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National

Mainstream Charities Are Unwittingly Funding Anti-Muslim Hate Groups, Report Says

By Leila Fadel | May 7, 2019

The nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization says that charitable foundations, mostly mainstream, are directly and indirectly giving millions of dollars to anti-Muslim hate groups.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations looked at the money trail from 2014 to 2016 from over 1,000 largely mainstream charities to 39 anti-Muslim groups that it calls the "Islamophobia Network." The report, called "Hijacked by Hate," was released Monday. It found that nearly $125 million was funneled to these groups. That includes money that was anonymously given through the charitable foundations of wealth management groups like Fidelity Charitable and Schwab.

The hate groups benefiting include ACT for America, the largest anti-Muslim group in the country and a registered nonprofit. The group is described by the Anti-Defamation League as an organization that stokes "irrational fear of Muslims." Others, like CAIR, call it a hate group for its spreading of misinformation about Islam and fearmongering around the principles Muslims live by.

"Traditional charities and foundations — commercial foundations, community organizations, community foundations, religious foundations — these foundations in philanthropy that make America what it is have been undermined," said Abbas Barzegar, director of research and advocacy at CAIR. "[They are being] used, or in my mind exploited, to funnel anonymous money from wealthy donors to the Islamophobia Network."
So, he said, a wealthy donor can give to a credible institution like Schwab, through a donor-advised fund. Then that money will be donated to these anti-Muslim organizations, which are registered as nonprofits or social welfare organizations, through the wealth management group. The donor gets a tax deduction and can make the contribution anonymously.

In a statement to NPR, Schwab Charitable said that it is an independent public charity that "facilitates grants on behalf of individuals to [501(c)(3)] charitable organizations of their choice. Grants that are recommended by our clients in no way reflect the values or beliefs of Schwab, Schwab Charitable or its management."

Schwab added that it "does not condone hate groups and we take concerns about illegitimate activity by grant recipients seriously." It encouraged anyone with these concerns to contact the IRS or state charity regulators about the activities of charitable organizations.

In an email, Fidelity Charitable told NPR that it took the report's findings "very seriously," adding that, "if there are concerning reports identified regarding a specific charity,

and Fidelity Charitable determines [that] grants to an organization are not used exclusively for charitable purposes, Fidelity won't approve grants to that organization."

The organization's "policies and procedures have always required that grants recommended by its donors are made only to qualified charitable organizations, and that funds are used exclusively in furtherance of charitable purposes. Fidelity Charitable reviews its granting practices regularly and doesn't hesitate to implement changes that it believes ensure better grantmaking to IRS-qualified, 501(c)(3) public charities for exclusively charitable purposes."

But, it added, ultimately it is the responsibility of the IRS to determine which organizations are qualified nonprofits.

In many cases, CAIR's Barzegar said, the same foundations contributing to after-school programs and homeless shelters are also unknowingly, he believes, giving to hate groups. He blames the Trump administration for legitimizing some of these anti-Muslim groups. For example, the head of ACT for America was welcomed at the White House.

"The Trump administration has embraced these institutions and allowed this stuff to become mainstream," Barzegar said. "And we're simply asking the philanthropic sector and the charitable sector people who control hundreds of millions of dollars to take a stand and help us reclaim our public space."

The report links the increased funding of activities of these anti-Muslim groups to real-life negative impacts that range from hate crimes to suicide as a result of intense bullying because of religion.

"Together, the expansive funding network revealed in this report demonstrates that the Islamophobia Network cannot be considered a marginal or passing phenomenon in American society. Rather, it is a prominent and shameful institutional feature of American philanthropy," the report said. "These foundations have donated across a wide range, from the [minuscule] amount of $20 to the staggering sum of $32 million."

The report also tracked money coming from mainstream faith-based charities and private family foundations. It found that the total revenue capacity of the 39 anti-Muslim groups reached $1.5 billion during the 2014-2016 period.

"So that $1.5 billion is being used in so many different ways that directly affect the American Muslim community and then Americans as a whole," said Zainab Arain, the main researcher on the CAIR report. "It's being used to advance anti-Sharia legislation. It's being used to stage anti-Muslim rallies. It's being used to work to shut down American Muslim institutions, like women's shelters or relief aid groups or even places of worship."

