists when socio-demographic characteristics are controlled. A stigmatized group usually possesses multiple denigrated traits (Link et al. 1997). Studies, for example, show that black Muslim women are stigmatized in both American society at large and within the *ummah* (Muslim community) (Karim 2006). Lower demographic and socioeconomic status characteristics are associated with stigmatized groups (Carr and Friedman 2005; Carr et al. 2008). On the same line, most previous research on perceived discrimination has identified socio-demographic characteristics as correlates of perceived discrimination (Adam and Dressler 1988; Forman et al. 1997; Kessler et al. 1999; Nimer 2001; Harris 2004; Livengood and Stodolska 2004; Carr and Friedman 2005; Rippy and

Newman 2006; Perez et al. 2008; Sirin and Katsiaficas 2011; Aroian 2012). Findings have been inconsistent ranging from positive to negative and to curvilinear relationships. Controlling for socio-demographic characteristics, *I expect that these factors may confound the observed association between Muslim race/ethnicity and perceived group discrimination with a greater likelihood of reporting discriminatory treatments by people from the lower socio-economic strata.*

Furthermore, the paper examines whether racial/ethnic differences in perceptions of group discrimination exist, once additional characteristics are included. The sense of possessing a stigma is bounded to a particular social context (Coleman 1986; Crocker et al. 1998:506). A specific social context defines whether and to what extent a group's characteristic gets denigrated. Since the focus of the paper is on perceived group discrimination, inclusion of a community engagement measure seems relevant. As argued by Sirin and Katsiaficas (2011), community involvement is more commonly available for immigrant minorities for their civic engagement, compared to citizenship bounded measure of participation in elections. When faced with discrimination some Muslim Americans turn to their communities for support, whereas others refrain from participating in their community activities (see Sirin and Katsiaficas 2011, for a review). Active participation may make one a target of mistreatment. You do not know if someone is Muslim if you see them on the street (if dressed in nonreligious garb), yet you do know they are Muslim if you see them at a mosque. Thus, religious participation could engender mistreatment. Additionally, this mistreatment may differ by race. For example, Jamal (2005) found that mosque participation was connected to discriminatory acts against Arab and African American Muslims but not South Asian Muslims. On the other

hand, prior studies show that Muslim Americans, in particular women employ community engagement as a coping mechanism to deal with discrimination (Byng 1998; Elaasar 2004; Hallak and Quina 2004). For example, Elaasar (2004) indicated that many Muslim Americans sought support in mosques and Islamic centers to cope with post 9/11 discrimination. Byng's (1998) qualitative study found that African American Muslim women, along with such individual-level coping strategies as self-definition and maintaining a humanist vision, mediated the effects of discrimination through association with the safe social space of the Muslim community. A similar observation was made by Hallak and Quina (2004) whose study of a focus group with seven Muslim women attending school three blocks from the ground zero revealed that in coping with discrimination these women turned to their faith for spiritual meaning and to their communities and their families for physical refuge (p.336).

Social integration theory (Durkheim [1897] 1951) and research going back to Durkheim posit the protective social and psychological effects of being embedded in a community. Getting engaged in public life is associated with a series of positive outcomes, including the provision of social support, improvement in one's positive sense of self, development of well-being, receiving coping sources, and assertion of one's identity (e.g. Bellah et al. 1996; Branscombe and Ellemers 1998; Piliavin and Siegl 2007). *I expect community engagement to influence perceptions of discrimination among Muslim Americans with attenuating effect of discrimination for those who opt to participate in social and religious activities of the community. It is also expected that the community involvement effect differs across Muslim American racial/ethnic minorities with Asian Muslims reporting less group discrimination compared to white Muslims.*

## **DATA, VARIABLES, AND METHODS**

### **Data**

The study draws on the 2011 Muslim American Survey conducted by the Pew Research Center. The dataset is publicly available from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life website (<http://www.pewforum.org/datasets>). The survey included landline and cell phone interviews with 1,033 Muslim adults 18 years old and older living in the United States conducted in English (925), Arabic (73), Farsi (19), and Urdu (16). Out of the total sample, 358 interviews were drawn from screening of a geographically stratified random digit dial (RDD) sample of the general public of 41,869 households, 501 were obtained from a commercial database of more than 600,000 households with likely Muslim names, and additional 174 interviews came through recontacting English-speaking Muslim households from previous nationwide surveys conducted since 2007 (Pew Research Center 2011). These sampling sources were used to address three important issues, namely, the high dispersion of the Muslim population throughout the United States, the low incidence (about 5 out of 1,000 respondents identify themselves as Muslim), and cell phone coverage. The response rates ranged from the lowest 18% for the list sample, to 20% for the cell RDD sample, to 22% for the geographic landline RDD sample, and to the highest 54% for the recontact sample (Pew Research Center 2011). Given challenges indicated by previous studies on surveying the Muslim population, which are primary associated with low return rates due to lack of trust (see Leonard 2003:44), the Pew study can be considered a success in surveying the Muslim American population.

### **Variables**

### *Dependent variable*

To examine the views of the U.S. Muslim population towards being discriminated as a group, I use the following question from the 2011 Muslim American Survey: *“In your own words, what do you think are the most important problems facing Muslims living in the United States today?”*

Respondents responses were collapsed by Pew researchers into the following 17 common themes: discrimination/racism/prejudice; not treated fairly/harassment; acceptance by society; stereotyping/generalizing about all Muslims; hatred/fear/distrust of Muslims; ignorance/misconceptions of Islam; viewed as terrorists; negative media portrayals; lack of representation/community involvement; religious/cultural problems between Muslims and non-Muslims; jobs/financial problems; problems among Muslims; fundamentalist/extremist Muslims in other countries; war/U.S. foreign policy; no problems; don’t know/refused; and other. Up to three responses were recorded in order of mention.<sup>8</sup> Responses to the question on the most important problems facing Muslims living in the United States today were categorized for the purpose of the multinomial logistic regression analysis. Persons who answered “discrimination/racism/prejudice”<sup>9</sup> and “not treated fairly/harassment” as their first response were combined under one

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<sup>8</sup> Due to the small number of cases in the second and third responses, I focus only on the first response. For example, “discrimination/racism/prejudice” and “not treated fairly/harassment” categories taken together have only 27 and 4 cases for the second and third response, respectively. Additionally, not much difference has been observed in the multinomial regression analysis once I include in my 1<sup>st</sup> category those who name “discrimination/racism/prejudice” and “not treated fairly/harassment” as their 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> answer choice.

<sup>9</sup> Prejudice and discrimination are two distinct categories in sociology. The Pew question does not differentiate prejudice as an attitude from discrimination as a behavior. Listing racism and prejudice along with discrimination in the response makes them seem more like they represent a perception of a problem of actual difference in treatment. Given the fact that a random sample of the public might not make the prejudice/discrimination distinction and a considerable amount of research considers prejudice or racial attitudes as predictors of discriminatory behavior, lumping them in the response might make them seem like they are the same thing.

category, called “discrimination” (reference category). Respondents who indicated “no problems” as their first answer choice were considered another category, labeled “no problem.” The remaining responses were collapsed into another category, named “any other problems.” Persons with “don’t know/refused” answers (4.31%) were dropped from univariate and bivariate analyses.<sup>10</sup> For the multinomial logistic regression analysis, I employed multiple imputation procedures to impute missing values on my outcome measure and all other variables used in the study.

### *Independent variables*

All Pew participants were asked to report their race. Race has five categories, namely, black, non-Hispanic; Asian, non-Hispanic; Hispanic; other or mixed, non-Hispanic; and white, non-Hispanic as a reference category. It should be noted that Hispanic was not an answer choice in the previous wave of the Pew study conducted in 2007. The inclusion of Hispanic as a separate category could be related to the increasing number of converts to Islam among this group.

