

Identities that divide, identities that unite:
News portrayals of intergroup encounters and their effects on outgroup orientations

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Abstract

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Media messages help construct and express intergroup perceptions, define boundaries between ingroups and outgroups, and shape a sense of belonging to social groups. Drawing upon social psychology, intergroup and mass communication, this study focuses on Muslims, a group that has been increasingly targeted by hate crimes in many Western contexts and understudied in the intergroup relations literature. Given how most U.S. Americans do not personally know a Muslim, those with little direct experience with Muslims often rely on media content to better understand this group, thereby giving media outlets the power to frame such intergroup relations. This study integrates two fruitful theoretical perspectives to better understand the role of news media in portraying and shaping Muslim/non-Muslim relations. First, intergroup contact theory rests on the idea that contact between groups can reduce prejudice and bias. Contrary to a well-

established body of scholarship on direct, face-to-face contact, a specific form of indirect contact remains underexplored: *vicarious intergroup contact*. Influenced by work on parasocial relationships with media characters, this form of mediated contact involves situations in which one observes ingroup members interacting with outgroup members via media, thus giving audience members an opportunity to learn about others. Second, social identity theory is used to explain individual attitudes and behaviors vis-à-vis particular social groups one values and identifies with. One way to reduce intergroup bias and conflict is to emphasize a *common ingroup identity*, a process also known as recategorizing from two groups to one group. Making a shared, superordinate social identity, like national identity, more salient in a media context may activate certain identity processes, improve intergroup attitudes, and reduce intergroup conflict.

To examine how vicarious intergroup (i.e., Muslim/non-Muslim) contact and a common (i.e., U.S.-American) ingroup identity (1) are portrayed in media content and (2) shape orientations toward the (Muslim) outgroup, a systematic content analysis of articles in U.S. newspapers and an experiment were conducted. Results of the content analysis reveal that *dyadic* or *group* portrayals (i.e., encounters involving Muslims and non-Muslims) are fairly rare in contrast to *individual* representations of Muslims. When intergroup encounters are present ($N = 307$), they are primarily found in the newspapers' foreign news sections and typically take place in settings shaped by conflict rather than support. Thus the tone used to portray the encounters, particularly their outcomes, is generally negative. This pattern is more pronounced for national than local papers. Muslims, as part of those encounters, are typically portrayed as having little or no agency over the interaction. Muslims' social identities, especially American national and occupational identities, are more salient in intergroup portrayals in local and regional rather than national newspapers.

To examine media effects of vicarious contact experiences involving Muslims, two aspects were experimentally manipulated: the valence of the outcome of the intergroup encounter (positive/neutral/negative) and the salience of the common ingroup identity (salient versus nonsalient U.S. national identity). Based on a large sample ($N = 687$) and an array of multivariate techniques, findings indicate that positively framed news portrayals of Muslim/non-Muslim encounters increase non-Muslims' willingness to engage with Muslims. This relationship remains significant even after controlling for various third variables (e.g., prior contact, ideology, identity importance) and is partly mediated by interest in learning more about the outgroup. The more positive the vicarious contact experience, the more interested individuals tend to be in learning more about Islam and Muslims more generally. Underlying social identity motivations regarding media use (i.e., using intergroup media content for social uncertainty reduction and social enhancement) can be important drivers for increasing interest and contact willingness. Contrary to expectations, using a common-identity approach by making U.S.-American national identity more salient in news about intergroup encounters involving Muslims does not moderate the effects on non-Muslims' willingness to engage with Muslims. The dissertation concludes with a discussion of key findings, situating them in their theoretical and sociopolitical context; study limitations and directions for future research; and a set of ideas to reduce bias and improve intergroup relations from a news media perspective.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

Events involving Islam and Muslims have become increasingly visible in political discourse and media coverage, yet many people in the United States (U.S.) remain largely disconnected from the Muslim community. Especially since 9/11, U.S. news outlets have extensively focused on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the ramifications of the Arab uprisings in the Middle East, and terrorist attacks in the name of Al-Qaeda and ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant), thus painting a picture of Islam that is often associated with violence and seen as a threat to Western societies (Ahmed & Matthes, 2017; Cottle, 2011; Dixon & Williams, 2015; Jackson, 2010; Powell, 2011; von Sikorski, Matthes, & Schmuck, 2021). These views are reflected in public opinion about Muslims around the world (Lipka, 2017; Pew, 2011; Wike, Stokes, & Simmons, 2016). In the U.S., the public is largely split on questions of compatibility of Islam with democracy and American society (Pew, 2017), and perceptions of Muslim Americans as anti-American are widespread (Pew, 2016). Most U.S. citizens also overestimate, or are unaware of, the actual Muslim population share (Pew, 2019b) – about one percent of the U.S. population (Mohamed, 2018), with many of them concentrated in few areas (de la Cruz & Brittingham, 2003). This in turn makes it challenging for many non-Muslims to be in direct contact with Muslims: Less than half of Americans personally know a Muslim (Sahgal & Mohamed, 2019), a figure that has remained largely unchanged in the past decade and only slightly increased since the turn of the century (Heimlich, 2009). Thus the lack of direct experience further cements prejudice against Islam and stereotypical views about Muslims.

In view of rising Muslim population shares nationally and globally (Lipka, 2015; Lipka & Hackett, 2017; Pew, 2019b), it is therefore important to improve relations between Muslims

and non-Muslims, including mutual trust, prosocial attitudes, and intergroup knowledge. The study of intergroup relations – how individuals perceive each other and interact as members of social groups – has been a central and constant theme in not only communication, but also social psychology, sociology, and political science. Understanding the drivers and processes behind intergroup relations from a communication and media perspective has generated a rich body of scholarship since the 1950s (for an overview see Harwood, Hewstone, Amichai-Hamburger, & Tausch, 2013). After all, two foundational theoretical approaches to studying intergroup relations phenomena – intergroup contact and social identity – are inherently communication-oriented, most visibly by use of language and message-oriented behaviors that shape, and are shaped by, relations between social groups. As a field of study, intergroup communication is premised on the idea that intergroup relations are shaped, perpetuated, and altered via human communication and media content. At various levels of influence, those messages help construct and express intergroup perceptions, define boundaries between ingroups and outgroups, and therefore create a sense of belonging to social groups (Harwood, 2018).

While social groups based on identity factors like race, ethnicity, age, gender or sexual orientation have been widely studied from an intergroup communication perspective, religious groups have received far less scholarly attention. Moreover, within this body of literature, the primary focus has been on Christians including their various subgroups, such as Catholics and Protestants (Hewstone, Cairns, Voci, Hamberger, & Niens, 2006). In contrast, intergroup relations involving Muslims have mostly been studied in a European or Israeli-Palestinian context (e.g., Hammack, 2010; Husnu & Crisp, 2010; Tal-Or & Tsfati, 2016). It is therefore important to study the communicative aspects of Muslim/non-Muslim relations. With few non-Muslims personally knowing a Muslim (Pew, 2017) – and possibly even fewer having

meaningful or ongoing contact with Muslims – media outlets have power to frame such relations. Frequent media and political-elite references to Islam and Muslim as threatening may have inundated citizens’ understanding of the religion and its followers with negative associations, as recent polls (Pew, 2016; 2017) and scholarship (Ahmed & Matthes, 2017; Margulies, 2013) suggest. It is therefore not only the scarcity of scholarship on Muslims in general, but also a matter of practical significance – the limited real-world experience of many non-Muslims with Islam and Muslims – that requires a closer empirical look at media portrayals of intergroup relations involving Muslims as well as their effects on orientations toward that group.

Examining media portrayals of Muslims from an intergroup relations perspective, including their effects, is relevant for a variety of theoretical, practical, and normative reasons. First, given increasingly diverse societies in a globalized world, it is essential to analyze whether that diversity, specifically religious diversity in a national context like the U.S., is adequately reflected in contemporary news. National news media have a particularly important role in facilitating a collective identity that incorporates this diversity via a unifying grand narrative of shared myths, traditions, symbols, and a set of principles, values, and ideals. The nation that gives meaning to this collective identity is socially constructed as an “imagined community” (Anderson, 1991). Second, media messages focusing on intergroup encounters involving religious minorities like Muslims represent an important prerequisite of positive indirect, mass-mediated contact, but also serve as an effective gateway for seeking more direct contact and thus developing more positive attitudes toward this group. Positively framed media portrayals of intergroup encounters can serve as a prejudice- and conflict-reduction tool, especially in the absence of opportunities to engage in direct contact with outgroup members (Fujioka, 1999). Third, such depictions may also serve identity-shaping purposes. The interplay of

representational and relational elements of intergroup encounters in the news has the potential of making social identities more salient, with both positive and negative outcomes. In times of changing demographics and communication technologies, more fragmented media environments, and a general rise in right-wing authoritarianism around the world, individuals often retreat to “tribalism” (Chua, 2018; Fukuyama, 2018) and exclusionary “us-versus-them” thinking (Huntington, 2004; Kinder & Kam, 2010), which has the potential to outweigh the effects of positive contact and intensify the effects of negative contact. Mindful of the constraints posed by individual media selection processes (Schieferdecker & Wessler, 2017), experiencing a positive interaction in the news can be a strategic means to satisfy social identity needs, reduce uncertainty, spark interest in learning more about other groups, and ultimately improve intergroup relations.

The central overarching question that guides this dissertation is thus: *How do the news portray intergroup encounters and what are their effects on orientations toward outgroups?* In order to answer this question, I undertake a two-pronged project: (1) a quantitative, systematic analysis of news content that assesses larger trends and patterns of portrayals of intergroup encounters involving Muslims; and (2) a survey experiment that examines the processes and mechanisms by which such content can influence outcome variables relevant to intergroup relations, such as trust, attitudes, and behavioral intentions.

The structure of this dissertation is as follows. *Chapter 2* reviews the relevant intergroup relations literature, bringing together empirical and theoretical insights from such fields as journalism, social psychology, and political science. Study rationales are provided for each research question and hypothesis that guide the later chapters of this dissertation. *Chapter 3* then describes the research methodology, study design, and measures used to answer the first,

content-oriented, set of research questions to examine news portrayals of intergroup encounters involving Muslims. *Chapter 4* presents and interprets the results of the quantitative content analysis to describe the trends and patterns of such portrayals in U.S. news. *Chapter 5* transitions to the second, effects-focused study and describes the research methodology, design, and measures used to test the hypotheses and answer the research questions to analyze the effects of portrayals of intergroup encounters in the news. *Chapter 6* presents and interprets the results of the experiment. *Chapter 7* concludes by providing some key findings of both study parts, discussing and integrating them with existing intergroup contact and social identity scholarship, outlining study limitations, providing some directions for future research, and offering different ways of thinking about the normative role of news outlets in framing intergroup relations.

CHAPTER 2:

MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF INTERGROUP CONTACT AND THEIR EFFECTS: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND EMPIRICAL INSIGHTS

The intergroup literature draws mostly from scholarship in social psychology, communication and media studies, and much of this work focuses on different forms of direct and indirect intergroup contact. While these are important, so too is one particular form of indirect contact that lends itself to media research: vicarious (or mediated) intergroup contact. This chapter reviews the scholarship in these areas and offers a set of research questions and hypotheses that derive from currently unanswered questions. These questions collectively address media portrayals and effects of intergroup encounters.