CAIR is calling for more accountability to stop donors from not only giving to these anti-Muslim groups but from getting a tax break for the donation. Arain said she hopes the report will lead to more oversight in the charitable world.

AMERICA INDIVISIBLE

HOW TO SPOT AND STOP RACIALIZED ANTI-MUSLIM BIGOTRY

NOVEMBER 2020

WRITTEN BY AI FELLOW JON PARAMORE

INTRODUCTION

Chances are, you know someone who's asked this question "How can Islamophobia be racism if Islam's not a race?" Like some forms of racism, anti-Muslim rhetoric in this country is grounded in how people look. Whether it's "funny" hats, "menacing" beards, or "oppressive" head scarves, it is often about visible features.

Race is a created idea used to categorize people according to physical characteristics (skin color, facial features, hair texture, etc). This is different from ethnicity (a person's culture, heritage, and ethnic roots) or nationality (a person's citizenship). For example, somebody could be an American who has Irish roots but be classified racially as white and another may be an Italian who immigrated to the United States and also be classified as white. Race in America has had a rough history of grouping people together solely on how they look. Racism towards Muslims is really no different.

In addition, many of the anti-Muslim attacks in the United States have been directed toward people who aren't even Muslim. South Asian Hindus have been targeted because of their accents and Sikhs because of their turbans. At the same time, the diverse religion of Islam has been categorized as a solely Middle Eastern faith causing many Muslims to be mistaken as Arab. Did you know that the largest population of Muslims in the world is actually found in Indonesia? That's approximately 5,000 miles from the Middle East!

This digital, clickable guide is designed as a resource for you to better understand the racial undertones of anti-Muslim bigotry. Below you can see the different kinds of people that are affected by racialized Islamophobia, where it happens, and ways that you can take a stand against it.

WHO DOES RACIALIZED ANTI-MUSLIM BIGOTRY IMPACT?

SIKHS

Sikhism is the world's fifth largest religion and is based on the teachings of Guru Nanak. Sikhs have been in the United States for generations and are often confused as Muslims because of the religious head coverings they wear.
- A Sikh man was one of the first recorded post 9/11 "revenge" killings
- Listen to this personal story of a Sikh man who was targeted as a Muslim

MUSLIMS

Muslims are often put into a monolithic group. But Muslims form one of the most diverse religious communities in the country.
- For example, read about this white, Scottish man who considers himself a Muslim
- There is also a large LGBTQ Muslim community and mosques are learning what it means to be inclusive of them.

SOUTH ASIANS

The term South Asian refers to people who track their ancestry to many different countries including India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Although Islam does have a very large presence in these communities, the majority of South Asians are actually Hindu while the Buddhist, Christian, and Sikh religions are also prominent.
- A South Asian man was assaulted at a Red Robin in Pennsylvania and another man was killed at a bar in Kansas. In both instances, the attackers thought the men were Arab or Muslim, though neither were.

SOUTH EAST ASIANS

East and Southeast Asian countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, and Myanmar are also home to many Muslim communities who have immigrated to the United States. Here is an example from the United Kingdom.

BLACK AMERICANS

Islam plays a large part in the history and culture of Black America. Malcolm X was a key player in the civil rights movement and black Muslims were some of the first Africans to be brought over as slaves as this film about a Gambian Muslim prince portrays. As you watch the film, here's a viewing guide to help you follow along.
- Check out this coming of age film about a young black woman navigating her Muslim identity in America.
- Anti-Muslim bigotry can be directed to black people who aren't Muslim as well. A famous example of this is the misattribution of Barack Obama's religious identity.

ARABS

Arabs are made up of people from all over the Middle East and North Africa and are often portrayed in the media as violent extremists. Because of this, Arab Muslims can often be targeted for hate crimes or everyday things like getting profiled at the airport.

- Arabs who aren't Muslims can be targeted as well, like a Lebanese-American Christian boy who was shot on his porch in Oklahoma or a Mexican-Palestinian Christian who was falsely accused of having ties to the Muslim Brotherhood by his opponent in the 2018 congressional elections.

IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

Immigrants, or folks who have permanently moved to the U.S. from abroad, and refugees, those forced to flee their home countries, come from diverse religious backgrounds. However, many of them are assumed to be Muslim based on the language they speak or their country of origin, which can make them susceptible to anti-Muslim bigotry.

- Read about this Bosnian Muslim immigrant community that isn't assumed to be Muslim or immigrants because they don't fit the usual stereotypes.

WOMEN

Women often carry the brunt of anti-Muslim bigotry because of their head coverings. But did you know that there are many different religious traditions that involve head covering?

- Some Orthodox Jewish women wear head coverings and have even been targeted in attacks for them.
- There are also many Christians that cover, like the Mennonites or the Amish.
- Remember, sometimes women wear scarves to stay warm.

WHERE DOES IT HAPPEN?

Across the country:
New America has compiled racist Islamophobic incidents into a series of interactive graphs and maps.

South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) has published their Acts of Hate Database. Check it out to see up to date information on incidents and where they are happening. They also have an easy to view map of incidents around the country.

Legislation can often stem from racialized Islamophobic ideas. The Institute for Social Policy and Understanding publishes a restrictive legislation map.

The Southern Poverty Law Center publishes a hate map which tracks any organizations that "attack or malign an entire class of people."

In media and entertainment:
There are many examples of films today that cast those who appear to be Muslim in a bad light.

This documentary specifically tracks the negative perceptions of Arabs in film.

Read about how these graffiti artists highlighted the racism of the show Homeland.

In textbooks and schools:
Anti-Muslim bigotry can result in bullying. Read this kid's story of being bullied because of his faith. For a more comprehensive understanding, read this report on the bullying of America's Muslim children.

See how a Muslim Student Association is sharing their experience as a hijbai by encouraging their fellow students to wear a hijab for a day.

This report on the bullying of the Sikh community sheds light on how anti-Muslim bullying doesn't just affect Muslims.

The bullying of Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim is not surprising when you take into account the anti-Muslim bigotry in children's textbooks around the country, like this situation in California.

Check out how one organization is pushing back against this narrative by countering Islamophobia through children's stories.

HOW TO STOP IT
FOR THE NON-IMPACTED

DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT FOREIGNNESS AND FAITH.
- Don't assume a name is "foreign" just because it doesn't sound like one you've heard before. And don't assume a person is foreign because of their name.
- Don't assume someone isn't American just because of how they look.

PRACTICE ENLIGHTENED CURIOSITY AND LISTENING.
- Check out these women engaging the diversity of identities around those who are perceived to be Muslim and the advice they have for how to stay curious and engage well.

EDUCATE YOURSELF
- Here's a great resource to better understand the diversity of American Muslims and their faith!
- Check out this quick fact sheet as well.

LEAD A DISCUSSION!
Here's a great resource to better understand the diversity of American Muslims and their faith!
- Have a Living Room Conversation around race and ethnicity with your friends
- Check out the film, Prince Among Slaves, a historical documentary about a West African prince enslaved in the United States. Here are a couple of ways you could use it to start dialogues in your community:
    - *Prince Among Slaves* Outreach Resource Kit
    - *Prince Among Slaves* Advertising Campaign Planner

HOW TO STOP IT

FOR THE IMPACTED AND THEIR ALLIES

PRACTICE SELF-CARE
It's not your job to educate the world or to fight bigotry wherever you find it. Address it if you want, or walk away. Whatever you decide, know that there are networks of allies and organizations who are working hard to help.

RESPOND WITH RELATIONSHIPS AND STORIES
- Looking for examples of how to do this? Check out this diverse set of Muslims who are stepping up and choosing to tell their story the way they think it should be told. For more, check out NPR's snapshots on their lives.

BRING IN THE PROS
If you have witnessed or been the victim of a hate crime, look for resources in your local area here. You can also report your incident to some of these great organizations that deal with this kind of stuff for a living:
- Council on American Islamic Relations: report an incident.
- The Sikh Coalition: report an incident.
- American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee: report an incident.