### *Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics*

I use a set of demographic and socioeconomic status characteristics as control variables. They are controlled to see whether the association between racial/ethnic

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<sup>10</sup> Prior analyses with a dummy variable for missing cases showed that age and income had a curvilinear relationship and education was inversely associated with the odds of answering “don’t know/refused” to this question. Compared to other respondents, those who did not answer or refused to respond to the question were less educated (12.47% versus 27.60% with college and post-graduate degrees), were older in age (55.20% versus 39.87% of people 40 years old and older), had significantly lower income (13.11% versus 41.44% with income level of \$30,000-\$100,000), and participated significantly less in community affairs (3.46% versus 37.04%). Similarly, a series of logistic regressions revealed that contrary to the race, gender, and age patterns in non-response, the community involvement effect was significant at  $p \leq .001$  and the effects of the last categories of education (post-graduation) and income (over \$100,000) were significant at  $p \leq .01$ . The odds of not answering the question was 94% and 93% less for Muslims with post-degree education and community involvement, respectively, and almost eight times higher for Muslims with income level of \$100, 000 and more.

categories and perceived discrimination holds net of socio-demographic characteristics. Demographic measures include sex and age. Sex was coded as a dummy variable (1 = female; 0 = male). Age has 4 categories – 18-29 years (reference category), 30-39 years, 40-54 years, and 55+ years. I maintained the original coding and created dummy variables for each category.

I include two socioeconomic status variables. The first is the respondent's education. It is asked by the question "What is the last grade or class that you completed in school?" I recoded the existing categories as a series of four dummy variables: high school or less (omitted category), some college, college graduate, and post graduate. The second measure is the respondent's total family income in the previous year. Income has 4 categories – less than \$30,000, \$30,000 - \$49,999, \$50,000 - \$99,999, and 100,000 and up. The original coding was maintained and dummy variables for each category were created. The category of less than \$30,000 serves as a reference category.

The respondent's community involvement is asked by the question "And outside of salah [prayer] and Jum'ah [Friday] prayer, do you take part in any other social or religious activities at the mosque or Islamic Center?" Responses included "yes" and "no," which were coded as a dummy variable.

## **Method**

To address the objectives of the present study, I use three types of analyses. First, I run univariate analyses to give descriptive statistics for all variables used in the study. Second, I look at the distribution of perceived discrimination as one of the important problems faced by Muslims in the United States today based on this minority group's racial/ethnic differences. Finally, given that my outcome measure is a three-level

categorical variable, I use multinomial logistic regressions to assess the effect of Muslim racial/ethnic group membership on the odds of no problem and any other problems relative to discrimination. I control for demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, to examine whether these variables account for the observed relationship between racial and ethnic groups and perceived group discrimination. I also determine whether a community involvement characteristic has effect on racial/ethnic differences among Muslims in perceptions of group discrimination.

I use STATA 13.0 for all analyses. Considering the complex sampling design, I use survey weighted data for all analyses to better represent the U.S. Muslim population. Towards this goal, I employ the svy command suggested by the Pew Research Center. Furthermore, I employ multiple imputation procedures using ICE commands in Stata 13.0 to impute missing values on all variables.<sup>11</sup>

## **RESULTS**

### **Descriptive statistics**

Table 4.1 presents the descriptive statistics for the three categories of the outcome measure, main predictors, and potential control variables. About 18 percent of respondents report discrimination as one of the most important problems facing Muslims living in the United States today. Nearly 17 percent indicate no problem as their answer choice. The rest of the respondents constitute the majority (65%), who selected any other problems as their answer choice. The top listed reasons in the category of any other

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<sup>11</sup> In the preliminary analysis, I used listwise deletion by dropping observations with “don’t know/refused” responses and excluding cases due to missing data on one or more variables. Taken together, the excluded cases (151 observations) comprised 14.62% of the entire sample. The multinomial regressions run with the listwise excluded cases produced similar results, suggesting that missing data do not have much impact on the analysis.

problems include ignorance/misconceptions of Islam; stereotyping/ generalizing about all Muslims; viewed as terrorists; hatred/fear/distrust of Muslims; religious/cultural problems between Muslims and non-Muslims; and negative media portrayals.

Muslim Americans represent a diverse group in terms of race/ethnicity. White Muslims comprise the largest racial group (31%), followed by blacks (23%), Asians (21%), other/mixed race (19%), and Hispanics (6%). Almost half of respondents are female (49%). Young Muslims comprise the largest age category. Over one-third of adult Muslims (36%) are between the ages of 18 and 29. The largest proportion of respondents (54%) hold a high school diploma or less and nearly one in five (19%) have some college education. Slightly over one fifth of respondents (21%) report a household income of \$50,000 to \$100,000. Finally, over a third of Muslim Americans (36%) report that they participate in social or religious activities at the mosque or Islamic Center outside of religious services.

### **Bivariate analysis**

Table 4.2 displays the distribution of perceived problems by Muslim racial and ethnic groups in the United States today. Chi-squared analyses were conducted to show differences across Muslim groups by giving the proportions of respondents who answered “yes” to discrimination (row 1), no problems (row 2), and any other problems (row 3). The table shows that there are significant differences among three outcome categories (discrimination, no problems, and any other problems). Nearly 18 percent (17.79%) of respondents report discrimination as a most important problem faced by Muslims. About one-sixth of Muslim Americans (16.53%) report no problem as their answer choice. Two thirds of respondents (65.68%) indicate any other problems as their answer choice.

There are significant differences across the Muslim racial/ethnic groups on the first outcome category (discrimination) with more Hispanic Muslims (39.90%) and Muslims of other/mixed race (23.78%) perceiving discrimination as one of the most important problems faced by Muslims in the U.S. today compared to the other three groups. Additionally, there are significant differences across the analyzed Muslim groups with fewer Muslims of other/mixed race (7.23%) and more Asian Muslims (30.48%) perceiving no problems among important issues faced by Muslim Americans. Significant differences are also found in the percentage distributions for the third outcome category between the racial/ethnic groups with more black Muslims (74.24%) perceiving any other problems as one of the most important problems faced by Muslims in the U.S. today. In general, among the five analyzed Muslim racial/ethnic groups, Hispanic Muslims and Muslims of other/mixed race are significantly more likely to report discrimination, whereas Asian Muslims are significantly more likely to report no problem as one of the most important problems faced by Muslims in the U.S. today.

Table 4.3 presents the distribution of community involvement by Muslim American racial/ethnic groups. The chi-squared analysis reveals no significant differences across the Muslim American racial/ethnic groups on community involvement. Yet, among the analyzed groups Muslim Americans of other/mixed race has the lowest involvement (30.39%) in social and religious activities of a mosque or Islamic Center outside of religious services.

### **Multinomial logistic regressions**

The results of the multinomial logistic regression analysis are presented in Table 4.4. Since the outcome variable has three categories, two comparisons are needed. Discrimination is an omitted category in each comparison. The first comparison shows the impact of the independent and control variables on the likelihood that Muslim

Americans report no problem versus discrimination. Likewise, the second comparison shows whether there is an increase in the odds of Muslim Americans reporting any other problems over discrimination. Model 1 regresses the dependent variable on race. Model 2 introduces the socio-demographic variables. Model 3 builds upon Model 2 by including the community involvement factor.

*Are there differences among the Muslim American racial/ethnic groups in perceptions of group discrimination?* Model 1 in the first panel shows that among the Muslim racial/ethnic groups, only respondents of other or mixed race are significantly different from a reference group of white Muslims. Muslims of other or mixed race relative to white Muslims report significantly lower odds ( $OR = 0.30, p \leq .01$ ) of choosing no problems than discrimination among the issues faced by Muslim Americans today.

Similar to Model 1 in the first panel, only one racial/ethnic group differs significantly from a reference group in Model 1 of the second panel. The group includes Hispanic Muslims who, compared to white Muslims, have a 71% lower odds of reporting any other problems instead of discrimination ( $OR = .29, p < .10$ ).

*Do the observed differences among the Muslim racial/ethnic groups persist after controlling for socio-demographic factors?* To address the question, I control for socio-demographic characteristics to assess whether minority group differences persist. Model 2 observes some changes, once the socio-demographic variables are introduced. Two noticeable changes occur with the categories of Asian Muslims and Muslims of other or mixed race. For the former, the previously insignificant results become marginally significant after introducing the control variables. Compared to white Muslims, Asian

Muslims report almost two and half times higher odds ( $OR = 2.33, p < .10$ ) of choosing no problems than discrimination among the issues faced by Muslim Americans today. For Muslims of other or mixed race, the magnitude of this category's effects decreases by 20 percent (comparing the odds ratios on the other/mixed category in Model 1 to Model 2 in the first panel). Among the socio-demographic variables, age and income are the significant determinants of reporting no problems versus discrimination as the top problem. Compared to 18-29 years old respondents, those of 40-54 and older than 55 years of age have over 3 ( $OR = 3.15, p \leq .01$ ) and almost 4 ( $OR = 3.85, p < .10$ ) times higher odds of reporting no problems relative to discrimination. Relative to Muslims in the lower income category of less than \$30,000, respondents in the \$30,000 to \$49,999, \$50,000 to \$99,999, and \$100,000 and above income level categories report significantly lower odds ( $OR = .35, p < .10$ ,  $OR = .09, p \leq .001$ , and  $OR = 0.11, p \leq .05$ , respectively) of selecting no problems than discrimination as the most important issue faced by Muslim Americans.