Forms of Intergroup Contact

A wealth of research has examined the effect of intergroup contact on outgroup attitudes, with particular emphasis on prejudice (Pettigrew, 2016). While direct, face-to-face contact has been the most researched form of intergroup contact and typically reduces people's prejudice toward dissimilar others (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), not everyone is able to directly experience intergroup contact even if they are willing, interested, and motivated to do so. Perhaps people live in more rural areas or segregated areas with little or no diversity in their neighborhoods, and meeting others represents an investment of resources (time, money, etc.) that may be limited. For those individuals who lack the opportunity to engage in face-to-face intergroup contact, other indirect forms of experiencing contact come into play. Specifically, those can take place as extended, computer-mediated, imagined, or observed forms (for a more detailed overview of all those contact forms see Harwood et al., 2013). A useful theoretical framework for better understanding and examining various forms of intergroup contact is based on the notion of the

contact space (Harwood, 2010). This parsimonious framework allows the researcher to position and compare various forms of intergroup contact in a two-dimensional space that is organized by the richness of the intergroup experience (i.e., the variety of channels and sensory skills needed to navigate an intergroup encounter) and one's level of involvement in the contact situation (i.e., direct versus indirect).

Several forms of contact have already been widely examined in the intergroup contact literature and can be clearly positioned within the contact space. For example, *face-to-face contact* typically scores high on both dimensions, meaning it is a direct and generally rich contact experience that allows the parties involved to directly perceive both verbal and nonverbal communication cues to facilitate the message transfer. In contrast, *extended contact* (that is, merely knowing about an outgroup via an ingroup friend) tends to score low on both dimensions (Harwood, 2010): One is not directly involved in the contact experience, meaning the parties involved virtually do not know each other and only share one mutual contact. Given its indirect nature, extended contact also does not require the parties involved to use any of their senses to process communication cues and navigate the intergroup experience as it is independent of time and space. Other forms, however, have received little scholarly attention, such as observing mediated contact involving an ingroup friend or hearing about an ingroup stranger's intergroup contact (with the latter representing the type of contact analyzed in this project). Both represent forms that are rather low regarding experience richness and the intensity of one's involvement in the contact situation, but this does not mean that those forms are less effective. In fact, they can be quite consequential if this is the *only* form of contact one experiences. Such mediated contact of how one's ingroup or another group behaves and interacts may foster observational learning which can positively impact social norms different from conventional face-to-face contact (De

Tezanos-Pinto, Bratt, & Brown, 2010). In addition to learning, mediated contact may also affect processes of liking and identifying with groups that are part of the contact situation (Joyce, 2017). In other words, indirect contact via media has the potential to ameliorate intergroup relations, particularly in situations where actual direct contact is not possible.

This dissertation focuses on a particular form of indirect contact derived from the contact space framework: *vicarious intergroup contact*. Rooted in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2001), this type of contact is also referred to as observed or mediated intergroup contact (Ortiz & Harwood, 2007), that is, a form of mediated interaction in which an individual observes – via media – an ingroup member interacting with an outgroup member (Harwood, 2010). Other forms of indirect contact, especially if they involve media channels, may become intertwined with this form of contact (Harwood, 2010; 2017). Research has just begun to explore the potential of combining different forms of indirect contact for improving intergroup relations (e.g., Kim & Harwood, 2019; Wojcieszak & Warner, 2020). However, neither the idea of vicarious contact is new (Allport, 1954), nor the potential influence of mass media in shaping prejudice (Mutz & Goldman, 2010), but many theoretical linkages between contact, media consumption and intergroup outcomes have been drawn only in recent years. Observing intergroup contact via media has its roots in the concept of parasocial contact or relationships, for example with media characters (Horton & Wohl, 1956). The term “vicarious” is borrowed from social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1969; Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1963), particularly the concept of vicarious learning, that is, learning and modeling behavior by observing others (see also Bandura, 2001). Using a social cognitive approach, intergroup contact theory extends this work by specifically observing outgroup characters *interacting with* ingroup characters (Ortiz & Harwood, 2007).

Given the lack of direct contact opportunities for many, mass media and online media often represent the primary – and sometimes only – sources for forming people’s impressions of other social groups (Mutz & Goldman, 2010). For example, vicarious contact can take place via print media (Vezzali, Stathi, & Giovanni, 2012), television (Joyce & Harwood, 2014), and radio (Paluck, 2009). Typically, these effects happen without audiences being aware of them (Schiappa, Gregg, & Hewes, 2005) and are particularly influential for individuals without outgroup friends and who live in less diverse, more segregated areas (Christ, Hewstone, Tausch, Wagner, Voci, & Hughes, 2010). Research confirms the positive effect of vicarious contact on outgroup attitudes in a variety of settings related to gender and sexual orientation (Schiappa et al., 2005, 2006) as well as race (Ortiz & Harwood, 2007; Ramasubramanian, 2007).

Vicarious Intergroup Contact via Media Portrayals of Intergroup Encounters

The vast majority of mediated intergroup contact research has focused on media portrayals of *individual* characters as the unit of analysis. This line of research, which often uses a social identity approach as a theoretical framework, has produced rich scholarship that informs intergroup relations literature in terms of how audiences identify with and process information about outgroup members. For example, this can take place via schemas and mental models (Dixon & Azocar, 2007; Mastro, Behm-Morawitz, & Ortiz, 2007), forming parasocial friendships with outgroup members (Schiappa et al., 2005), engaging in intergroup comparisons (McKinley, Mastro, & Warber, 2014) or priming beliefs about a particular outgroup (Power, Murphy, & Coover, 1996). Although media characters rarely act in solitude, their relations with members of other groups are implied rather than made explicit and the focus of scholarly attention. If portrayals of intergroup relations are of interest, then the dyadic level becomes the focal point in content-based media research (Harwood et al., 2013; Park, 2012). This study’s

focus on vicarious intergroup contact involves interactions that may appear in the form of a dyad, a small group, or a larger community. Although media content is regularly used to create and manipulate experimental stimuli, little is known about the extent and the ways in which intergroup encounters are *actually* portrayed in the news media. Five areas of interest are identified below, accompanied by research questions that remain unanswered or are not sufficiently answered in the extant literature, and therefore guide the first part of this dissertation.

The News Domains in Which Intergroup Encounters Are Portrayed

The first element that is useful for describing encounters between different social groups is the context in which they take place. Research linking news values and social identity theory has examined the different news domains or “spheres of activity” (Rivenburgh, 2000, p. 310) in which interactions between groups occur. Intergroup encounters may take place in a variety of settings that differ in their newsworthiness, including politics, sports, science, arts, or education, among others. For example, business and sports tend to be the most prominent activity spheres across different geographical settings based on a cross-national analysis of newspaper portrayals of interactions between U.S. citizens and individuals from foreign countries (Rivenburgh, 2000).

With regard to the group of interest for this study, Islam and Muslims are typically associated with notions of terrorism, military conflicts, and migration (Ahmed & Matthes, 2017; Bleich & van der Veen, 2018; Shaw, 2012), thus positioning them in a political, and specifically foreign policy, context. Compared to the portrayal of other religious groups in U.S. newspapers (e.g., Jews, Hindus), Muslims are more often linked to stories about extremism and events in foreign settings (Bleich & van der Veen, 2018). These findings are not just limited to the U.S. context. Half of British media coverage on Muslims during the 2000s referenced terrorism or extremism (Moore, Mason, & Lewis, 2008). These patterns can be partly explained by the higher

news values of these topics, combining negativity and unexpectedness of such events (Chermak & Gruenewald, 2006), particularly in the post-9/11 era during which media coverage was heavily shaped by the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the search for Osama bin Laden and other high-level Al-Qaeda operatives (Jackson, 2010). Examining news coverage of terrorist attacks on U.S. soil during the 2000s, Islam was frequently cast as a bigger foreign threat while non-Muslim domestic terrorism is typically downplayed and cast as a minor threat, thus feeding the concept of orientalism and creating a culture of fear around Islam (Powell, 2011; see also Karim, 2006). Those news narratives often resemble what Huntington (1996) referred to as a clash of civilizations between “the West” and “the Islamic world” (Abrahamian, 2003). This trend has continued throughout the 2010s, particularly since the self-proclamation of the Islamic State’s caliphate whose followers claimed responsibility for many terrorist attacks and atrocities around the globe (Satti, 2015; Zhang & Hellmueller, 2016).

In sum, while research on media coverage of Islam and Muslims as an outgroup has seen a proliferation of studies on tone, context, and effects in recent years, much less is known about the type of news domains in which intergroup encounters involving Muslims and non-Muslims take place. Developing a deeper understanding of media coverage involving such interactions is therefore critical for a variety of outcomes, most notably public opinion about Muslims. Therefore, defining *where* these interactions occur is a first important step as it provides a broader frame of reference and has implications for potential readership and their news preferences. With this in mind, three related aspects can be examined to help answer the first broad research question:

RQ1: *Where do portrayals of intergroup encounters involving Muslims typically appear in U.S. newspapers?*

RQ1a: *In which news domains can those portrayals typically be found?*

RQ1b: *In which newspaper sections are those portrayals typically placed?*

RQ1c: *To what extent can those portrayals be found on the front page?*

Given that news coverage is rarely uniform across different media outlets, this study differentiates newspapers based on their primary service area, that is, national newspapers that are read nationwide (and oftentimes even beyond the nation's borders) and local/regional newspapers that are read by citizens in specific metropolitan areas or regions within a particular U.S. state. Given their long tradition, wide circulation, and journalistic resources, national news outlets like the *New York Times* have the potential for setting the national news agenda, but agenda-setting and priming effects can be found at the local level too (Kim, Scheufele, & Shanahan, 2002). Readers of local newspapers also tend to be more aware of local issues as well as more interested and involved in local politics (Scheufele, Shanahan, & Kim, 2002). In fact, many news audiences consume local rather than national news (and often both) and pay attention to issues that are of local interest (Moy, McCluskey, McCoy, & Spratt, 2004). Despite the rise of digital media that have fundamentally reshaped local news and the public's polarized views about national news outlets, a majority of Americans continue to have trust in their local news outlets and believe they report the news accurately and fairly, and fulfill their watchdog role regarding local political elites (Pew, 2019a). While much news research in the intergroup contact literature focuses on larger national or international news outlets, local and regional newspapers continue to be of empirical interest for media scholars (McKay-Semmler, Semmler, & Kim, 2014; Pines, Harwood, & Giles, 2018; Stewart, Pitts, & Osborne, 2011). A local event may be considered newsworthy given its specific geo-ethnic context (Grimm & Andsager, 2011; Lin & Song, 2006), its physical and psychological closeness (i.e., proximity and scope) as well as its

social significance for the local community (Cohen, Adoni, Bantz, Robinson, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1990; Shoemaker, Lee, Han, & Cohen, 2007). With this in mind, given the differences in terms of journalistic resources and circulation, the following question is proposed to examine differences between national and local/regional newspapers in the U.S.:

RQ1d: *To what extent do these patterns (i.e., news domains and newspaper sections in which intergroup encounters are portrayed) differ between national and local newspapers?*

The Entities that Constitute Intergroup Encounters

While Muslim/non-Muslim interactions may be portrayed in a variety of news contexts, there can also be considerable variation in the portrayals of the different entities that constitute an intergroup encounter. Research on media coverage about Muslims often focuses on groups or individuals. This distinction is important, especially in light of the strong focus on terrorism and extremism as outlined in the previous section. Focusing on individuals inevitably involves some form of generalizing and other cognitive processes that help negotiate relationships between predominant stereotypical traits of an outgroup and the traits of individuals who are part of that group (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011; Rothbart, 1996). In portraying individuals, the media evoke representativeness as well as (stereo-)typicality or atypicality (Rothbart, Sriram, & Davis-Stitt, 1996). Such portrayals have implications for how content gets processed. Specifically, when exposed to individuals as potential representatives of their groups, people tend to pay more attention to those outgroup individuals that confirm the predominant stereotype about that group and less attention to those who are not in line with that group stereotype (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011; Rojahn & Pettigrew, 1992). In portraying groups, the media may evoke viewers' perceptions of group entitativity, that is, the extent to which a group is *perceived* as a coherent

entity (Campbell, 1958; Lickel et al., 2000), which is different from the notion of *actual* group cohesiveness (Cartwright & Zander, 1960; Seashore, 1954). Outgroups that are perceived to be strongly entitative tend to be evaluated more threatening than non-entitative groups (Castano, Sacchi, & Gries, 2003). Exposure to media messages that unfavorably represent one's ingroup (such as U.S. Latinx/Hispanics viewing an immigration-critical news story) can harm ingroup entitativity perceptions and can serve as a mechanism for distancing oneself from a potentially harmful ingroup characterization (Seate & Mastro, 2015). Regardless of individuals or groups, focusing on people has certain advantages in media framing. Making people central characters in news stories sends a signal of building empathy and rapport, establishing bonds, and creating sympathy among different social groups (Coe & Neumann, 2011), thus personalizing news content by giving a face to a religion like Islam. Conversely, it may also scapegoat and single out individuals or groups. For example, a terrorist attack may be framed as an action committed by a "lone wolf" (Spaaij, 2010) or as part of a collective, organized group activity (Horgan, 2005), with implications for how people view the outgroup associated with that individual.

Another way to portray Muslims is via more abstract entities, such as organizations, institutions, or places of worship. Oftentimes those entities serve as a stand-in for the individuals that created or govern the organization. Public discussions involving Islamic institutions, for example about the "Ground Zero Mosque" (an Islamic community center in lower Manhattan originally known as the Cordoba House and later renamed into Park51) have generated a lot of media coverage (DeFoster, 2015; Yang & Self, 2015). More recently, setting fires at Islamic houses of worship (like in Joplin, Missouri, in 2012) or mosque shootings, as in Quebec, Canada, in 2017 (Kwon, Chadha, & Wang, 2019), or Christchurch, New Zealand, in 2019 (Rahman, 2020), garnered considerable media attention. Places of worship and other brick-and-mortar

institutions are not the only entities for portraying intergroup encounters. In other occasions, even larger entities may be portrayed as representing a belief (Islam) or a group (Muslims) in news narratives, such as the Islamic State (IS), the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, or entire Muslim-majority nations. In fact, the analysis of media content about foreign policy and international affairs, specifically relations among countries, lends itself to the study of intergroup phenomena at a macro-level (Rivenburgh, 1997, p. 79). All those entities may be part of certain intergroup encounters too. Those may be portrayed as a person-institution interaction (such as the arsonist setting fire at the mosque), an institution-group interaction (such as the IS attacking non-Muslims), or an institution-only interaction (such as the U.S. fighting against the IS). In sum, referencing organizations may shape news narratives in ways that people-oriented narratives cannot do. Referencing organizations – as opposed to groups – may be a way to portray group entitativity or cohesiveness because organizations may underline shared values or a common heritage and foster a sense of belonging and community. Alternatively, it is easier to mobilize against a more abstract entity (like the IS) as opposed to a group of people. Similar to people, there are advantages and disadvantages associated with those framing choices.

Perhaps the highest level of abstraction is achieved by invoking the entire belief system or faith. This is not uncommon in political elites' discourse (Coe & Chenoweth, 2013). Similar to organizations, making more abstract references has certain advantages over invoking more specific referents such as people. Specifically, invocations of "Islam" or the "Muslim faith" may be more suitable in combination with less individualistic and more abstract elements of that belief system, including its values, principles, history, rituals, and symbols. Like organizations, invocations of Islam may further amplify group entitativity – with positive or negative implications. For example, notions of "radical Islam" that are frequently heard in political

discourse of far-right parties help promote and perpetuate Islamophobic narratives in the media (Waikar, 2018), with stronger effects on conservatives who do not differentiate between “radical Islam” and “terrorism” (Hoewe & Bowe, 2018). Although notions like “Islam” or “radical Islam” are abstract and do not explicitly invoke groups, they nonetheless serve as identity sources and are symbolic for the groups and individuals associated with them.

In sum, the language chosen for news narratives that involve acts of terrorism and extremism can create and reinforce group biases and negatively shape public opinion about groups that are frequently associated with these concepts (West & Lloyd, 2017). Seeing and understanding *who* – or *what* – constitutes the intergroup encounter can help audiences identify with the entity and model similar interactions, which may or may not be beneficial to the intergroup relation. Employing Benedict Anderson’s (1991) notion of “imagined communities,” it helps media audiences who may represent different social groups and lack direct contact to “imagine” the outgroup’s place within that “community” or society. To account for these nuances in media coverage on Islam and Muslims, the next research question asks:

RQ2a: *To what extent do news portrayals of intergroup encounters involving Muslims include references to individuals, groups, organizations, and the religion itself?*

Similar to the previous section on news domains (RQ1), the second part of RQ2 focuses on potential differences based on a newspaper’s primary service area. Specifically, it seeks to examine the extent to which national and local/regional newspapers reference different entities – people (including both individuals and groups), organizations, and Islam itself – when portraying intergroup encounters as part of their news stories.

RQ2b: *To what extent do patterns of referencing individuals, groups, organizations, and the religion itself as part of intergroup encounters involving Muslims differ between national and local newspapers?*

The Nature of Intergroup Encounters: Actions and Agency

Members of different social groups interact with members of other groups for numerous reasons, are driven by different motivations and interests, and act with varying levels of agency and autonomy. In the most abstract sense, intergroup encounters may be understood in terms of the *actions* taken to pursue certain goals, particularly the ways those goals, or their underlying interests, are managed, negotiated, and depicted in the news. Since a news portrayal of an intergroup encounter only provides a snapshot of a more complex intergroup situation – and, in fact, may often end up as sound- or image-bite news with detrimental effects (Esser, 2008; Hallin, 1992; Rinke, 2016) – it is important to focus on the means to the ends, that is, the intergroup actions of the moment that shape the larger dynamic between those groups. Mindful of the many ways in which goals can be pursued, those actions may be broadly shaped by conflict on the one side or support on the other side of the spectrum.

Intergroup conflict makes a clash of interests, motivations, and goals more visible and helps to draw boundaries between social groups. Conventional “us-versus-them” portrayals represent a familiar theme in intergroup-relations research with focus on identity aspects (Cikara, Botvinick & Fiske, 2011; Huntington, 1996; Kinder & Kam, 2010). In fact, conflict is often the ill for which intergroup contact is seen as a remedy and a generally productive strategy to reduce outgroup prejudice and improve relations between social groups (Harwood, 2017). This, of course, depends on favorable conditions, such as having institutional structures that support these intergroup encounters (Allport, 1954). Long-lasting and often intractable conflicts around the world have been popular study contexts for intergroup-relations researchers, including the Democratic Republic of Congo (e.g., Bilali, Vollhardt, & Rarick, 2017; Paluck, 2010; Vollhardt & Bilali, 2015), Rwanda (e.g., Bilali & Vollhardt, 2013; Paluck, 2009; Rimé, Kanyangara,

Yzerbyt, & Paez, 2011), South Africa (e.g., Alexander & Tredoux, 2010; Gibson & Claassen, 2010; Schieferdecker, 2017; Schieferdecker & Wessler, 2017), Israel/Palestine (e.g., Cole et al. 2003; Ditlmann & Samii, 2016; Tal-Or & Tsfati, 2016), Northern Ireland (e.g., Hewstone et al., 2008; Paolini, Hewstone, Cairns, & Voci, 2004; Tausch, Hewstone, Kenworthy, Cairns, & Christ, 2007), and Bosnia (e.g., Biro et al., 2004; Cehajic, Brown, & Castano, 2008; Voci, Hadziosmanovic, Cakal, Veneziani, & Hewstone, 2017).

When it comes to media content, conflictual actions may be expressed by one group acting against another (e.g., using violence against each other, engaging in illegal activities hurting others, forming legal protests aimed at others). Such scenarios may also include situations in which one group takes away resources from another group (Rivenburgh, 2000). Analysis of media content in the intergroup contact literature remains scarce, especially vis-à-vis the plethora of experimental studies that are often designed with intergroup conflict in mind. According to research that focuses on visual depictions of group differences in conflict settings, outgroup members (e.g., non-U.S. police or military personnel) are portrayed as more explicitly violent than ingroup members (e.g., U.S. soldiers) (Fishman & Marvin, 2003). Media portrayals involving conflict that primarily serve one's ingroup therefore tend to downplay the suffering of the outgroup while simultaneously emphasizing the ingroup's suffering and victimization and minimizing the harm the ingroup inflicts upon an outgroup (see also Bilali & Ross, 2012; Nadler & Saguy, 2004; Pratto & Glasford, 2008). Similarly, U.S. media coverage of the country's use of drones in conflict zones around the world tends to frame the drone program more favorably (e.g., of strategic value, technologically advanced) while downplaying civilian casualties, compared to non-U.S. news outlets (Sheets, Rowling, & Jones, 2015; see also Entman, 1991). These patterns, which tend to be more visible in intergroup conflict settings, can be explained by social identity

theory, particularly national identity and ethnocentrism. Constrained by the sociocultural context in which journalists normally operate, they tend to be sensitive to such identity needs and pressures when deciding on how to report news about intergroup conflict (Jones & Sheets, 2009; Rivenburgh, 2000).

On the contrary, media portrayals of intergroup encounters may underscore notions of support, compromise, and cooperation, for example, by providing material (e.g., shelter, food, money, other donations) or intangible resources (e.g., spiritual support, information, services, teaching). Research on media portrayals of positive intergroup encounters remains relatively scarce, presumably because of the heavy (and often justified) focus on conflict situations. However, a few notable exceptions exist. Based on a large-scale analysis of newspaper coverage of inclusionary, pro-immigrant events across more than 50 metropolitan areas, immigrant inclusion can be effective and immigrant-native boundaries can break down with increasing visibility and political participation of immigrants as well as salience of immigration as an issue (Okamoto & Ebert, 2016). A similar analysis of immigration news coverage in U.S. states that share a border with Mexico reveals that positive outgroup statements were far less common compared to negative outgroup statements and positive ingroup statements, therefore confirming the linguistic intergroup bias (Dragojevic, Sink, & Mastro, 2017). However, while this research unearths important insights about language and bias in portraying outgroups in the news, it remains unknown to what extent intergroup encounters are shaped by support and cooperation. Important empirical insights on this aspect are also provided by case studies and content analyses that focus on post-conflict reconciliation discourses (e.g., Bratic, 2008; Golčevski, von Engelhardt, & Boomgaarden, 2013).