CLICKABLE RESOURCES

ARTICLES/REPORTS

TheWant To Stop Islamophobia? Talk To Your Fellow Christians

Charter For Compassion International's Islamophobia Guidebook

Equal Treatment? Measuring the Legal and Media Responses to Ideologically Motivated Violence in the United States

Muslims in America: A New Generation

BOOKS

The Fear of Islam: An Introduction to Islamophobia in the West

Muslim Cool: Race, Religion, and Hip Hop in the United States

Arabs and Muslims in the Media: Race and Representation after 9/11

American Muslim Women: Negotiating Race, Class, and Gender within the Ummah

Growing Up Muslim: Muslim College Students in America Tell Their Life Stories

The Black Muslims in America

RESEARCH CENTERS/ ORGANIZATIONS FIGHTING BIGOTRY

Sikh Coalition

Justice for Muslims Collective

Shoulder to Shoulder

National Sikh Campaign

MuslimARC

Muslim Public Affairs Council

Islamic Networks Group

Institute for Social Policy and Understanding

American Muslim Poll 2019: Predicting and Preventing Islamophobia
Featuring an Updated National American Islamophobia Index

Key Findings: Islamophobia

The Islamophobia Index is a measure of the level of public endorsement of five negative stereotypes associated with Muslims in America. ISPU analysts chose these five variables based on previous research[1] linking these perceptions with greater tolerance for anti-Muslim policies such as mosque surveillance, racial profiling and greater scrutiny of Muslims at airports, the so-called Muslim ban, and even taking away voting rights from Americans who are Muslims. These five measures are not meant to cover the totality of public Islamophobia, which can and does include many other false beliefs about Muslims. They are instead meant to offer an evidence-based measure of five perceptions known to link to acceptance of discriminatory policies.

The Islamophobia Index calculates reported levels of agreement with the following statements:

1. Most Muslims living in the United States are more prone to violence than others.
2. Most Muslims living in the United States discriminate against women.
3. Most Muslims living in the United States are hostile to the United States.
4. Most Muslims living in the United States are less civilized than other people.
5. Most Muslims living in the United States are partially responsible for acts of violence carried out by other Muslims

Islamophobia Index Inches Up
- A measure of the level of public endorsement of five negative stereotypes associated with Muslims in America, our score of Islamophobia among the general public inched up from **24** in 2018 to **28** in 2019.
- Among faith groups, Jews score the lowest on the Islamophobia Index (18) except for Muslims (14). White Evangelicals score the highest on the Islamophobia Index (35).

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[1] See Nour Kteily and Emile Bruneau, "Backlash: The Politics and Real-World Consequences of Minority Group Dehumanization," *Personal and Social Psychology Bulletin* 43, no. 1 (2017): 87–104 by the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Inc.; Emile Bruneau, Nour Kteily, and Emily Falk, "Revealing an Intergroup Bias in Collective Blame Decreases Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Hostility," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*; and Nour Kteily, Emile Bruneau, and Gordon Hodson, "They See Us as Less Than Human: Metadehumanization Predicts Intergroup Conflict via Reciprocal Dehumanization," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 110, no. 3 (2016): 343–70.

- Catholics score 27, Protestants score 29, and the non-affiliated score 22.

Jews and Hispanic Americans Are Most Favorable Toward Muslims and White Evangelicals Least
- Of all faith groups apart from Muslims, Jews score the lowest on the Islamophobia Index. 53% of Jews report having positive views of Muslims with 13% reporting negative views.
- White Evangelicals score the highest on the Islamophobia Index with as many as 44% holding unfavorable opinions about Muslims, which is twice as many as those who hold favorable opinions (20%).
- Hispanic Americans are five times as likely to hold favorable opinions of Muslims as they are to have negative attitudes (51% vs. 10%).
- White Americans are almost as likely to hold favorable as unfavorable opinions (33% vs. 26%) whereas 40% have no opinion. Black Americans are seven times as likely to hold positive opinions (35%) as negative views (5%) of Muslims, but the majority report having no opinion (51%).