Model 2 in the second panel shows that net of all socio-demographic factors, racial/ethnic differences remain for Hispanic Muslims compared to whites. Among socio-demographic measures, education and income are the significant predictors of reporting any other problems versus discrimination. Relative to Muslims who hold high school diploma or less, respondents with some college degrees have more than twice the odds ( $OR = 2.17, p \leq .05$ ) of reporting any other problems versus discrimination. Those at \$50,000 - \$99,999 income level, compared to those at the lowest income level, report lower odds ( $OR = .50, p \leq .05$ ) of indicating any other problems as an important issue instead of discrimination.

*Does community involvement account for racial/ethnic differences among Muslims in perceptions of group discrimination?* The final goal is to examine whether Muslims' involvement in social and religious activities of a mosque or Islamic Center outside of religious services shapes the experience of discrimination differently within Muslim groups. For this purpose, I assess two-way interactions for each racial/ethnic category and community involvement. Prior to this, I determine whether the community involvement characteristic has effect on Muslims in their perceptions of group discrimination.

As the first panel of Model 3 shows, the community involvement measure is a significant predictor for the outcome variable. Muslims, who are involved in social and religious activities of a mosque or Islamic Center outside of religious services, report significantly lower odds ( $OR = .40, p \leq .05$ ) of reporting no problems versus discrimination among the issues faced by Muslim Americans today, compared to those who do not participate in such activities. For Asian Muslims a small change in the magnitude of this category's effect turns the previously marginally significant category ( $OR = 2.33, p < .10$ ) into significant ( $OR = 2.41, p \leq .05$ ). A small increase (over 5%) in the magnitude of effects is also found for Muslims of other/mixed race. Other changes are observed with a decrease in the magnitude of effects for Muslims of 40-54 years of age and 55 and older by 19% and 16%, respectively (comparing the odds ratios on the age 40-54 and 55+ categories in Model 2 to Model 3 in the first panel), once the community involvement factor is introduced.

Adding the community involvement factor to Model 2 in the second panel does not bring any changes in the pattern and levels of significant effects (Model 3). The

community involvement measure is not a significant factor distinguishing Muslims who are more likely to report any other problems instead of discrimination as an important issue faced by Muslims in the United States today.

A very limited number of the interaction terms reveal significant results. Figure 4.1 presents the odds of reporting perceived group discrimination by Muslims' race and community involvement, net of all demographic and socioeconomic status variables. Muslims of other or mixed race, who are involved in social and religious activities of a mosque or Islamic Center outside of religious services, have a 98% lower odds ( $OR = .02, p \leq .05$ ) of reporting no problems versus discrimination among the issues faced by Muslim Americans today, compared to white Muslims who do not participate in such activities. Relative to white Muslims with no community engagement, Asian Muslims lacking community engagement report nearly 2.5 times higher odds ( $OR = 2.45, p < .10$ ) of choosing no problems than discrimination among the issues faced by Muslim Americans today.

## **DISCUSSION**

The present study has examined the prevalence of racial/ethnic differences and socio-economic and community engagement correlates of perceived group discrimination among Muslim Americans. Some variations across Muslim racial/ethnic groups in perceptions of group discrimination are revealed by the bivariate analysis. There are significant differences in the percentage distributions across the Muslim racial/ethnic groups with more Hispanic Muslims and Muslims of other/mixed race perceiving group discrimination than the remaining three groups. On the contrary, the prevalence of perceptions of no problems is highest for Asian Muslims than for the rest of four groups.

The findings are consistent with the results from Chapter 2 where the prevalence of perceptions of racial/ethnic discrimination among Muslim Americans are measured on five personal discriminatory outcomes, including people suspicious of you; called offensive names; singled out by other law enforcement officers; physically threatened or attacked; and any type of discrimination. The findings also support previous research that found that following 9/11 there was a substantial increase in three subclusters of general discrimination, labeled personally experienced discrimination, national- and international-level discrimination, and community level discrimination (Sheridan 2006). Assuming that black Muslims experience the most discrimination due to a history of racism and anti-Muslim sentiment in the U.S., it was somewhat surprising to see black Muslims reporting perceptions of other problems at a much higher rate than discrimination relative to the rest of Muslim racial/ethnic groups. This finding is inconsistent with previous studies that suggest that in comparison with other Muslim communities, such as Turkish and South Asian communities for African American communities dealing with racial prejudice was among their major problems (Sonn 1994). An explanation can be sought in increasing rates of poverty, unemployment, crime, and other social problems faced by the black community.

Some variation is also observed in the two panels of multinomial logistic regressions, which contrasted Muslim Americans' reporting of no problems and any other problems to discrimination. Asian Muslims report significantly lower odds of discrimination than white Muslims. The finding is consistent with previous studies that found that South Asian Muslims see larger American society tolerant and respectful of Muslims (Jamal 2005). Compared to white Muslims, Muslim Americans who identify

themselves as other or mixed race and Hispanic, report significantly lower odds of reporting no problems and any other problems instead of discrimination as an important issue facing by U.S. Muslims today. This variation within the Muslim racial/ethnic groups supports Link and Phelan's (2001) observation that "stigma is a matter of degree... [meaning] that some groups are more stigmatized than others" (p.377). Although the observation is mainly made for intergroup comparisons, it fits well the premises of within group contrasts. As argued by some scholars, "even among stigmatized people, relative comparisons are made, and people are reassured by the fact that there is someone else who is worse off" (Coleman 1986:215). The finding also supports the intersectional perspective suggesting that people with multiple intersecting disadvantaged statuses are discriminated at significantly higher rates than those who hold one denigrated status. Muslims who describe themselves as other/mixed race and Hispanic are more likely marginalized within the *ummah* (Muslim community) and based on their disadvantaged status as minority. For Latino Muslims, who are a new rising minority group among Muslim Americans, this marginalization is extended beyond the intersection of these two disadvantaged statuses, as they might be discriminated not only by the Muslim community and larger society but also by the Latino community for converting into Islam. Narrative accounts of such discriminatory treatments are emerging (Wakin 2002; Padgett 2013). This explanation of Hispanic Muslims being stigmatized at multiple levels may hold for the finding from the bivariate analysis, which shows the highest level of perceived discrimination reported by Hispanic Muslims relative to other Muslim racial/ethnic groups.

Depending on the type of the outcome contrast and the racial/ethnic group under consideration, I found differential effects of socio-economic characteristics on perceptions of group discrimination. Reporting higher odds of no problem instead of discrimination by older Muslims indicates that age is negatively correlated to perceived group discrimination. This finding is consistent with some research on black-white differences in perceived discrimination (Adams and Dressler 1988; Forman et al. 1997) and stigmatized group (Carr and Friedman 2005). While one explanation is sought in the older generation upbringing as more tolerant of discrimination (Adams and Dressler 1988), another explanation links this inverse relationship to generational differences with younger generations being more aware of and alacritous in reporting discrimination (Carr and Friedman 2005). Still another related explanation may be sought in the existence and usage of a term such as discrimination in the vocabulary of older generations of Muslims. It may resemble the experience of people raised in the pre-civil rights movement of the 1960s who may not have this as part of their consciousness.

Muslims with some-college education are more likely than high school graduates to report any other problems instead of discrimination. This finding contradicts survey-based data (see Smith 2002, for a review) and other empirical studies (Kessler et al. 1999; Carr and Friedman 2005) that often demonstrate higher levels of discrimination being reported by better educated people. Yet, it corroborates with Harris's (2004) study that found a reverse relationship between education and perceived discrimination for such groups as African Americans and Puerto Ricans. One explanation is that higher education, similar to older age, may be related to tolerance toward discrimination.