Every intergroup situation is also shaped by differences in status – both perceived and real – between the groups involved. This struggle over power, responsibility and autonomy introduces a second criterion to describe the nature of the intergroup encounter: *agency*. In psychology, the concept of self-agency is central to selfhood. Individuals tend to resist threats to their autonomy because of their motivation to maintain independence, control, and freedom of choice and behavior (Brehm, 1966). People who place emphasis on self-agency also tend to have higher levels of self-efficacy (i.e., the confidence in one’s ability to exert control over one’s environment and produce desired outcomes; see Bandura, 1982), self-regulation (i.e., the ability to change and direct one’s behavior toward desired goals; see Carver & Scheier, 1982), self-determination (i.e., the perception that one’s own behaviors are autonomously chosen; see Deci & Ryan, 1985), and a strong belief in free will (Guenther & Alicke, 2013). Guided by this line of research, agency may, for the purpose of this study, be defined as the capacity to exert one’s power and control over one’s social environment to affect intergroup outcomes. The distribution of such agency in intergroup relations largely depends on two central, non-static features of social hierarchies: power and status (Fiske, Dupree, Nicolas, & Swencionis, 2016). Power describes asymmetrical control over scarce resources whereas status expresses respect and social prestige (Fiske, 2010; Galinsky, Rucker, & Magee, 2015; Ridgeway, 2014). The interaction between status and power in an intergroup context creates psychological and social distance so that groups with greater power and higher status become increasingly distant from others, especially low-status and low-power social groups (Lammers, Galinsky, Gordijn, & Otten, 2012; Magee & Smith, 2013).

In the context of this study, the principal agent, i.e., the one who initiates action (or who is mainly responsible for the action), can be a Muslim or a non-Muslim entity. Agency also

provides information about the direction of the resource flow. It might be one-sided (i.e., agent-initiated, such as establishing an interfaith dialogue or initiating a protest march) or two-sided (i.e., mutual, reciprocal, without clear agency, such as cooperating in a business opportunity or joining a protest). It is safe to assume that oftentimes diverging or converging interests are inherently two-sided as those interests are negotiated. However, while this is often implied, making the aspect of agency explicit in the media portrayal would further accentuate the nature of the interaction. It is therefore important to take the portrayal of agency in intergroup encounters into account as it has implications for perceptions of power and status of the social groups portrayed. Likewise, effective intergroup encounters, such as intercultural exchange and community intergroup dialogue programs, support mutual understanding, alliance building, and agency regarding social change (DeTurk, 2006). Integrating these two features – actions and agency – as a way to better understand the nature of Muslim/non-Muslim encounters, the next set of research questions is as follows:

RQ3a: *To what extent do portrayals of intergroup encounters involving Muslims include conflict versus support?*

RQ3b: *To what extent are Muslims portrayed as having agency over these actions?*

RQ3c: *To what extent do these patterns differ between national and local/regional newspapers?*

The Valence of Intergroup Encounters

Whether an intergroup encounter is shaped by conflict or support has direct implications on the tone of the news portrayal. Early research on news production procedures, media logic, and news framing shows why certain events are considered news events (Gans, 1980). In foreign policy news coverage, an event that is clearly understood and can be interpreted without

ambiguity is likely to be chosen as a news story (Galtung & Ruge, 1965). Events that involve negativity, elite actors, competition, and conflict have traditionally been considered more newsworthy events (Bell, 1991; Schlesinger, 1987). However, referencing positive news (such as rescue missions or finding cures) has become a more common journalistic practice (O'Neill & Harcup, 2009). Journalists may also conceive of themselves as change agents who advocate for social change and political reform (Downman & Murray, 2018; Hanitzsch & Vos, 2018), especially in societies in transition (Chan, Pan, & Lee, 2004; Pintak, 2014; Pintak & Ginges, 2008) and when reporting on humanitarian crises and human rights violations (Downman & Ubayasiri, 2017).

Positive intergroup encounters may be considered newsworthy events as, for example, shown by news coverage of pro-immigrant civic and political events in the U.S. context (Okamoto & Ebert, 2016). In these contact situations, a different tone may be used toward the different entities constituting the intergroup encounter, regardless of agency. In line with social identity theory, certain social groups or individuals may be portrayed in a more favorable light than others in media content, reflecting social identity motivations expressed in journalistic choices. One such motivation can be in-group favoritism which, in a foreign or international news context, translates into ethnocentrism (Rivenburgh, 2000), an enduring news value (Gans, 1980). For instance, U.S. news stories about Muslim Americans may portray this group as more progressive and democracy-oriented, and therefore more positive, than stories about Muslims abroad (Ibrahim, 2010; Mertens & de Smaele, 2016; Powell, 2011). Likewise, against the backdrop of the Arab uprisings, Muslims abroad may be depicted as friendly, nonviolent, pro-democratic and freedom-loving, and are therefore worthy of foreign support in contrast to the Islamic leaders who govern them (Rane & Salem, 2012).

A look into the stereotyping literature provides valuable insights about outgroup portrayals. Much research on stereotypical representations of marginalized groups in the U.S. media has focused on racial and ethnic minorities, including Hispanics (Dixon & Azocar, 2006; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005), African Americans (Dixon & Azocar, 2007), and Native Americans (Mastro & Greenberg, 2000). Stereotypes based on age, gender, and sexual orientation, often focusing on the intersection of these stereotypes, have also been subject to empirical analysis (Holz Ivory, Gibson, & Ivory, 2009; Signorielli, 2004; Stern & Mastro, 2004). Research on media portrayals of Islam and Muslims in the U.S. context can be traced back to the early 1980s (Said, 1981) – against the backdrop of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the subsequent hostage crisis. Specifically, journalists covering Islam seemed to be driven by “passion, prejudice, or political interests” (Said, 1981, p. 23) rather than journalistic norms such as objective, unbiased representations. After nearly two decades of relative silence on this topic, media coverage of Islam and Muslims became again a focal point – this time in the context of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the increased engagement of the nation in Muslim-majority countries like Afghanistan and Iraq. Within the last two decades, media scholars have produced impressive empirical works that investigate Muslim stereotypes and their representation in the mass media (e.g., Alsultany, 2012; Farouqui, 2009; Morey & Yaqin, 2011; Nacos & Torres-Reyna, 2007; Poole, 2002; Poole & Richardson, 2010).

As cognitive structures, stereotypes help simplify the complexities of the social world and are the outcome of people’s tendency to categorize others based on certain identity aspects. The process of stereotyping is therefore closely linked to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and self-categorization theory (Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994; Turner & Reynolds, 2011). In line with cultivation theory, mass media have the potential to shape audience

beliefs about social realities because they reflect, perpetuate, and reinforce various group-based stereotypes (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli, & Shanahan, 2002). With regard to the examination of media messages, the stereotype content model is of particular analytical value (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008; Fiske, 2012). Rooted in perceptions of competition and relative status, the model uses a 2x2-matrix to assess an outgroup's *warmth* and *competence* as overarching stereotypical dimensions of intergroup and interpersonal cognition (for earlier works see also Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Wojciszke, 2005). Warmth broadly refers to the intentions of the actor(s) and how these are evaluated at an interpersonal or intergroup level with regard to the level of perceived threat coming from the outgroup (e.g., good-natured vs. evil-spirited) (Cuddy et al., 2008). Competence refers to how capable and effective individuals or groups are in accomplishing their goals (Sides & Gross, 2013) and “entails the possession of skills, talents, and capability (and) can take the form of potential action as well as actual action” (Cuddy et al., 2008, p. 65).

The stereotype content model was developed in the area of social psychology to describe the *process* of stereotyping, but it has utility for examining stereotypes in media messages too. For example, Muslims and people from the Middle East are generally rated lower on both warmth and competence compared to other racial/ethnic groups (e.g., Whites, Asians) and religious groups (e.g., Jews, Christians) (Fiske, 2012). This pattern is also reflected in media and discourse scholarship. Specifically, media coverage of Muslims is highlighted by crisis and conflict (Sheikh, Price, & Oshagan, 1995). Via linking to themes of terrorism and fundamentalism, Muslims' apparent hostile intentions are frequently juxtaposed with incompatibility with conventional “Western” values (Karim, 2006; Nacos & Torres-Reyna, 2007; Shaheen, 2009). These works – primarily portraying Muslims as untrustworthy, hostile or

dangerous vis-à-vis other groups – resemble a rather low level of warmth in the stereotyping content model (Fiske et al., 2002). While perceived warmth of Muslims has received much scholarly attention in stereotyping research, less clarity exists with regard to their perceived competence (Sides & Gross, 2013). While participants in the aforementioned studies (e.g., Fiske, 2012) rate Muslims low on this dimension, media coverage often tells a different story, ranging from invocations of power, wealth, and privilege (Cottle, 2011; Jasperson & El-Kikhia, 2004) to depictions of intellectual inferiority, lack of scientific progress, and economic backwardness in the Islamic world (Said, 2008; Viorst, 1995), and occasionally incorporating elements of both (Shaheen, 2009). It is therefore important to examine the power and prevalence of stereotypes in understanding and evaluating intergroup relations involving Muslims.

In sum, a sizable body of scholarship has focused on outgroup portrayals of Muslims that are predominately negative (e.g., Ahmed & Matthes, 2017; Baker, Gabrielatos, & McEnery, 2013; Mertens & de Smaele 2016; Moore et al., 2008; Nacos & Torres-Reyna, 2007; Poole & Richardson, 2010; Trevino, Kanso, & Nelson, 2010), but little is known about the tone of those portrayals when the situation involves an encounter with another group. Considering these differences in valence, the next set of research questions asks:

RQ4a: *To what extent is the outcome of the intergroup encounter involving Muslims portrayed positively?*

RQ4b: *To what extent are Muslims in those intergroup encounters portrayed positively?*

Given that an event's proximity to a media outlet's likely audience is an important news value, it is worth examining the differences between national and local/regional newspapers. National newspapers with greater distance to the event (e.g., a Muslim/non-Muslim encounter abroad) may use a different tone to cover the event than local newspapers with better access,

more on-the-ground resources, and a stronger motivation to cover local events. For example, research on newspaper coverage of relations between local residents and immigrant newcomers highlights the potential of local newspapers in fostering prosocial intergroup relations in metropolitan areas (Okamoto & Ebert, 2016). With this in mind, the last part of RQ4 asks:

RQ4c: *To what extent is the outcome of the intergroup encounter involving Muslims portrayed positively in national versus local/regional newspapers?*

The Salience of Social Identities in Intergroup Encounters

Intergroup relations literature frequently links intergroup contact and social identity theory. Individuals portrayed in news stories are rarely one-dimensional characters but in fact represent a multitude of social identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, religion, social class, gender, sexuality) that intersect (Vertovec & Rogers, 1998). The number of studies that analyze media content and build on social identity theory has grown considerably in recent years, with many of them focusing on gender (e.g., Lynch, Tompkins, van Driel, & Fritz, 2016; Sink & Mastro, 2017), language (e.g., Dragojevic, Mastro, Giles, & Sink, 2016; Dragojevic et al., 2017), race/ethnicity (e.g., Banjo & Jennings, 2017; Sui & Paul, 2017; Tukachinsky, Mastro, & Yarchi, 2015), and nationality (e.g., Rowling, Gilmore, & Sheets, 2015; Rowling, Sheets, & Jones, 2015). Relatively little empirical research has been done regarding the role of religious identity in shaping portrayals of intergroup relations in the news even though in many cases – primarily experiments – it provided the study context (e.g., Husnu, Mertan, & Cicek, 2018; Tal-Or & Tsfati, 2016; Tausch et al., 2007). Public opinion research that uses social identity theory as a framework for explaining majority group members' views of religious minorities, such as Muslims and Mormons, reveals that religious identification processes have a far stronger influence on those views than social and political factors (Penning, 2009). In line with social

identification processes, this suggests that individuals tend to classify religious communities and process information about those religious groups in terms of perceived group characteristics.