Knowing a Muslim, Knowledge of Islam and Positive Views of Other Minorities Linked to Lower Islamophobia
- Our analysis reveals that knowing a Muslim personally is among several protective factors against Islamophobia. When a Muslim is a close friend, Islamophobia is further reduced.
- Other predictors of lower Islamophobia include Democratic leanings; knowledge about Islam; favorable views of Jews, Black Americans, and feminists; and higher income.
- Negative views of Evangelicals are significantly linked to a lower score on the Islamophobia Index (less Islamophobia), though the correlation is weak.
- Hispanic Americans are more likely than white Americans to know a Muslim personally and have the lowest levels of Islamophobia, scoring 23 on the Islamophobia Index.
- Three in four Jews know a Muslim and about half of the general public know a Muslim, but only about one in three white Evangelicals know an American who is Muslim.
- Nativity, sex, age, education, and religiosity have no bearing on Islamophobia.

Jews and Muslims Mirror Views of Each Other, Unlike Muslims and Evangelicals and Evangelicals and Jews
- ISPU data show that Jews and Muslims are similar in their regard for each other: Roughly half express favorable opinions of each other, about 10% express unfavorable view of each other, and the rest report "no opinion."
- Muslims are more favorable toward white Evangelicals than white Evangelicals are to Muslims. In fact, white Evangelicals are more than three times as likely to have unfavorable opinions of Muslims as the other way around (44% vs. 14%). While a third (33%) of Muslims have favorable opinions of Evangelicals, just 20% of white Evangelicals reciprocate.

● The largest reciprocity gap is between Jews and Evangelicals. White Evangelicals overwhelmingly have favorable opinions of Jews (75%) while *none* express unfavorable opinions. Conversely, just a quarter (25%) of Jews return this positive sentiment, and one-third (33%) hold unfavorable opinions of white Evangelicals.

Support for Muslim Ban Does Little to Help Candidates With Most Voters
● 61% percent of Muslims, 53% of Jews, and 56% of non-affiliated Americans report that a candidate's endorsement of the Muslim Ban would *decrease* their support for that individual.
● While white Evangelicals (44%) are the most likely of any group to say a candidate's endorsement of the Muslim Ban would increase their support of that candidate, a majority of even this faith group saw the issue as either decreasing their support (19%) of such a candidate, or making no difference (37%).
● 44% of the general public say a candidate's endorsement of a Muslim Ban would decrease their support, while 21% say it would increase their support. 34% of the general public say it would make no difference to them whether or not a candidate supported the Muslim Ban.

Key Findings: Civic Engagement

Muslims Least Likely to Approve of President
● Only 16% of American Muslims approve of the job Donald Trump is doing as President, the lowest of all groups surveyed.
● Other faith groups tallied between 24% and 50%, the vast majority of white Evangelicals (73%) reported approval of the President, highlighting a deep rift between the two religious groups.
● Among Muslims, white Muslims (29%) and those who are 30-49 years old (19%) are more likely to approve of Donald Trump than all others groups.

Despite Dissatisfaction with the President, Muslims Most Likely Group to Express Optimism with the Direction of the Country
● Despite the low opinion of the performance of the President, 33% of Muslims conveyed optimism about the future trajectory of the nation, more than any other faith group or those without an affiliation surveyed.
● White Muslims (43%) are more likely than African American Muslims (20%) to be upbeat; Muslim women (70%) are more likely than Muslim men (58%) to be pessimistic about the future.

Though Growing, Muslim Voter Registration and Engagement Still Lags Behind Other Groups
- Despite being higher than in 2016 (60%), only 73% of eligible Muslim voters report being registered to do so, the least likely in our sample than other groups in 2019 (85%-95%).[2]
- 80% of Muslims are eligible to vote, less than the other groups. This gap may persist because 47% of American Muslims are not native-born.
- The voter registration gap is most pronounced among Muslim young adults (aged 18-29), only 63% of whom report being registered to vote compared to 85% of their peers in the general population.
- Muslim voter engagement further suffers due to the inconsistency of Muslim voters who express their intentions to vote (83%) but show up at the polls in fewer numbers (59%), either due to lack of choice of candidates or distrust in the electoral system.