Another explanation is that respondents with higher education may be better integrated in larger society and less susceptible to discriminatory treatments.

Surprisingly, respondents at the \$50,000-\$90,000 income level are more likely than those at the lowest income level to report discrimination instead of no problems and any other problems as the most important problem faced by Muslim Americans. Previous studies with similar findings argued that people from marginalized groups, such as blacks in higher status occupations may posit a threat to the white's domination of job market (Adam and Dressler 1988). Overall, I found a weak support for my second hypothesis that people possessing one stigmatized attribute usually possess other denigrated attributes. Muslims with lower education report higher levels of perceived group discrimination. On the contrary, gender is not a significant predictor of perceived group discrimination, whereas age and income are positively related to perceived group discrimination. These findings are in contrast with some previous studies on stigmatized groups (e.g. Carr and Friedman 2005), yet they should be interpreted with caution. The findings do not undermine our understanding of stigma as a phenomenon that threatens devalued individuals at multiple levels. Rather they point to the complexity of stigmatization process, which might play differently when perceived discrimination is measured at personal versus group level.

Given the fact that most previous studies point to gender differences among Muslim Americans reporting experiencing discrimination, it is somewhat surprising to find insignificant gender differences in perceptions of group discrimination. Studies find Muslim women to be more prone to become the target of discrimination due to their visibility from what they wear (Nimer 2001; Allen and Nielsen 2002; Livengood and

Stodolska 2004; Aroian 2012). One possible explanation for the lack of significant gender differences is that both Muslim men and women report equally about the perception of group discrimination.

I did not find full support for my third hypothesis predicting an attenuating effect of discrimination for Muslims who choose to participate in social and religious activities of the community. The significant effect of the community involvement in the last model of the first panel suggests that this measure is a prominent factor in shaping perceptions of group discrimination for Muslim Americans. Participation in religious and social activities of a mosque or Islamic Center may increase respondents' awareness of discriminatory incidents pertinent to the group. Numerous incidents have been recorded showing that that Islamic centers and mosques are common targets of arson, paintball vandalism, and hate crimes (Allen and Nielsen 2002). Consequently, the likelihood of reporting perceived group discrimination is greater for Muslims with active involvement in the community affairs than for those who lack such experience. This finding emphasizes the assertion that stigma is tied to a certain social context (Coleman 1986; Link et al. 1997; Crocker et al. 1998:506). Active participation in community affairs increases Muslims' visibility and their chances of becoming the target of stigmatization. Thus, the finding does not support social integration theory and assertion of previous research that argued that community engagement protects Muslim Americans from stigmatization and helps them fight discrimination (Byng 1998; Elaasar 2004; Hallak and Quina 2004).

Although I could not find support for my other hypothesis that Asian Muslims with community involvement would report less perceived group discrimination compared

to white Muslims, some of the racial/ethnic variations in perceived group discrimination were due to the difference in community involvement. Compared to white Muslims lacking community involvement, Muslims of other/mixed race, who participate in social or religious activities at the mosque or Islamic Center, perceive more group discrimination. Again, it is possible that the community involvement raises the awareness of Muslims of other/mixed race about discrimination causing the higher number of reporting discriminatory incidents than white Muslims who lack such experience. This might also explain the lowest involvement rate in social or religious activities for Muslims of other/mixed racial group, compared to other Muslim racial/ethnic groups. Perceiving more discrimination, due to the community involvement, might reduce the number of current participants and prevent other group members from participation in religious or social events. Still another explanation can be linked to the racial/ethnic composition of these two groups. Muslims from the Middle East and North Africa region comprise majority of foreign-born white Muslims (60%), whereas only two-in-ten (22%) Muslims from the Middle East and North Africa region describe their race as other/mixed (Pew Research Center 2011). It looks like that white Muslims, being mainly represented by Arabs, are more concerned with political issues (foreign policy of the U.S. towards their home countries) rather than local problems of prejudice and discrimination.

Given the fact that previous studies on Muslim Americans (Byng 1998; Elaasar 2004; Hallak and Quina 2004) and other racial/ethnic and non-conformist stigmatized groups emphasized the protective social and psychological effects of being embedded in a community, these findings should be treated with caution. Fully ruling out the community involvement factor as a potential intervention for combating discrimination

against Muslim Americans could be premature. With the emergence of new nationally representative surveys, future studies could provide additional insights into this matter. It will also be worth looking at the existence, nature, and scope of programs in Muslim communities that are specifically devoted to raising awareness about discrimination and combatting strategies against it. Previous studies show that some Muslim communities consider immigration and economic problems as more important than “specific issues of local prejudice” (Sonn 1994:291) and they are more engaged with their internal community problems than “larger mainstream political matters” (Jamal 2005:536).

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Limitations and future directions**

The study has several important limitations pertinent to the nature of the Pew 2011 survey that merit attention. First, the measure of perceived group discrimination offered in the Pew 2011 survey is not specific. This abstract measure does not identify any context where and when discriminatory incidents might have taken place. Moreover, this measure neither specifies the type of perceived discrimination for respondents, nor asks them to specify it by themselves. Future studies should explore such variables that allow measuring perceived group discrimination in specific contexts and with identified types of discrimination.

Second, since the question about perceived discrimination is asked only at a group level, I am not able to assess the personal/group discrimination discrepancy *per se*. The discrepancy phenomenon for Muslim Americans has been observed in some polls and empirical studies (Gilbert 2002; Rippey and Newman 2006). Future researchers might consider such datasets that allow them to construct outcome measures at both personal

and group levels. To make the comparison meaningful and plausible, measures of perceptions of personal and group discrimination should be of the same type and belong to similar domains (Dion and Kawakami 1996).

Third, the measure of community involvement lacks such important dimensions as time period, frequency, and length. It does not allow me to examine other variations that might exist in the assessment of community involvement. Future studies might explore other dimensions of involvement, including length and frequency. Studies show that the moderating effect of community involvement is better for those currently involved than those ever involved (Ramirez-Valles et al. 2010).

Finally, the study looks only at the extent to which Muslim Americans perceive their group is the target of discrimination. Possible social and economic outcomes for the stigmatized group following discriminatory experiences are not measured. Future studies might consider addressing this shortcoming by examining various consequences that may result from experiences of discrimination among different Muslim racial/ethnic groups.

Despite these limitations, the study is one of the initial attempts to examine Muslim racial/ethnic differences in perceptions of discrimination as a group using a nationally representative sample. The findings of the study help understand Muslim minorities' experiences and how they differ across the five racial/ethnic identities. The study suggests that researchers employ new surveys to further explore community involvement as a potential factor in fighting discrimination. Program developers should consider designing and implementing tailored interventions for combating discrimination against Muslim Americans to overcome the lack of such programs in Muslim communities. Studies indicate that these types of interventions occur in a natural

environment, do not bear a lot of cost, attract the target group, and last longer (Ramirez-Valles et al. 2010). Given importance of the topic, the study also calls upon future research to examine various social and economic consequences that may result from experiences of discrimination among different Muslim racial/ethnic groups.

Table 4.1. Descriptive statistics for all variables used in analysis, Pew 2011

	Proportions (%) for values "1"	Valid n
<b>Dependent Variable</b>		
<i>Perceived group problems faced by Muslims</i>		995
Discrimination	17.70	
No problem	16.70	
Any other problems	65.60	
<b>Independent variables</b>		
<i>Race</i>		1009
White	30.43	
Black	23.23	
Asian	21.21	
Hispanics	6.49	
Other or mixed race	18.64	
<b>Control variables</b>		
<i>Gender</i>		1033
Sex (1=female)	48.88	
<i>Age</i>		1019
18-29	36.03	
30-39	23.44	
40-54	28.28	
55+	12.25	
<i>Education</i>		1028
High school or less	53.82	
Some College	19.24	
College Graduate	15.47	
Post Graduate	11.47	
<i>Income</i>		903
Less than \$30,000	45.39	
\$30,000 - \$49,999	18.82	
\$50,000 - \$99,999	21.43	
\$100,000 +	14.36	
<i>Respondent's community involvement</i>		1022
Religious and social activities (1=Yes)	35.64	

Note: Sample numbers and proportions (%) are weighted and exclude non-responses.