Scholarship also highlights the role of superordinate identities (for example, via citizenship) in improving the status of outgroups once they become identified with the nation and its symbols (such as *Muslim Americans*). Religious identity is considered one of the most powerful social identities (Mavor & Ysseldyk, 2020), often unmatched by identification with other groups given its emphasis on eternal group membership, value-driven moral authority, and its compelling affective experiences that can explain even extreme outcomes such as religious fundamentalism (Ysseldyk, Matheson, & Anisman, 2010). Pivotal (crisis) events can make a particular social identity more salient, that is, more central to an individual's concept of self. This was the case for many Muslims in the aftermath of 9/11 (Peek, 2005), thus demonstrating the importance of considering the larger sociopolitical and historical context in which identity formation typically takes place.

Another identity source has received considerably more scholarly attention in recent years, particularly by political scientists with focus on the U.S. context: national identity (e.g., Grimm, Huddy, Schmidt, & Seethaler, 2016; Huddy & Khatib, 2007). Similar to religious identity, national identity can be a powerful identity construct as it often assumes a superordinate role. In line with the common ingroup identity model (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000), an increase in the salience of a superordinate identity (like national identity) compared to a subordinate identity (like ethnic identity) has the potential to improve intergroup relations by minimizing the social distance between members of different social groups (Levendusky, 2018; Transue, 2007). For example, news stories about Muslim Americans tend to be more positive than stories about foreign Muslims (Ibrahim, 2010; Powell, 2011). In media contexts, national identity can be

critical for understanding which news frames are more likely to resonate culturally with the audience during times of war and conflict (Rowling, Sheets, & Jones, 2015).

Besides nationality and religion as social identity sources central to this study, people derive self-esteem, comfort, and a sense of security from belonging to various other social groups (Rowling, 2019). For example, one's profession or occupation can be such an identity source. People derive from their professional activities not only meaning, but also a certain sense of belonging to social groups – and therefore social status and prestige. In fact, simply using “I am” phrases when introducing oneself and talking about one's work (as opposed to, for example, “I work as”) can be seen as revealing an occupational identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Occupation-based social identity is particularly important for individuals with higher education, who work in professions that are considered to be of higher status, and who hold jobs that are shaped by strong occupational cultures, norms, and ideology (Ulfsdotter Eriksson & Linde, 2014). While occupations such as lawyers or physicians typically satisfy all these criteria, individuals in low-status professions, such as waste collectors or coalminers, often take pride in their work because these jobs are associated with a strong work culture which contributes to a positive occupational identification (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Ulfsdotter Eriksson & Flisbäck, 2011). Lastly, people also derive self-esteem from belonging to specific racial and ethnic groups. Other than occupational identity, these social identities are often examined vis-à-vis national identity (Sidanius, Feshbach, Levin, & Pratto, 1997; Transue, 2007) or partisan identity (Huddy, Mason, & Horwitz, 2016). Ethnic identity, however, remains a fuzzy concept that can be better understood in conjunction with other group-based identities including generation, cultural heritage/ancestry, and religion, especially as it relates to Muslims (Britto, 2008; see also Van de Vijver, Blommaert, Gkoumasi, & Stogianni, 2015).

Incorporating those identities into media content and accentuating them accordingly vis-à-vis other entities that are part of an intergroup encounter helps audiences to identify with and relate to those entities in the news story. Communication research has only recently begun to examine social identity aspects as features of intergroup narratives, i.e., stories in which members of various social groups interact (Joyce & Harwood, 2020, p. 72), however, not with the goal to examine the media content itself. Put differently, while media effects research about intergroup media seems to thrive, little is known about the extent to which those intergroup portrayals are covered by the media. Presenting more layers of a media character's social identity may make a news story more appealing to certain audiences. For example, to a U.S. audience, a story about a Muslim American interacting with a Jewish American may draw more attention than an interaction between a Muslim and a Jew as it features aspects of both a religious *and* a (common) national identity, thus providing more opportunities to connect and identify with the characters of the intergroup encounter and draw social comparisons. In other words, those identity features may help gratify underlying social identity motivations, such as reducing social uncertainty (Harwood, 1999; Hogg, 2000) and engaging in social enhancement (Abrams & Hogg, 1988; Joyce & Harwood, 2020). To further examine the social identity aspects embedded in news portrayals of intergroup encounters, the final set of research questions is as follows:

RQ5a: *To what extent do news portrayals of intergroup encounters involving Muslims include other religious identities?*

RQ5b: *To what extent do news portrayals of intergroup encounters involving Muslims include other identity aspects of the Muslim entity (i.e., national, racial/ethnic, and occupational identity)?*

Lastly, the extent and the ways in which identity creation in the news takes place may vary based on the type of newspapers and their target audiences. Based on the understanding of

nations as socially and discursively constructed, imagined communities (Anderson, 1991), newspapers “made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways” (p. 36). Thus, national newspapers with a wider reach are perhaps more instrumental than smaller local newspapers to the idea of creating a national identity and building a national community. National newspapers are relevant to national identity because they typically “encourage their readers to see the world in general in specifically national terms, ‘remind’ them of their own nation in particular, and help them to think in patriotic terms about it” (Rosie, MacInnes, Petersoo, Condor, & Kennedy, 2004, p. 437).

Local and regional newspapers can be important mediators of identity too as they depict community life and contribute to the promotion of local culture and identity (Skogerbø & Winsvold, 2011). In fact, as the work on imagined communities highlights, provincial papers play a key role in connecting local communities with the national sphere, as seen, for example, in the process of uniting European colonies in South America into new communities that were distinct from the European societies and political systems they left behind (Anderson, 1991). Local newspapers also have an educational role for local identity creation via informing readers about local lifestyle, history, and festivals, especially in more rural places (Rausch, 2004). Thus, given the mass media’s role in creating, shaping, and reproducing identity, particularly national identity, the final research question of this section focuses on examining the extent to which both types of newspapers reflect the idea of identity construction along several identity dimensions.

RQ5c: *To what extent do identity references in portrayals of intergroup encounters involving Muslims differ between national and local/regional newspapers?*

Media Effects of Vicarious Intergroup Contact

Analyzing media content is not only empirically relevant for describing the broader trends and patterns of certain media messages, but it is also theoretically important in that those media messages may have certain effects on audience members. In fact, oftentimes not enough scholarly attention is paid to actual media content that is assumed to drive certain effects (Graber, 2004). In the context of this study, it is important to examine message characteristics of intergroup portrayals in the news as those may impact audience members' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors toward the outgroup. For example, being exposed to such portrayals may shape an ingroup member's belief about the outgroup that constitutes the intergroup encounter. Specifically, in order to study the utility of vicarious intergroup contact it is necessary to analyze what constitutes this type of mediated encounter between different social groups in the first place. Thus, drawing on relevant scholarship in social psychology and particularly media psychology, the following section provides an overview of the focal outcome variables examined in this study as well as a set of hypotheses and research questions proposed to analyze the effects of news portrayals of intergroup encounters involving Muslims.

Orientations Towards the Outgroup

As a meta-concept, orientations toward the outgroup guides this study. To explicate this concept, the following set of theoretically relevant outcome variables are addressed: outgroup attitudes, outgroup trust, and willingness to engage in future contact with the outgroup.

First, as a staple in intergroup-relations research, *outgroup attitudes* shape how the ingroup relates to a certain outgroup in a social environment. Therefore, outgroup attitudes are a vital and enduring component for managing relations between groups (Harwood et al., 2013). Generally, attitudes comprise a set of beliefs (representing the cognitive dimension), feelings

(representing the affective dimension), and values whereas opinions are the manifestations of those attitudes (Glynn, Herbst, Lindeman, O’Keefe, & Shapiro, 2016). One form of attitudinal expression – prejudice – has dominated most contact-effects research since the contact hypothesis was first formulated (for early works see Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947; for more recent assessments about attitudinal outcomes see Hewstone & Swart, 2011; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Less surprising, the scholarly focus in much intergroup relations literature has been on normative goals like the objective to *decrease* prejudice, i.e., negative or hostile attitudes toward distinguishable groups (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 2005), such as Islamophobia (e.g., Abrams, Van de Vyver, Houston, & Vasiljevic, 2017; Turner & West, 2012). An explicit emphasis on *increasing* positive attitudes and prosocial behaviors has framed more recent scholarship on intergroup relations (Dixon, Levine, Reicher, & Durrheim, 2012; Dovidio, Gaertner, Shnabel, Saguy, & Johnson, 2010). Both direct and indirect forms of intergroup contact are positively associated not only with such attitudes, but also attitude strength (Christ, Hewstone, Tausch, Voci, Wagner, Hughes, & Cairns, 2010; Vonofakou, Hewstone, & Voci, 2007), i.e., the extent to which an attitude is consequential, resistant, and stable over time (Howe & Krosnick, 2017). Similarly, simply imagining engaging in intergroup contact has the potential to enhance intergroup attitudes (Desforges et al., 1997; Turner, Crisp, & Lambert, 2007), for example, by lowering even implicit prejudicial attitudes toward the outgroup (Turner & Crisp, 2010).

Second, *outgroup trust* – and ideally, mutual (i.e., intergroup) trust – is the glue that binds different social groups together. Trust represents a prime motivator for people to navigate their social relationships and “participate in group life without undue suspicion and vigilance” (Fiske, 2003, p. 241). Trust can be cognition-oriented (focused on the ingroup’s confidence in the outgroup’s skills and merits) and/or affection-oriented (focused on the ingroup’s feelings of

empathy and emotional closeness) (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Intergroup relations scholars have defined trust as “a social bond that is characterized by feelings of security and confidence in others’ good intentions and goodwill” (Tropp, 2008, p. 93), which also implies the absence of perceived threat in the intergroup setting (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Various extended forms of contact have been found to have a positive influence on outgroup trust, with more intimate ingroup relationships (like family members or friends) being more effective than less intimate ingroup relationships (like work colleagues or neighbors) (Tausch, Hewstone, Schmidt, Hughes, & Cairns, 2011). Trust itself can also serve as a mediator (Dhont & Van Hiel, 2011) and an antecedent for other interaction outcomes, especially with regard to intergroup reconciliation efforts and peace negotiations (Hewstone et al., 2006; Kramer & Carnevale, 2001). Since those efforts tend to be organized and led by institutional actors like governments, it is important to assess trust in those entities too (Saleem, Wojcieszak, Hawkins, Li, & Ramasubramanian, 2019). Even though these entities are not directly part of the intergroup relation, they nonetheless can shape the conditions under which successful intergroup contact can occur and thrive (Allport, 1954).