Income, Age, Mosque Attendance, and Local Political Engagement Predict Voter Participation Among Muslims
- Belonging to a high income bracket and older age group is linked to a greater likelihood of voting in midterm elections, which mirrors trends in the general public.
- Remarkably, the level of education attained does not impact voter participation for Muslims, though a college degree is the strongest determinant of participation for the general public.
- Weekly mosque attendance stands out as a predictor of midterm voter participation, as in past surveys. The same holds true for the general public, where weekly attendance of a religious service is also linked to voting in midterm elections.
- On average, Muslims who contact local officials are 25% more likely to vote in midterm elections. While it is not surprising that those who make the effort to contact their elected official are also more likely to vote in the midterms, it is noteworthy that this only becomes significant for local officials, and not federal officials. This suggests that when Muslims are engaged ***locally***, not just at the federal level, they are more likely to participate overall, even in state and federal elections.

Muslims Who Vote Overwhelmingly Vote Democrat
- 76% of Muslims cast their ballots for Democrats, a trend mirrored among the Jewish Americans (69%) we surveyed, as well as Black (91%) and Hispanic Americans (66%).
- Among Muslims, support for Democrats remains consistent with age as opposed to the general public where it decreases; 83% of Muslims aged 50 and older vote for Democrats in contrast with 44% of their generational peers in the general public.

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[2] While these numbers are higher than national voter registration numbers, they reflect the typical reported numbers in national polls, where the sample often reflects a more civically engaged sample. For the purpose of a comparison across faith communities, these numbers should be seen as a comparative benchmark rather than a figure competing with national voter registration numbers (Holbrook & Krosnick, 2009).

Key Findings: Faith and Community

Muslims Profess More Private Religious Devotion, Less Public Religious Assertiveness
- 71% of Muslims and 82% of white Evangelicals say religion is very important in their daily life, more than all other faith groups and non-affiliated Americans.
- Despite facing higher levels of religious discrimination than other groups, Muslims hold steady to their faith. 43% percent of Muslims attend religious services once a week or more, on par with Protestants (49%) but less frequently than white Evangelicals (64%).
- More Muslims (78% of men and 79% of women) report satisfaction with the way things are done in their house of worship than the general public (62%)
- Muslims (55%) have a sense of linked fate,[3] that is, to believe that their fate is tied to that of their coreligionists, as much as Protestants (55%) and white Evangelicals (57%), but less than Jews (69%).
- Muslims are highest on dimensions that reflect private spirituality and lower on the one that requires public risk, likely because of the threat of religious discrimination, which Muslims continue to report at higher frequencies (62%) than any other faith group (43% or less).
- Muslims are less likely to publicly assert their religious beliefs such as take unpopular stands to defend their faith (36%) or wish to use their faith as a source of law (33%) than white Evangelicals (58% and 54%).

Muslims Most Likely to Report Religious, Gender, and Sectarian Discrimination
- As reported in our prior polls, Muslims are the most likely group to report experiencing religious discrimination (62%). Muslim women report higher levels of discrimination (68%) than men (55%).
- 43% of Jews report religious discrimination, while 36% of white Evangelicals report experiencing it.
- With 40% registering experiences of sectarianism, Muslims are the group most likely to have sectarian discrimination within their ranks as compared to other groups surveyed.
- 41% of Muslim women experience gender discrimination from within their community, the highest of any group examined. However, the misogyny they suffer from the public at large is still greater, at 52%. Muslim women are also more likely to report gender discrimination from the public than are any other group of women surveyed (36% or less).
- Muslims (41%) are more likely than white Evangelicals (21%) and Protestants (28%) to have favorable views of feminists and are on par with Catholics (37%). Jews (55%) are the faith group most likely to view feminists positively.

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[3] Michael Dawson, *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African-American Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

While All Faith Groups Equally Likely to Report Knowing Someone Who Experienced Unwanted Sexual Advances from a Faith Leader, Muslims Most Likely to Report Such Incidents to Law Enforcement
- Unwanted sexual advances from a faith leader are equally prevalent among all groups we surveyed.
- All groups are also equally likely to report such advances to members of the community.
- Muslim victims of sexual crimes are more likely (54%) to involve law enforcement in such matters than other groups in our study (2%-36%).