Table 4.2. Proportion reporting types of perceived problems faced by Muslim Americans based on race/ethnicity, Pew 2011

	<b>Total sample</b>	<b>White Non- Hispanic</b>	<b>Black Non- Hispanic</b>	<b>Asian Non- Hispanic</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Other Non- Hispanic</b>	<b>p</b>
							<b>**</b>
<b>Discrimination</b>	17.79%	15.65%	12.61%	13.76%	39.90%	23.78%	
<b>No problem</b>	16.53%	16.03%	13.16%	30.48%	15.20%	7.23%	
<b>Any other problems</b>	65.68%	68.32%	74.24%	55.75%	44.89%	68.99%	
<b>N</b>	849	849	849	849	849	849	
<b>Percent</b>	100%	30.47%	24.11%	19.85%	7.24%	18.32%	

Notes: Chi-square significant at: \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$ , \*\*\* $p \leq .001$ .

Sample numbers and proportions (%) are based on weighted counts excluding non-responses on all variables.

Proportions (%) may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Table 4.3. Proportion reporting community involvement by Muslim American racial/ethnic groups, Pew 2011

	<b>Total sample</b>	<b>White Non- Hispanic</b>	<b>Black Non- Hispanic</b>	<b>Asian Non- Hispanic</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Other Non- Hispanic</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Community involvement</b>	38.28%	36.86%	44.58%	33.30%	56.88%	30.39%	
<b>N</b>	849	849	849	849	849	849	
<b>Percent</b>	100%	30.47%	24.11%	19.85%	7.24%	18.32%	

Notes: Chi-square significant at: \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$ , \*\*\* $p \leq .001$ .

Sample numbers and proportions (%) are weighted counts excluding non-responses on all variables.

Proportions (%) may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Table 4.4. Multinomial logistic regression predicting perceived group discrimination across Muslim American racial/ethnic groups, Pew 2011

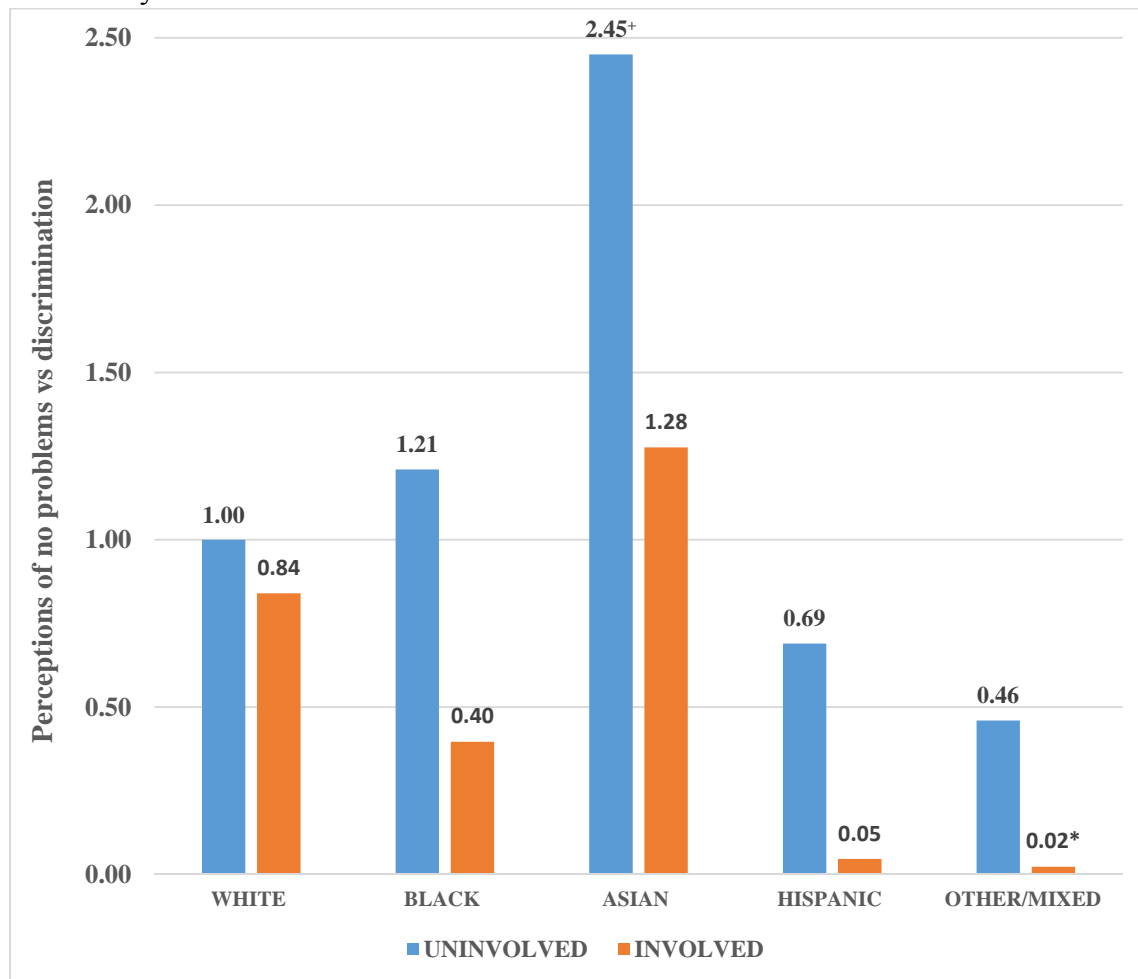
	No problem vs Discrimination			Any other problems vs Discrimination		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Race</i>						
Black <sup>a</sup>	.89 (.37-2.14)	.99 (.38-2.57)	1.09 (.39-3.02)	1.42 (.64-3.28)	1.74 (.74-4.09)	1.71 (.72-4.09)
Asian <sup>a</sup>	1.65 (.74-3.69)	2.33 <sup>+</sup> (.97-5.60)	2.41* (.99-5.88)	.87 (.43-1.78)	.86 (.40-1.85)	.86 (.40-1.85)
Hispanic <sup>a</sup>	.34 (.03-3.93)	.47 (.03-6.97)	.54 (.04-7.98)	.29 <sup>+</sup> (.08-1.08)	.30 <sup>+</sup> (.08-1.12)	.29 <sup>+</sup> (.08-1.05)
Other/Mixed <sup>a</sup>	.30** (.12-.73)	.36* (.14-.90)	.34* (.14-.87)	.68 (.32-1.46)	.75 (.34-1.68)	.76 (.34-1.71)
<i>Socio-demographics</i>						
Sex (1=female)		1.09 (.50-2.39)	1.14 (.52-2.50)		1.13 (.60-2.12)	1.12 (.59-2.10)
Age 30-39 <sup>b</sup>		2.36 (.76-7.31)	1.92 (.64-5.81)		.75 (.36-1.56)	.75 (.37-1.52)
Age 40-54 <sup>b</sup>		3.15* (1.12-6.89)	2.56 <sup>+</sup> (.91-7.20)		1.11 (.53-2.34)	1.13 (.53-2.43)
Age 55+ <sup>b</sup>		3.85 <sup>+</sup> (.86-16.91)	3.22 (.72-14.34)		.94 (.28-3.16)	.95 (.29-3.15)
Some College <sup>c</sup>		.94 (.33-2.62)	.98 (.35-2.76)		2.17* (1.05-4.49)	2.17* (1.06-4.44)
College Grad <sup>c</sup>		1.28 (.48-3.44)	1.29 (.48-3.46)		1.37 (.66-2.85)	1.36 (.66-2.81)
Post Graduate <sup>c</sup>		1.69 (.38-7.46)	1.79 (.44-7.27)		2.01 (.74-5.49)	1.97 (.73-5.32)
\$30,000 - \$49,999 <sup>d</sup>		.35 <sup>+</sup> (.11-1.15)	.35 <sup>+</sup> (.11-1.15)		.64 (.28-1.46)	.64 (.28-1.45)
\$50,000 - \$99,999 <sup>d</sup>		.09*** (.03-.22)	.10*** (.04-.25)		.50* (.25-1.00)	.49* (.24-.99)
\$100,000 <sup>d</sup> +		.11* (.02-.70)	.12* (.02-.77)		1.30 (.35-4.83)	1.30 (.35-4.82)
Community involvement			.40* (.19-.87)			1.14 (.62-2.09)
Constant	1.14 (.65-2.00)	.89 (.26-3.05)	1.18 (.33-4.21)	4.25*** (2.43-7.43)	3.87** (1.64-9.14)	3.72** (1.55-8.93)

Notes: N = 1,033. Effect estimates are presented as odds ratios. Confidence intervals are given in parentheses.