Third, while changes in beliefs and emotions are important psychological antecedents, behavioral effects – or at least the *intention to engage in future intergroup contact* – in response to social interactions between groups are often the ultimate outcome of interest (Tropp & Mallett, 2011). However, the path to actual behaviors is often not a straightforward one, with several cognitive and affective processes taking place before. The extent to which audience members can identify with a character and take on a different perspective is an important antecedent for future actions (Cohen, 2001; Joyce, 2017). For example, the stronger the identification with the ingroup character in a vicarious contact situation, the stronger the liking of

the outgroup that is featured in that situation, which in turn decreases prejudice and increases feelings of collective guilt as well as contact willingness (Moyer-Gusé, Dale, & Ortiz, 2019). Due to design and measurement challenges, only a limited number of studies have focused on the effects of intergroup contact forms on *actual* social interactions in the future (e.g., Crisp & Husnu, 2011; Stathi, Cameron, Hartley, & Bradford, 2014). Specifically, this is because the vast majority of scholarship on intergroup contact has been built on findings based on cross-sectional rather than experimental or longitudinal studies (Hewstone & Swart, 2011; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). One particular form of contact, imagined intergroup contact, has shown to have potential to increase willingness to engage in future contact (Crisp & Turner, 2013; Crisp, Husnu, Meleady, Stathi, & Turner, 2010; Harwood et al., 2017), suggesting that positive vicarious intergroup contact experiences may have similar behavioral effects. In contrast, exposure to negative media portrayals of one's ingroup, which represents a potential social identity threat, can lead to avoidance of outgroup members, especially if the ingroup is a marginalized or stigmatized minority (Saleem & Ramasubramanian, 2019).

Much of the media-effects research that focuses on portrayals of social groups in the media, including their interactions, have integrated social cognitive theory. For example, the extent to which one identifies with a media character, paired with perceptions of positive outcomes, may increase chances that audience members emulate the portrayed behavior (Nabi, 2009). Viewers of positive intergroup interactions in the media are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward the outgroup character, which in turn may translate into more positive views of the entire outgroup and even other social groups (Joyce & Harwood, 2014). These positive learning effects based on observing positive behaviors in the media have been well-documented in the area of children's educational programming (Fisch, 2002; Saleem, Anderson,

& Gentile, 2012; Zill, 2001). For example, children who frequently watch *Sesame Street* tend to have better cognitive skills (e.g., numeracy, literacy), prosocial reasoning, and more positive attitudes toward outgroup members (Mares & Pan, 2013). Using a social cognitive approach, the first set of hypotheses, with emphasis on orientations toward the outgroup, is proposed:

Exposure to positively framed intergroup encounters in the news is more likely than exposure to negatively framed intergroup encounters to:

H1: ... *enhance outgroup trust.*

H2: ... *to improve attitudes toward the outgroup.*

H3: ... *to increase willingness to interact with the outgroup.*

Interest in Learning about the Outgroup

Intergroup contact supports mutual learning because every contact situation also carries some information about the participating groups and the sociocultural context in which those groups are embedded. To initiate a learning process, however, some *interest in the outgroup* needs to be sparked, which represents the first mechanism with a mediating role in the conceptual framework of this dissertation. From an educational perspective, interest in a topic can be reinforced when the information that prospective learners receive is perceived as consistent with their values (Lupia, 2016). This principle also applies to vicarious contact situations: If group members who are involved in the intergroup encounter depicted in the news media hold values similar to the audience members, the event may spark interest in seeking more information about these groups. For instance, in the context of learning second languages, students who watch more television in a language other than their native language tend to have more positive attitudes toward that foreign language and the speakers of that language – a relationship that is mediated by interest in learning the language for social and cultural rather

than practical purposes (Harwood & Vincze, 2011). However, few studies outside educational settings (e.g., Noels, Clement, & Pelletier, 2001) have explicitly tested for interest in learning about an outgroup and outgroup-related issues.

Learning about the outgroup, and thus accumulating knowledge about the outgroup, serves as a corrective for potentially negative views held about outgroups (Pettigrew, 1998) and helps to improve outgroup views (Gardiner, 1972; Weldon, Carlston, Rissman, Slobodin, & Triandis, 1975; Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997). Moreover, knowledge has the potential to counteract ignorance and therefore undermine or disconfirm stereotypes (Kenworthy, Turner, Hewstone, & Voci, 2005; Miller, Kenworthy, Canales, & Stenstrom, 2006), reduce cognitive dissonance, and set new norms for intergroup behavior (Leippe & Eisenstadt, 1994). Interest in learning about another group seems less likely in contact situations with more limited cues and channels through which one experiences an outgroup member, such as imagined or computer-mediated forms of contact (Harwood, 2010). Improved intergroup knowledge can be a result of extended contact (Eller, Abrams, & Gomez, 2012) and direct contact (Eller & Abrams, 2003, 2004; see also Dovidio, Eller, & Hewstone, 2011). It is therefore worth investigating whether vicarious forms of contact have similar positive outcomes. Overall, relatively little research has focused on interest in learning about the outgroup as a cognitive mediator vis-à-vis affective mechanisms through which intergroup contact occurs (e.g., creating empathy) (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). One general limitation is that scholarship has heavily relied on affective measures (e.g., how people feel about the outgroup) for assessing concepts that are primarily of cognitive nature (e.g., holding certain beliefs and opinions about the outgroup) (Harwood, 2010). Interest in learning about the outgroup can serve as a cognitive mechanism

through which contact may affect orientations toward the outgroup. With this in mind, the following two hypotheses, with focus on direct and indirect effects, are posited:

H4: *Exposure to positively framed intergroup encounters in the news is more likely than exposure to negatively framed intergroup encounters to increase interest in learning more about the outgroup.*

H5: *The relationship between valence of intergroup encounters in the news and orientations toward the outgroup is mediated by interest in learning about the outgroup.*

Social Identity Motivations

Media content can be influential in activating and enhancing people's social identities (Seate, 2017), in large part because individuals are motivated by enhancement or uncertainty reduction (Joyce & Harwood, 2020). First, *social enhancement* involves comparing in- and outgroups with the goal of making one's ingroup appear favorable, which enhances group-based self-esteem (Abrams & Hogg, 1988) and ultimately reflects a positive social identity. Existing needs for positive group distinctiveness (or in-group favoritism) may get amplified if certain social identities are primed. The stronger an individual identifies with a social ingroup, the stronger the need for enhancing that social identity – or protecting it in case one perceives a threat to that identity, such as deviant behaviors. Seeing the reinforcement and perpetuation of stereotypes about one's ingroup in the media can act as a social identity threat, especially if the ingroup is a stigmatized group (Major & O'Brien, 2005). Furthermore, simply being aware of such stereotypes can be sufficient to threaten one's social identity (Steele, 1997). Confirming this pattern, research shows that social enhancement motivations are strengthened if ingroup members encounter media content that depicts an ingroup member engaging in criminal behaviors, as opposed to an outgroup member (Mastro, 2003).

With regard to vicarious contact involving different social groups, individuals may use mass media to satisfy their social identity needs – by way of intergroup comparisons – to enhance or protect their self-concept with regard to their social (e.g., ethnic) identity (Mastro, Behm-Morawitz, & Kopacz, 2008). While the role of threats (internal and external, perceived and real) in activating social identities is well-theorized in the social identity literature (Rowling, Gilmore, & Sheets, 2015; Stephan & Stephan, 2000; Wohl & Branscombe, 2009), social enhancement motivations may also be intensified if individuals sense an opportunity to promote or enhance their social identity in the event of past moral transgressions of ingroup members (Van der Toorn, Ellemers, & Doosje, 2015). The core idea of vicarious contact valence, especially seeing positive intergroup encounters in the media, can be regarded as such an opportunity to enhance one’s social identity – however, not necessarily at the cost of the outgroup, i.e., without concomitant outgroup derogation as it has often been theorized.

A second process, *uncertainty reduction*, has a long history in social psychology, especially in the context of interpersonal communication (Berger & Calabrese, 1974; see also Afifi, 2010; Knobloch, 2008). Integrating insights from social identity scholarship, uncertainty reduction occurs when individuals engage in group-based categorizations to minimize group-related uncertainties in the social world (Hogg, 2000). Individuals who feel uncertain about aspects that are important to and reflect on one’s sense of self and social identity tend to be “aversive and maladaptive because it compromises expectations and hinders effective action” (Hogg, Abrams, & Brewer, 2017, p. 574). This relationship, expressed as uncertainty-identity theory (Hogg & Wagoner, 2017), can be partly explained by self-categorization theory, an extension of social identity theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987; Turner & Oakes, 1989; for an overview of the social identity approach comprising these two theories see

Hornsey, 2008). Based on this view, the need to reduce uncertainty motivates individuals to internalize a prototype that describes their social identity and provide social meaning (Hogg, 2000). Reducing uncertainty therefore happens via group identifications through self-categorizing into social groups, and is consequential for ingroup attitudes, perceptions, behaviors, and outgroup expectations of these dimensions (Hogg et al., 2017). The existence and relative strength of multiple social identities plays an important role in reducing states of uncertainty. Research confirms that individuals who identify with few social groups and experience uncertainty are more prone to ideological orthodoxy and more likely to support authoritarianism, hostile ethnocentrism, xenophobia and other forms of extremism (Hogg, 2014; Hogg & Adelman, 2013; Hogg, Kruglanski, & van den Bos, 2013).

When it comes to media choices, uncertainty reduction motivates individuals to seek media content that supports their understanding of the world, what outgroups are like, and how groups interact with each other (Joyce & Harwood, 2020). These media choices could be expressed via increased media selectivity (Abrams, 2008; Knobloch-Westerwick & Hastall, 2010) or avoidance (Abrams & Giles, 2007). In the context of this study, this means that individuals who are motivated to reduce uncertainty about an outgroup may develop a stronger interest in seeking information about that group. This uncertainty, in turn, might stem from a difference in the valence of the media portrayal of the intergroup encounter: If audience members are exposed to news that depict an intergroup encounter with a negative outcome, it can represent a threat to the ingroup identity (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Essentially, such situations, shaped by uncertainty, may spark interest in learning more about the outgroup. Based on these two motivations, the following research questions are proposed to test the extent to which one central feature of the vicarious intergroup contact situation, valence, explains social uncertainty

reduction and social enhancement motivations, but also the extent to which they shape cognitions (i.e., interest in learning about the outgroup) and orientations toward the outgroup.