Key Findings: Recommendations

The following are suggested actions for those working to improve American Muslim civic engagement and those seeking to build a truly pluralistic America, free of racial and religious bigotry.

Recommendations for Those Working to Increase Muslim Political Impact
- *Build From the Ground Up:* Work to increase local civic engagement as a driver to increase political participation at the state and federal level. Those Muslim Americans who engaged a local elected official in the past year were more likely to not only be registered to vote, but to also have voted in the 2018 midterm election. This was not the case (surprisingly) with Muslims who engaged their congressional representative, underscoring the importance of starting local.
- *Mobilize at Mosques:* Like other Americans, those who identify as Muslims and attend a religious service at least once a week are also more likely to have voted in the midterms. This suggests that mosques, like churches and other houses of worship have historically, are spaces for mobilizing communities toward greater civic participation.[4]
- *Build Coalitions with Natural Allies:* As 1% of the population, Muslim Americans cannot make positive change without building coalitions. Natural allies include Hispanic and Jewish Americans who are the most likely to already have existing relationships with Americans who are Muslims and the most likely to also report favorable views of the community. The majority of both groups, like Muslims, tend to vote Democrat, so their political values are likely to align. Hispanic Muslims are the fastest growing ethnic group in the Muslim community, which may present a natural bridge to the wider Hispanic community. The other natural ally group are Black Americans. This is one of the largest racial segments of the American Muslim community (30%), a community that has a long history of fighting for civil rights and equality, and, like Muslims as a group, is more likely than the general public to see faith as important to their lives. Black Americans are also overwhelmingly Democratic.

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[4] For a case study on how a mosque mobilizes Americans who are Muslims to greater civic participation see: *Understanding Effective Civic Engagement | The Muslim Community Association of the San Francisco Bay Area: A Case Study.*

- ***Focus on Younger and Economically Disadvantaged Voters:*** Muslims who are the least likely to be registered to vote are young (18-29) and poor. Yet, both groups make up a disproportionately large segment of the American Muslim population compared to the general public, resulting in large gains in voter participation if they were engaged.

Recommendations for Those Combating Islamophobia
- ***Build Coalitions with Other Impacted Communities:*** Among the strongest predictors of lower Islamophobia are favorable regard for Black Americans, Jews, and the LGBTQ community, with favorability toward feminists also a moderate predictor of less anti-Muslim bigotry. This suggests that Islamophobia is just one branch on a bigger tree of bigotry. Combat Islamophobia in coalition with other impacted communities. Work to end racism and religious bigotry more generally.
- ***Keep Demystifying Islam:*** Knowing something about Islam is an even stronger predictor of lower Islamophobia than is knowing a Muslim personally. It is therefore not enough to humanize Muslims as people or make Muslim friends. It is still important to also educate the public on the faith that unites Muslims.
- ***Do More Than "Interfaith":*** While participating in interfaith dialogue is commendable for its own good, our data suggests that Islamophobia is more politically driven (ideology and partisanship) than religious in nature (religious factors are not drivers of Islamophobia). This is why it is important to reach out to diverse groups and communities, across racial, class, and cultural divides, to people of all faiths and no faith, rather than just those typically involved in interfaith engagement who tend to be white and middle class.
- ***Make Muslim Friends:*** Simply knowing a Muslim still cuts one's likelihood of negative perceptions in half. Create opportunities for face-to-face human interaction between people of different religious and cultural backgrounds while cooperating for the greater good.

For more details on polling methodology, visit www.ispu.org/poll.

PROTEUS FUND

10 Lessons Learned From 10 Years of the Rise Together Fund Grantmaking

Lesson 5: Islamophobia is an Intersectional Phenomenon, and We Must Tackle It with Our Partners Across All Racial Justice Movements

By Claire Downing | July 30, 2019

Although the term Islamophobia* has crept into the vernacular post-9/11, the roots of the concept are tied to historical forms of oppression and racism, including anti-Black racism, xenophobia, antisemitism, and homophobia. As the first and only national donor collaborative dedicated to serving Black/African, Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian (BAMEMSA) communities in the U.S., the RISE Together Fund (RTF) has learned and shared some critical lessons about the history and depth of Islamophobia since our founding in 2008.