<sup>a</sup>White; <sup>b</sup>Age 18-29; <sup>c</sup>High school or less; <sup>d</sup>Less than \$30,000.

<sup>+</sup>p < .10, \*p ≤ .05, \*\*p ≤ .01, \*\*\*p ≤ .001.

Figure 4.1. Odds of reporting perceived group discrimination, by Muslims' race and community involvement



Race and Community Involvement Classification

Source: Pew 2011

Notes: N = 1,033

Plotted values are net of demographic and socioeconomic status measures

<sup>+</sup>p < .10, \*p ≤ .05, \*\*p ≤ .01, \*\*\*p ≤ .001

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## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION**

### **SUMMARY**

The present dissertation aimed to answer the following question: Which self-identified racial/ethnic persons among Muslim Americans are more likely to report having experienced discrimination? Employing data from the 2011 Pew Religion and Public Life Survey of 1,033 adult Muslim Americans, I examined the prevalence and correlates of perceived discrimination across Muslim American racial/ethnic groups; focused on differences in perceived discrimination among Muslim Americans based on their religious identity, practices, and beliefs; and analyzed the extent to which Muslim Americans differ in their perceptions of being discriminated against as a group.

The present study is timely and important for several reasons. First, Muslim Americans continue experiencing discrimination on multiple fronts, in various forms, and across many domains of American society. The backlash against Muslim Americans is on the rise whenever there is an act of terror committed by some individuals or groups, not representative of Islam. The most recent terror attacks in France on November 15, 2015 and the San Bernardino mass shooting in Southern California on December 2, 2015 have spiked threats, hate crimes, and violent attacks against Muslims and their places of worship in the U.S. Based on the compilation of news reports, only during a short period between December 8 and 12, 2015, Muslims and their mosques and Islamic centers were the targets of 14 incidents of bigotry, hate crime, and vandalism (Greenwald 2015). Second, the racial and ethnic makeup of the United States is changing rapidly. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, by 2043 minorities are projected to become the majority in the country. By 2060 the proportion of non-white people who identify themselves as

black, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American will grow from 37% now to 57% (U.S. Census Bureau 2012). Muslim Americans who come from about 80 countries around the world (McCloud 2006; Pew Research Center 2011) and belong to different racial and ethnic backgrounds, are essential part of this demographic transformation. Unfortunately, along with the rise of minority groups the racial and ethnic disparities are growing too. Third, in addition to this profound demographic shift, the religious composition of the U.S. is also changing dramatically. Islam is one of the fastest growing religions in the United States. According to some estimates, by 2050 Muslims will constitute the second largest religious group in the U.S. (Smith 1999; Armstrong 2000; Lipka 2015). Examining differences in perceptions of discrimination that exist among Muslim Americans help us determine the prevalence of perceived discrimination, identify principal targets, and ascertain major factors associated with perceptions of discrimination. Understanding these differences could assist policy makers to examine the challenges and implications of the occurring dramatic changes in the U.S. demographic and religious landscapes and develop policies directed toward the elimination of discrimination practices.

In my first analytic chapter (Chapter 2), I examined differences in the prevalence of perceived discrimination across Muslim racial/ethnic groups, assessed socio-demographic correlates of perceived discrimination, and evaluated two-way interaction terms to determine whether the effects of race/ethnicity on perceived discrimination differed by gender. I found that Asian Muslims reported the lowest frequency of perceived discrimination than the other Muslim racial/ethnic groups. Nearly all Muslim racial/ethnic groups had a few times higher odds of reporting one or more types of

perceived discrimination, relative to white Muslims. After controlling for socio-demographic characteristics, the observed relationships persisted for Hispanic Muslims but disappeared for black and other/mixed race Muslims. Muslim women were less likely than Muslim men to report several forms of discrimination. Older Muslims reported lower rates of perceived discrimination than younger Muslims. White Muslim men were more likely to report experiencing discrimination than white, black, and Asian Muslim women.

In my second analytic chapter (Chapter 3), I analyzed the effects of religious identity, practices (orthopraxy), and beliefs (orthodoxy) on Muslim Americans' perceptions of discrimination and the extent to which these religious factors might shape the perception of discrimination differently within Muslim racial/ethnic groups. I found that Muslim Americans with high levels of religious practices were more likely and Muslim Americans with strong belief in religious tenets were less likely to report experiencing all five forms of discrimination. These effects sustained net of all demographic and socioeconomic variables, suggesting that certain religious factors influence Muslims' perceptions of discrimination. Within group comparison showed that the pure extrinsic group reported higher rates of perceptions for all forms of discrimination than the pro-religious, pure intrinsic, and antireligious groups. Among the five Muslim racial/ethnic groups, black, Asian, and other/mixed race Muslims with high levels of orthopraxy reported significantly higher odds on most forms of discrimination, compared to their white coreligionists. Less educated Muslims with low levels of orthodoxy were more likely to report experiencing discrimination than better educated

counterparts with high levels of orthodoxy. The religious/national identity measure was not a prominent factor in shaping Muslims' perceptions of discrimination.

In my final analytic chapter (Chapter 4), I determined whether and to what extent there were race/ethnic differences in perceived group discrimination among Muslim Americans. In the bivariate analysis, I found that Hispanic Muslims and Muslims of other/mixed race reported perceptions of group discrimination at much higher rates than white, black, and Asian Muslims. Similar to the pattern in the bivariate analysis, multinomial logistic regressions revealed that Muslim Americans who identify themselves as Hispanic and other/mixed race were significantly more likely to perceive group discrimination compared to white Muslims. The effects of race/ethnic differences persisted net of all socio-demographic factors. The community engagement measure was a prominent factor in shaping perceptions of group discrimination for Muslim Americans.

Overall, the findings highlight the existence of varying degrees of perceived discrimination among Muslim American racial/ethnic groups. Nearly all non-white race/ethnic groups are more likely to perceive discrimination than white Muslims. The highest levels of differences in perceptions are among Hispanic Muslims and the lowest levels are among Asian Muslims.

In what follows I will discuss three key findings of the dissertation to highlight the main contributions of my work to the general literature on perceptions of discrimination among minority groups and specific literature on discrimination against Muslims. I will point out the limitations of the present study, ruminate policy implications, and give some directions for future research.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

One emerging theme across the three analytic chapters was the concept of a

stigma being “a matter of degree.” The findings of the dissertation support this observation made by Link and Phelan (2001) and collaborate with previous research (e.g. Carr and Friedman 2005; Carr, Jaffe, and Friedman 2008) in asserting that persons with several devalued attributes perceive discrimination at higher rates. Except for Asian Muslims, all other Muslim race/ethnic groups have a few times higher odds of reporting experiencing one or more types of discrimination than white Muslims. High socioeconomic status that white Muslims hold relative to Muslims of black, Hispanic, and other/mixed racial background might account for their perceptions of discrimination at significantly lower rates. Significantly higher proportions of white Muslims are married, hold home ownership, and have college and postgraduate degrees than the other three race/ethnic groups (Tables 2.1, 3.2). Additionally, white Muslims mostly represented by Arabs (60% of foreign-born white Muslims come from the Middle East and North Africa region (Pew Research Center 2011)) hold a higher hierarchical status within the Muslim community from religious perspective. Muslims from the Arab world claim a sole right to define Islam in the United States (Jackson 2005; McCloud 2006). Further analysis revealed that “even among stigmatized people, relative comparisons are made, and people are reassured by the fact that there is someone else who is worse off” (Coleman 1986:215). The above mentioned relationships between race and perceived discrimination persisted for Hispanic Muslims but disappeared for Muslims of other/mixed race and black Muslims after controlling for demographic and socioeconomic status characteristics (Table 2.3). These findings highlight the importance of the existence and interplay of various demographic and socioeconomic factors influencing racial/ethnic differences among Muslim Americans. Among Muslim American racial/ethnic groups, Hispanic

Muslims are at the bottom of socioeconomic scale making the lowest percentage of respondents who hold college and postgraduate degrees and home ownership (Tables 2.1, 3.2). Interaction term analyses showed that both Hispanic men and women reported significantly higher odds of discrimination than white men, whereas women from other minority groups reported lower odds of discrimination compared to white men. Interestingly, Hispanic Muslims continued to be one of the most stigmatized groups at a group level too. They reported the highest level of perceived group discrimination than other Muslim racial/ethnic groups. Intersectional theory might offer an explanation for this pattern suggesting that people with multiple intersecting disadvantaged statuses are discriminated at significantly higher rates than those who hold one denigrated status. The intersection of three disadvantaged statuses that Hispanic Muslims hold in the Muslim community, larger society, and Latino community contributes to their marginalization. In addition to their disadvantaged status as minority, Latino Muslims continued to be looked down by immigrant Muslims and Latino community for not being genuine and leaving their Hispanic culture (Wakin 2002; Padgett 2013). These findings could be considered one of the first attempts to study empirically the most disadvantaged, understudied, and fast growing ethnic minority group within the Muslim American population.