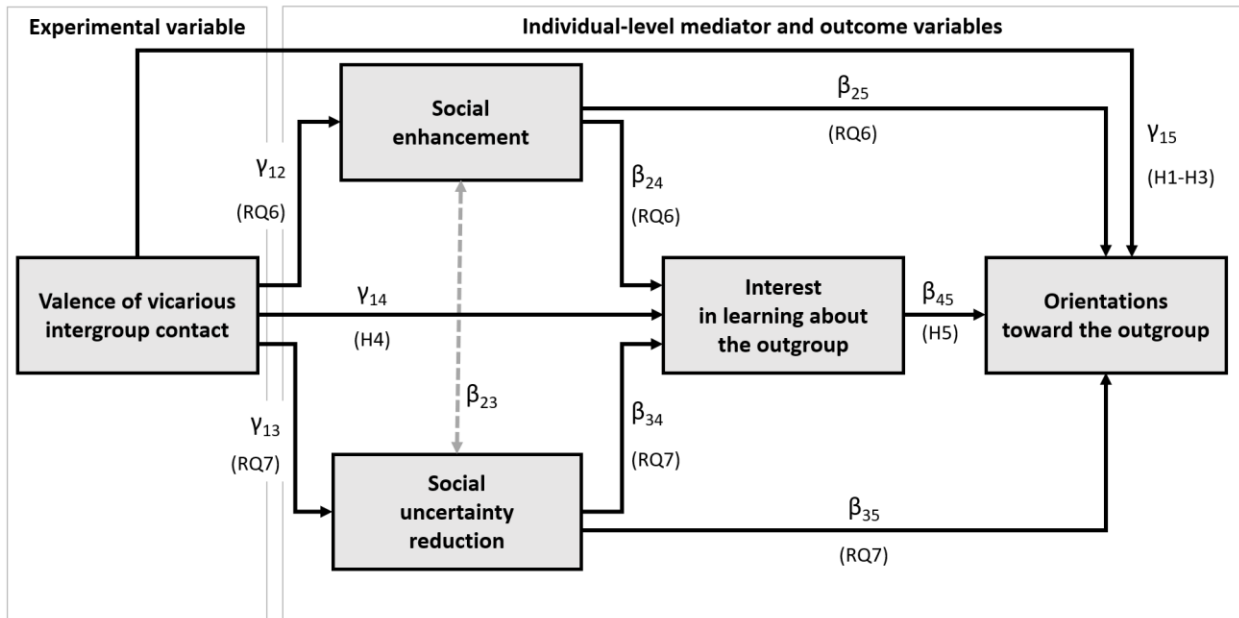
RQ6: *To what extent do social enhancement motivations mediate the relationship between vicarious contact valence and (a) interest in learning about the outgroup and (b) orientations toward the outgroup?*

RQ7: *To what extent do social uncertainty reduction motivations mediate the relationship between vicarious contact valence and (a) interest in learning about the outgroup and (b) orientations toward the outgroup?*

Figure 1 synthesizes the aforementioned variables and their relationships.

Figure 1

Predicted Model of Effects of Vicarious Contact Valence on Contact Willingness



Note. Relationships between the experimental variable and endogenous variables are described with the coefficient γ while relationships among the remaining endogenous variables in the model are described with the coefficient β . All direct- and indirect-effects hypotheses (H1-H5) and research questions (RQ6, RQ7) appear next to their corresponding paths.

National Identity Salience

A concept central to understanding social identity phenomena is *salience*, which indicates the activation of a social identity in a given situation. A salient social identity helps to increase the influence of one's group membership (Oakes, 1987) and relates to the psychological significance of being a member of a social group (Stets & Burke, 2000). A salience increase of one social identity occurs relative to other social identities (Slater, 2007). It is this relational perspective that ensures salience a central position in the social identity framework: If a category is salient, the group's social identity dominates. If a category is not salient, an individual's personal identity dominates. Managing these multiple social identities, which at times are rooted in different values and belief systems, can be complex (Roccas & Brewer, 2002).

Two social identity approaches that can be effective with regard to intergroup outcomes are based on *decategorization* and *recategorization* processes (Kenworthy et al., 2005). As the name suggests, decategorization processes posit that the use of category labels and identifiers is minimized or avoided altogether so that individuals primarily do not interact as representatives of their respective social groups, but rather on an individual, personalized basis (Brewer & Miller, 1984). According to the recategorization view of intergroup relations, individuals representing different social groups are more effective if the interacting parties place emphasis on an overarching, superordinate, all-inclusive category (e.g., "we" instead of "us and/versus them") (Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, & Dovidio, 1989), also referred to as the common ingroup identity model (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000, 2005). Although other approaches, largely based on differentiation, have been proposed (e.g., Hewstone & Brown, 2000), the focus of this project is on the recategorization approach by examining the effect of one *superordinate* social identity vis-à-vis various *subordinate* social identities on intergroup outcomes.

One specific superordinate identity that has increasingly received scholarly attention is *national identity*. Particularly for countries in which national identity and views of citizenship are based on a set of political principles rather than ethnocultural conceptions of nationhood, emphasizing the national identity can be effective in managing intergroup relations, for example with regard to immigration/citizenship policies and narratives centered on multiculturalism (Alba & Foner, 2014; Bauder, 2014; Brubaker, 1992). Scholarship in political psychology confirms that adhering to a shared superordinate (like U.S.-American) national identity has the potential to transcend subgroup boundaries, minimize the social distance between different groups, and improve intergroup relations by means of public policy (Transue, 2007). Emphasizing a common ingroup identity can also minimize affective polarization due to partisanship in politics (Levendusky, 2018). This highlights that individuals who identify with a higher-order entity, like the nation, tend to deemphasize conflict, competition, and outgroup derogation. However, in order to be effective that identity first needs to be made salient in the intergroup context.

Superordinate identities typically underscore their unifying potential via corresponding narratives that are built around shared values. These narratives can be powerful means of strategic communication, especially when confronted with external threats or past experiences with internal intergroup conflict. Comparing different ethnic and racial minority groups in the U.S. (African Americans, Hispanics) with the majority group (Whites), the majority in all groups tend to have similarly strong feelings about U.S. national identity and express pride in its symbols, values, and ideals (Citrin, Wong, & Duff, 2001). This suggests that particularly for individuals from ethnic or racial minorities, for whom their ethnic or racial identity is generally more salient than for Whites, this dual identity can be conducive to reducing intergroup conflict and improving intergroup relations under the umbrella of American national identity. In fact, the

very motto of the U.S. for nearly two centuries had been “E pluribus unum” (“Out of many, one”).¹ This is also evident in the “rally around the flag” discourse and mobilizing effect during times of public uncertainty, national crisis, and international conflict (Baker & Oneal, 2001; Schubert, Stewart, & Curran, 2002; see also Hutcheson, Domke, Billeaudeau, & Garland, 2004; Sheets et al., 2011). However, even when groups work together toward a higher (superordinate) goal or in response to a social identity threat to the common ingroup, social comparisons on the basis of subgroup identities, and ultimately intergroup tensions, may be inevitable because of the salience of those subgroup identities (Deschamps & Brown, 1983; Kam & Ramos, 2008). With this in mind, the last set of hypotheses and research questions focuses on the joint influence of vicarious contact valence and national identity salience on the key outcome and mediator variables. Specifically, it is predicted that making U.S. national identity salient in a news story about intergroup relations has positive effects on the aforementioned outcome variables.

H6: *The positive effects of vicarious contact valence on interest in learning about the outgroup are amplified when a superordinate (i.e., national) identity is emphasized in the news narrative.*

H7: *The positive effects of vicarious contact valence on orientations toward the outgroup are amplified when a superordinate (i.e., national) identity is emphasized in the news narrative.*

RQ8: *To what extent are the effects of vicarious contact valence on (a) social enhancement motivations and (b) social uncertainty reduction motivations moderated by national identity salience in the news narrative?*

¹ “*E pluribus unum*” had been used until it was officially replaced with “In God We Trust” by President Eisenhower in 1956. The motto, however, is still widely used, for example, on the Great Seal and on coins. Similarly, the European Union’s official motto is “*In varietate concordia*” (“United in diversity”), thus also emphasizing the existence of a superordinate (i.e., European) identity while acknowledging the presence of various subordinate (i.e., national) identities.

To conclude, the main objective of this chapter was to provide an overview of the extant intergroup-relations literature as well as develop a theoretical rationale and a conceptual model for testing the hypotheses and answering the research questions proposed throughout this chapter. While this body of scholarship is vast, the theoretical focus of this chapter was on two key theories in social psychology that lend themselves to further integration with communication and media research: intergroup contact and social identity theory. While each of those two theories offers ample research venues, two specific components seem particularly fruitful for further examination from a media psychology perspective: vicarious intergroup contact and the concept of a common ingroup identity. Given the interdisciplinary nature of these research topics, the chapter draws widely from related literatures in psychology (particularly social and cognitive psychology) and communication (particularly mass, political, and intergroup communication as well as journalism studies). The focal outgroup in this dissertation are Muslims, a group that has received less scholarly attention than other identity-based groups in the intergroup literature.

Specifically, the motivation behind the research questions posed in the first, *media-content*-oriented part of the chapter is to identify and describe the broader patterns and trends in news coverage on intergroup encounters involving Muslims. The hypotheses and research questions developed for the second, *media-effects*-oriented part aim at explaining how such intergroup portrayals can affect people's orientations toward other groups, including outgroup attitudes, beliefs, trust, and behaviors, but also interest in learning about outgroups as a cognitive mechanism through which those media effects may occur. While Chapter 2 is theoretically and conceptually oriented, the next chapter provides a methodological and operational overview, first by describing the study design and measures used to study media content.

CHAPTER 3:
DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY TO EXAMINE
MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF INTERGROUP ENCOUNTERS

This chapter provides a detailed overview of the study design, including sampling and coding procedures, and the measures used to assess media content. In other words, this chapter outlines the methodology chosen in order to answer the first set of research questions (RQ1-5), which focus on identifying and describing several message characteristics of media portrayals of intergroup encounters involving Muslims across various U.S. newspapers.

Study Design and Procedures

A systematic quantitative content analysis was conducted to examine the broader trends and patterns of Muslim/non-Muslim encounters in U.S. news media. Mindful of different understandings of content analysis as a research method, the approach of this study largely follows Neuendorf's (2001) definition of content analysis as a summarizing, quantitative analysis of media messages guided by the scientific method (p. 10). The following section details three major steps that were taken to analyze the media content: (1) the initial data collection and sampling of news articles; (2) the identification of the units of analysis in those articles; and (3) the manual coding procedure to produce the raw data for subsequent analysis (see Chapter 4).