Read on to explore some of our lessons learned:

*A definition from Berkeley's Islamophobia Research & Documentation Project (via Justice for Muslims Collective's website): "Islamophobia is a contrived fear or prejudice fomented by the existing Eurocentric and Orientalist global power structure. It is directed at a perceived or real Muslim threat through the maintenance and extension of existing disparities in economic, political, social and cultural relations, while rationalizing the necessity to deploy violence as a tool to achieve "civilizational rehab" of the target communities (Muslim or otherwise). Islamophobia reintroduces and reaffirms a global racial structure through which resource distribution disparities are maintained and extended."

What Islamophobia Is:

Islamophobia is both structural and societal. Over the years, Islamophobia has manifested in both structural (involving the state, systemic, political) and societal elements. Structural Islamophobia includes policies and efforts such as the War on Terror; the continued use of Guantánamo Bay to house Muslim prisoners, some of whom have never been charged with a crime; and the now-dismantled NSEERS program. Societal Islamophobia includes negative or overly simplistic references to Islam, Muslims, Arabs, and others, in the media and in popular culture. RTF grantee the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) and partner organization Bridge Initiative found that Islamophobia increased between 2018 and 2019; this is unsurprising given the intersection of Islamophobic policy and rhetoric.

Islamophobia is linked to racism and gendered oppression. Islamophobia in its current form continues to intersect with race and gender. At least 25-30 percent of American Muslims identify as Black or African, and Black Muslims face not only intra-community racism from fellow Muslims, but are also disproportionately affected by police violence and surveillance models like countering violent extremism (CVE); consider, for example, that two out of three of the Department of Homeland Security's CVE "pilot city" programs targeted the Somali American community (in Boston and Minneapolis, respectively). Muslims writ large are surveilled by police, and Arab Americans (regardless of faith) are often singled out for their political views or language. Muslim women of all races are continually targeted, particularly those who display visible markers of the faith such as hijab. As a result of both Islamophobia and anti-Black racism, Black Muslim women face higher rates of attack.

Islamophobia is well-funded. A recent report from the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) demonstrates that Islamophobic actors, as well as philanthropic entities, funneled $1.5 billion into the so-called Islamophobia industry just between 2014 and 2016. Contrast this with the RTF's average grant size of $30,000-$70,000. Islamophobic actors are also appointed to high-ranking cabinet positions and provide training for law enforcement.

What Islamophobia Isn't:

Islamophobia isn't a post-9/11 phenomenon. While policies such as the Muslim ban necessarily grab headlines, it is important to remember that the oppression of Muslim and BAMEMSA communities more broadly started neither with the ban nor after 9/11. "Beyond the Ban," a recent event featuring RTF grantees ISPU, Justice for Muslims Collective (JMC), and MuslimARC, and others, explored how the groundwork for the Muslim ban was laid through centuries of oppressing communities of color, starting in the U.S. with enslaved Black Africans, many of whom were Muslim and who were forced to convert or hide their religious identities. Continuing the legacy of Black oppression, U.S. government programs like COINTELPRO have influenced modern-day surveillance programs targeting Muslims such as CVE.

Islamophobia isn't limited to Muslims. The first hate crime victim after 9/11 was a Sikh man, Balbir Singh Sodi, whose murderer mistook him for a Muslim. Sikh men, who traditionally wear a turban, non-Muslim Arabs, and other people perceived to be Muslim are frequently victims of Islamophobic rhetoric and attacks. This is why RTF intentionally funds Black/African, Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian communities because we recognize that a spectrum of communities are affected by Islamophobia.

Islamophobia isn't only perpetuated by right-wing actors. As Namira Islam, Community Engagement Director of Community Engagement for RTF grantee organization the Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative (MuslimARC) explains, liberal or progressive actors can knowingly or unknowingly perpetuate Islamophobic tropes. This includes, in some cases, progressives' embrace of anti-Muslim actors under the guise of feminism.