Another important finding of this dissertation speaks to the assumption of Muslim as a “master status” that single-handedly elicits discriminatory treatment regardless of one’s other traits. Prior research demonstrates that Muslims have a strong association with their religion (Pew Research Center 2011; Gallup 2009; Pew Research Center 2011). There are times, such as a backlash after the 9/11 terror attacks, when hate crimes, bigotry, and discrimination spike against Muslims. Yet, Muslims do not defer from their

religion in such circumstances but assert it in different ways. They do raise their own and others' awareness about Islam, start participating actively in the life of their community, and increase their engagement with and interest in social and political aspects of larger society (Kundnani 2002; Peek 2003; Gupta 2004; Nagra 2011). The strong association that Muslims hold with their religion serves as a source of racialization for Muslim Americans, whereas other minority groups are racialized according to their physical composition (phenotype) (Naber 2000; Alsultany 2006). This association creates a general assumption of viewing Islam as a "master status" for Muslims. The current study unpacks religion as an exposure (those who attend mosque more often are at greater risk of attack if their mosques are targeted), worldview (heightened awareness about one's religious identity), and behavior (wearing religious dress, praying in public) by focusing on three aspects of religion, namely, orthopraxy, orthodoxy, and religious/national identity. I find that for American Muslims, among the three analyzed components of religion, only orthopraxy (religious practices) or extrinsic religious orientation is a "master status" or a primary identifying trait that trumps all other traits of their identity (Goffman 1963) and increases their chances of encountering discriminatory treatments. The finding was further supported by considering the issue of continuity in the original classification of bipolar opposites in the intrinsic-extrinsic religious orientation theory (see Kirkpatrick and Hood 1990, for a review). Using Hood's (1978) fourfold classification of religiosity, I demonstrated that pure extrinsic Muslim Americans (those with high orthopraxy and low orthodoxy) reported higher rates of perceptions for all forms of discrimination than the pro-religious, pure intrinsic, and antireligious groups. In general, the findings draw attention to varying effects of religious factors on different

Muslim American groups in perceived discrimination and suggest researchers challenge a common perception of viewing religion as a “master status” for the Muslim identity.

The third more nuanced finding is associated with contrasting results of some correlates of perceptions of discrimination. The finding on gender differences with women reporting lower rates of perceptions of discrimination than men is not consistent with previous research on discrimination against Muslims. Most studies demonstrate that Muslim women are to be more prone to become the target of discrimination due to their visibility from what they wear (Nimer 2001; Livengood and Stodolska 2004; Aroian 2012). Additionally, research shows that Muslim women from minority groups experience discrimination both in American society at large and within the *ummah* (Muslim community) (Karim 2006). Although I cannot tell whether my female respondents wear *hijab* (Muslim women’s headscarf), which has been recognized as a “stigma symbol” against which Muslim women are discriminated (Ghumman and Ryan 2013), it can be speculated that women are less likely to believe that they are targets of discrimination than Muslim men due to their underestimation of encounters with discriminatory acts (Crosby 1984) and the degree of severity of stereotypes that Muslim men and women experience. Muslim women’s typical stereotypes may include “weak” or “maltreated,” whereas Muslim men usually deal with stereotypes of the “terrorist or oil sheikh” (Salari 2002:582). The results from two-way interaction terms offer further support for the latter explanation. With the exception of Hispanic Muslim women, Asian, black, and white Muslim women report lower odds of discrimination compared to white Muslim men. Associating Arabs, who constitute the majority of white Muslims, with

terrorists (Suleiman 1999; McCloud 2006) makes white Muslim men susceptible to perceiving discrimination at higher rates.

The other contradicting finding concerns the measure of education. Inconsistent with most past research (Kessler et al. 1999; Carr and Friedman 2005; Hirsh and Lyons 2010), I found that higher levels of education lowered odds of perceived discrimination. Given that education is a good proxy for secularization, in my second analytic chapter I conducted interaction term analyses with education and orthodoxy (belief in religious tenets). Even here education with or without a secularizing influence on Muslims did not yield higher levels of perceived discrimination. It is possible that highly educated Muslims are less likely to report perceived discrimination due to their tolerance toward discrimination, or, conversely, less educated Muslims overestimate their encounters with discriminatory incidents.

Finally, contrasting results were found for the community involvement measure. Although this measure was a prominent factor in shaping perceptions of group discrimination, it did not have influence on Muslim Americans in coping discrimination. In contrast to previous research on Muslim and non-Muslim minority groups showing that community engagement protects from stigmatization and helps combat discrimination (Byng 1998; Britt and Heise 2000; Elaasar 2004; Hallak and Quina 2004; Sirin and Katsiaficas 2011), it is possible that participation in social and religious activities of the community increased Muslims' visibility and their chances of becoming the target of stigmatization.

These contrasting findings add additional insights to research on discrimination against Muslim Americans and the larger body of work on perceptions of discrimination.

They highlight the complexity of stigmatization process that plays differently when perceived discrimination is measured under different social conditions and at personal versus group level.

## **LIMITATIONS**

The study has several important limitations that merit attention. First, the cross-sectional nature of the data limits my ability to infer causal pathways. I could not eliminate the problem of reverse causation, due to the lack of information on the temporal ordering of outcome and key independent measures. It is difficult to determine that socio-demographic, religious, and community involvement measures are the “cause” but not the “effect” of perceptions of discrimination among Muslim Americans. Studies show that once being exposed to discriminatory treatments, Muslim Americans seek spiritual and physical protection in their religion and communities (Byng 1998; Elaasar 2004; Hallak and Quina 2004; Sirin and Katsiaficas 2011). In order to assert that the analyzed factors are sole causes of reporting experienced discrimination for certain Muslim race/ethnic groups, longitudinal studies will be needed. The previous wave of the Pew study conducted in 2007 provides very close estimations on the prevalence of Muslim Americans’ perceptions of discrimination to those in the 2011 wave used in the present study. Nevertheless, a number of cross-sectional studies could not substitute a longitudinal study. The former compares several population groups to see differences among population subsets at single points of time, whereas the latter focuses on examining same subjects multiple times and over several years to determine changes in their characteristics.

Second, not of less importance is the issue of subjectivity, which is pertinent to questions such as discrimination. It remains uncertain to what degree respondents were

honest and possessed good ability to recall past discriminatory incidents. Outcome measures used in the study to unobtrusively capture perceived discrimination might have prompted respondents' tendency to report "yes" to experiencing discriminatory acts. Positivity bias could not be ignored in such cases where yes/no questions disproportionately yield answers of "yes." Studies show that respondents are more likely to and at higher rates report self-perceived racial and ethnic discrimination when asked explicitly framed questions versus generic questions of discrimination (Brown 2001). One possible way to avoid assigning "a racial gloss" to direct questions on racial/ethnic discrimination, as suggested by Smith (2002:12), would be asking respondents indirectly about discriminatory incidents and then determine whether race/ethnicity played a role. Another way, as shown by recent research (Bobo and Suh 2000; Smith 2000), would be using open-ended questions following discrimination items that will not only reveal details of discriminatory incidents but also increase the "validity of self-reports" (Smith 2002:13).

Third, since the data were collected for reasons other than the present researcher's purpose, locating relevant and desired variables that could help with operationalization of key concepts was very challenging. For example, research shows that markers of racialization for Muslims in the United States are also political (Alsultany 2006; Modood and Ahmad 2007). The survey includes a very limited number of political orientation and affiliation variables, which do not allow examining the effects of political factors on Muslim Americans' perceptions of discrimination. On the same line, future studies might consider examining the effects of cultural factors on perceptions of discrimination among Muslim Americans. Some studies suggest that compared to most minority groups that are

influenced by either cultural outgroup affect or racial/religious minority affect, Muslims are associated with both positively seen racial/religious minority groups and with negatively seen cultural minority groups (Kalkan, Ayman, and Uslaner 2009). Future studies should implement combined rigorous quantitative and qualitative methods to overcome the scarceness of the data set in provision of potentially important and relevant variables.

Finally, the measures of perceived discrimination utilized in the Pew survey are constructed based on general questions of occurrence of discriminatory incidents. They are general measures that identify types of perceived discrimination but do not specify any context or domain where and when discriminatory incidents might have taken place. Previous studies identified stores, police, work, restaurants, public transportation, and places of worship (ranked from the highest to the lowest) as most frequent places where people encounter discrimination (Smith 2002). Consistent with this, several studies have examined Muslim Americans' experiences of discrimination in specific settings, such as workplaces (Kaushal, Kaestner, and Reimers 2007; Widner and Chicoine 2011; Sahgal 2013), schools (Khanlou, Koh, and Mill 2008; Aroian 2012), American courts (Freeland 2001), prisons (Marcus 2009), and leisure settings (Livengood and Stodolska 2004). Yet, they have often asked about one venue. Future studies should explore such variables that allow measuring perceived discrimination in multiple specific venues and see whether the emerged patterns will be similar or different from survey-based studies on non-Muslims.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The current study highlights the importance of tracking race/ethnic differences in perceived discrimination. A growing number of studies show that perceived discrimination has effects on increased level of psychological distress and poorer

physical and mental health status of Muslims (Moradi and Hasan 2004; Rippy and Newman 2006; Abu-Ras and Abu-Bader 2008; Padela and Heisler 2010; Rousseau et al. 2011). Studies of other minority groups have also demonstrated the effects of perceived discrimination on different social and political outcomes, such as increased levels of work-life conflict (Minnotte 2012), higher levels of homesickness (Poyrazli and Lopez 2007), decreased trust in government (Schildkraut 2005), and higher levels of identification with certain political parties (Barreto and Pedraza 2009; Mayrl and Saperstein 2013). Once it is determined who among Muslims are at greatest risk of mistreatment resulting in distress, targeted programs can be tailored to minimize unfair treatment. Programs can also be developed to assist most stigmatized Muslim racial/ethnic groups to understand and cope with discrimination, reducing their alienation and increasing their chances of integration into both the Muslim community and larger American society.

The findings of the study raise an important question of whether the patterns that I found are unique to Muslims, or whether I would find similar reports of discrimination (due to factors other than religion, but to race, ethnicity, etc.) in other national samples. According to survey data, Hispanics and Asians fall between whites and blacks with the former reporting discrimination at lowest and the latter at highest rates (Smith 2002:16). Studies have been consistent in their findings that other racial/ethnic minorities report higher levels of perceived discrimination compared to whites (Barnes et al. 2004; Harris 2004; Hirsh and Lyons 2010). Most findings on racial/ethnic differences in perceived discrimination among minorities have also showed lower levels of perceived

discrimination among Asians relative to Hispanics and blacks (Naff 1995; Bobo and Suh 1995 and Klugel and Bobo 2001 as cited in Harris 2004).

On the contrary, my findings suggest that among Muslim American racial/ethnic groups, the prevalence of perceived discrimination on most outcome measures is highest for Hispanic Muslims and lowest for Asian Muslims, whereas Muslims of white, black, and other/mixed racial/ethnic backgrounds fall in between. Thus, perceptions of discrimination for Muslim Americans are not similar to those who are not Muslim. My replication of the study with the 2004-2006 National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States (MIDUS II) has also supported the above assertion that there is something akin to a “Muslim factor” in the perception of discrimination in society. It adds a new page to our understanding of race/ethnic discrimination among minority groups. Traditional positioning of race and gender plays differently for Muslim Americans. Traditional hierarchical position attributed to white men or general assertion of whites always reporting lowest rates of discrimination compared to other minority groups (Smith 2002) is challenged by the findings of the present study.

### **DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The study offers some directions for future research. First, the present study is an important addition to our knowledge of the multiethnic spectrum of American society. The analysis of survey data suggests that nationally representative surveys are prevalent for whites and blacks, rare for Hispanics and Asians, and absent for Arabs [Muslims] and American Indians (Smith 2002:21). Thus, the study emphasizes the need for more national surveys of understudied minority groups in the U.S. and encourages future

researchers to cover more racial/ethnic and religious minorities to get a better picture of the country's multiethnic mosaic.

Second, future studies should consider further disaggregation of ethnic groups within Muslim Americans. The Pew survey uses race/ethnic categories that are traditional sources of social identity in the U.S. Thus the classification of Muslim Americans into racial/ethnic categories of white, black, Asian, Hispanic, and other/mixed is too broad to capture subtleties of experiences of specific ethnic groups that could differ in perceptions of discrimination from their native born counterparts or further disaggregated ethnic groups. Different estimations suggest that Muslim Americans come from 68 to 77 and to 80 different ethnicities and nationalities from over the world (McCloud 2006; Pew Research Center 2009; Pew Research Center 2011). Previous research demonstrates that the prevalence of perceived discrimination differs by both broad racial/ethnic and disaggregated ethnic group categorizations (Harris 2004). Comparative studies on perceptions of discrimination among certain Muslim ethnic groups in Europe have also been emerging in this area (e.g. Bruss 2008). Surveys that provide large enough subsamples to give statistical power for such analyses are needed.

Third, future research should examine various social, economic, and political outcomes for the stigmatized group following discriminatory experiences. A growing number of studies demonstrated the association between perceived discrimination and adverse mental and physical health outcomes among Muslims (Moradi and Hasan 2004; Rippy and Newman 2006; Abu-Ras and Abu-Bader 2008; Padela and Heisler 2010; Rousseau et al. 2011). Yet, studies that examine the effects of perceived discrimination on various social, political, and economic outcomes among Muslim Americans are

absent. Past studies of other minority groups in the U.S. that found such associations (Schildkraut 2005; Poyrazli and Lopez 2007; Barreto and Pedraza 2009; Minnotte 2012; Mayrl and Saperstein 2013) could be sought for initial insights.

Finally, future studies should examine the personal/group discrimination discrepancy phenomenon among the Muslim American population and variations that might exist across Muslim racial/ethnic groups. Past research demonstrates that members of ethnic minorities perceive greater discrimination toward their groups than toward themselves personally (Crosby 1982; Taylor et al. 1990; Moghaddam and Studer 1997; Dion and Kawakami 1996). Another rationale for such assessment is related to different types of criteria predicted by perceptions of personal and group discrimination (Dion 2001). To assess accurately the strength of this phenomenon, surveys should consider such measures of perceptions of personal and group discrimination that occur in similar domains making the comparison meaningful and plausible (Dion and Kawakami 1996).

## **FINAL WORD**

Research on Muslim Americans' perceptions of discrimination is in its infancy. In general, studies on perceptions of discriminations among Muslim Americans are limited, assume Muslims as a homogenous group, use non-representative sample, lack comparison aspect, and do not account for interaction of various demographic, social-status, religious, and community involvement characteristics that shape Muslim Americans' perceptions of discrimination and help form hierarchical positions among this group. My study is an initial step in using a nationally representative sample toward examining how Muslim Americans' perceptions of discrimination are socially patterned. I highlight that perceptions of discrimination differ among Muslim American

racial/ethnic groups and emphasize the existence of stratification and systematic differences among Muslim Americans. I also offer initial indications of how Muslim Americans differ from the U.S. general population. Overall, my study fills in another important piece of the national quilt puzzle that will be more diversified by the mid-21<sup>st</sup> century. It does so by challenging the presumption of the homogeneity of perceived discrimination that downplays the varied degree to which minority groups are being socially integrated in U.S. society.

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