Step 1: Sampling

A total of ten U.S. newspapers, including two national and eight local and regional newspapers, were selected for this study to cover a wide range of regions and readership. The two national news outlets are *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. Both daily newspapers have maintained a constant position within the U.S. news industry and U.S. culture

since their founding and are among the top ten newspapers based on weekday circulation, including digital circulation (Barthel, 2019; Misachi, 2017). As such, they are considered the nation's flagship newspapers, leaders of the "prestige press" (Stempel, 1965), and the only two "newspapers of record" in the U.S. (Doctor, 2015; Martin & Hansen, 1998). Both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* are among the most trusted news sources in general (Pew, 2014)² and influential in setting the agendas of other news sources, including television and online media (McCombs, 2004). Specifically, the *New York Times* has been a news media proxy for communication and media scholars who analyze longitudinal trends of political phenomena (Bradshaw, Coe, & Neumann, 2014), or seek to extend scholarship related to agenda-setting (Kioussis, 2004), indexing (Bennett, 1990), or social identity processes in the relationship between the press and the public (Althaus & Coe, 2011). Additionally, scholars of media coverage of Muslims have identified both as prominent dailies that "occasionally print articles that, while maintaining critical investigatory stances, provide informed insights into Muslim societies without pandering to stereotypes" (Karim, 2006, p. 117).

Not only national news media have the potential to set the national news agenda, but local news outlets can be particularly influential on local audiences as well. Newspapers that portray community life and local events demonstrate to their news audiences that their place – their neighborhood, town, city or region – matters (Thomas, 2006). The relevance of geography in journalism – expressed as the news values of proximity and scope – not only shows that an event can be physically close, but also psychologically close and thus important to the audience member (Shoemaker et al., 2007). In addition, maintaining a strong geographic connection

² They are only exceeded by *USA Today* and *Wall Street Journal* which are more trusted than distrusted by readers across the entire ideological spectrum (Pew, 2014).

between local news audiences and events is not only a strategy to serve news markets outside the scope of larger national newspapers, but also a way to counteract declining circulation in light of today's high-choice digital media environment (Mersey, 2009; see also Hess & Waller, 2014). To examine how intergroup encounters, as community news, are portrayed from a community perspective, eight local and regional newspapers were selected for this study: *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* (eastern Pennsylvania), *New York Post* (New York), *Charleston Gazette-Mail* (West Virginia), *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (Missouri), *Daily Herald* (northern Illinois including Chicago), *Bismarck Tribune* (North Dakota), *Salt Lake Tribune* (Utah), and *San Diego Union Tribune* (southern California). Those eight news outlets serve different metropolitan areas and their surrounding regions, and cover all parts of the United States.

A total of 5,008 news articles, published between January 2015 and March 2019, were retrieved in April and May 2019, and later processed using the content analysis software TextQuest.³ TextQuest is a tool that allows one to organize articles or transcripts (for example, based on newspaper and time of publication) and isolate each reference based on a previously developed dictionary within each text. In this case, the dictionary only consisted of the stemmed versions of the terms *Islam* and *Muslim* (using *Islam** and *Muslim** so that terms like *Islamic* and *Muslims* can be found). It is important to note that the news article needed to include both terms instead of just one of the two. This ensured that the article provided a more substantive discussion about Islam and Muslims as opposed to just mentioning one of them in passing only. This was decided after an initial close reading of 25 articles that were found based on an either-or search of the two terms. TextQuest returned referential units that consist of 350 characters on either side of each reference to Islam or Muslims, which is similar to key-words-in-context

³ For more detailed information see www.textquest.de

coding (Wiedemann, 2013; see also Neumann & Coe, 2014). This amount of text provided sufficient information to fully understand the use of the term in its context, which facilitated subsequent coding of the content features specified in the section below (“Step 3”).

Step 2: Identifying the Unit of Analysis

Across the 5,008 articles and ten newspapers, TextQuest identified 52,220 referential units with either of the two search terms. On average, there were 10.4 references to Islam or Muslims in each news article. However, not every mention represents a portrayal of an intergroup encounter, the unit of analysis for this study. For the purpose of this study, a portrayal of an intergroup encounter describes a *situation in which a member of an explicitly mentioned social group (in this case Muslims) or an identity source (i.e., Islam) encounters or interacts with at least one other social group*. Several intergroup encounters may occur in the same news article. To facilitate step two, systematic random samples were drawn from each newspaper. (All articles in the same newspaper were saved in separate text files.) Across all ten newspapers, the sample represented roughly 11% ($N = 5,611$) of the entire corpus of references to Islam and Muslims in articles published between 2015 and 2019. This resulted in subsamples of 3,176 references for the two national newspapers combined as well as 2,435 references for the eight regional newspapers combined (approximately 304 per newspaper). References in the article’s title, byline, body, and photo captions were considered.

Although the coding measures described in the next section were developed a priori, the preceding step, that is, how to identify whether the reference actually describes an intergroup encounter in the first place, was shaped by a mix of inductive and deductive approaches. This approach can be useful as it combines the rigor of the scientific method and the innovation that comes with conducting exploratory research (Neuendorf, 2001; see also Kuhn, 1970). In this

case, it was deemed necessary given that the focus on the dyad as the unit of analysis has been largely absent from the body of scholarship that employs content analysis. In other words, the focus has been on group portrayals (and therefore representational aspects such as stereotyping) but not on *intergroup* portrayals (and therefore relational aspects such as the type and valence of those encounters) (Harwood et al., 2013). Therefore, in contrast to fully deductively informed approaches like abstraction and categorization via predetermined criteria, a close reading of approximately 450 referential units was done in order to define both inclusion and exclusion criteria. The goal was to generate an exhaustive list of potential intergroup encounters that help shape the coding rules for this step of the process.

Besides the vast majority of references to Islam or Muslims without a link to another group or identity source, the following cases did not qualify as a portrayal of intergroup encounters. First, any references to future events or hypothetical scenarios were excluded. Only past and present events – those that actually occurred or are taking place at the time of reporting – were considered. Second, internal subjective states, such as one group’s feelings about another group, or cognitions, such as one group’s knowledge or opinion about another group, were not considered *unless* those were openly expressed and followed up by some action (for example, as part of a public forum or in the form of a protest or manifestation that describe the intergroup encounter). Likewise, describing one group’s values or a religion’s guiding principles, such as openness toward others, was considered insufficient unless those statements are backed up by evidence in the form of actual (past or present) behaviors that exemplify these values (e.g., openness toward others demonstrated via recent interfaith gatherings). Third, implied interactions were also excluded. For example, some professions, especially those where individuals typically get in contact with dissimilar others (like teachers), strongly imply

intergroup encounters. However, the intergroup encounter needed to be explicitly referenced to be considered for further analysis. Lastly, it should be mentioned that not all encounters involving groups are subject to analysis. For example, an interaction between Sunnis and Shi'ites represents an *intragroup* – not an intergroup – encounter (as both are Muslims).

Coder training took place between June and August 2019 and involved one coder practicing with non-study content that was similar to the study content in structure and complexity (as recommended by Lacy, Watson, Riffe, & Lovejoy, 2015). Training continued until the protocol and coder produced reliable data and the intercoder reliability was high. Upon completion of the training, the chance-corrected coefficient, based on a random sample of 50 referential units and using Krippendorff's alpha, was .92 (equivalent to 98% agreement) (Freelon, 2013; Krippendorff, 2004). The coder then coded a systematic random sample of 5,611 referential units (10.7% of all referential units across the ten newspapers) to determine whether the content meets the criteria of an intergroup encounter as specified above. Of those, the vast majority ($N = 5,304$ or 94.5%) of references to Islam and Muslim did *not* involve an intergroup encounter. Only a small portion – roughly every 20th reference ($N = 307$) – depicted an intergroup encounter that met the aforementioned criteria. The content of this smaller subset of the data was analyzed to respond to the research questions provided in Chapter 2. Table 1 presents some descriptive statistics about the sample including the newspaper, primary service area, ideological orientation based on political endorsements, average circulation, number of articles, and references within those articles.

Table 1*Newspaper Sample Characteristics*

Newspaper	Format	Owner	Primary service area	Ideological orientation ^a	Circulation		Total number		Sample		Intergroup encounter present	
					Monday-Friday	Sunday	Articles	Excerpts	N	%	N	%
<i>New York Times</i>	Broad-sheet	New York Times Company	National	Liberal	951,000	1,376,000	1,483	15,117	1,809	12	88	5
<i>Washington Post</i>	Broad-sheet	Nash Holdings	National	Liberal	578,000	798,000	1,170	13,660	1,367	10	63	5
<i>New York Post</i>	Tabloid	News Corp	New York (NY) metropolitan area	Conservative	525,000	334,000	221	1,541	307	20	45	15
<i>Pittsburgh Post-Gazette</i>	Broad-sheet	Block Communications	Pittsburgh (PA) metropolitan area	Moderate	192,000	301,000	227	1,902	317	17	18	6
<i>Charleston Gazette</i>	Broad-sheet	HD Media	Charleston (WV) metropolitan area	Moderate	59,000	68,000	385	3,987	307	8	19	6
<i>Chicago Daily Herald</i>	Broad-sheet	Paddock Publications	Chicago (IL) suburban area	Liberal	106,000	116,000	455	4,591	306	7	19	6
<i>St. Louis Post Dispatch</i>	Compact	Lee Enterprises	St. Louis (MO) metropolitan area	Liberal	210,000	400,000	282	3,709	309	8	19	6
<i>Bismarck Tribune</i>	Broad-sheet	Lee Enterprises	South-central and southwest North Dakota (ND)	Moderate	26,000	30,000	253	2,387	299	13	15	5
<i>San Diego Union Tribune</i>	Broad-sheet	Patrick Soon-Shiong	San Diego (CA) metropolitan area	Liberal	250,000	311,000	217	1,748	291	17	11	4
<i>Salt Lake Tribune</i>	Broad-sheet	The Salt Lake Tribune, Inc.	Salt Lake City (UT) metropolitan area	Moderate	113,000	103,000	315	3,578	299	8	10	3
							5,008	52,220	5,611	11%	307	5%

^a Assessment based on candidate endorsements in the 2016 and 2020 U.S. presidential elections (see Appendix A.1 for more detailed information)

Step 3: Manual Coding

The third, and final, step of the content analysis involved the actual coding of the units identified in the previous step. This section discusses the coding measures used to describe the units of analysis, including both meta-measures (article features) and unit-specific measures (content features of the intergroup encounter embedded within the article) (see Appendix A.2).

Coding Measures: Article Features

The following aspects of the news article portraying the intergroup encounter were coded. All article features were already provided in the Nexis Uni output file. Each article received a unique identifier.

News outlet: With this variable, the news source of the article portraying an intergroup encounter was coded (e.g., *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *San Diego Union Tribune*).

Time of publication: The year, month, and day of the release of the news story were coded.

Article positioning: The article's placement in the newspaper, including the newspaper section (e.g., A-Section, B-Section, or their equivalents) and the page number were coded.

Article length: The article's length in words was coded.

News domain. With this variable, the news context of the article portraying the intergroup encounter appeared was coded. The categorization predetermined by the newspaper was used, including world/global/international news, national/domestic news, local/regional, business/finance/economic news, sports, health, science and technology, arts and media, lifestyle (including food, fashion, and travel), as well as the opinion section (including editorials, letters, and op-eds). The remainder included features and book reviews, among others.

Coding Measures: Content Features

The following aspects were then coded to shed further light on the portrayal of the intergroup encounters involving Muslims and non-Muslims, which are embedded in the news articles. Coding was completed in April 2020 with two other coders who were trained in October and November 2019. Those coders were not involved in step two described above, i.e., they worked with a specific dataset that only consisted of already identified coding units (based on the 307 individual portrayals identified earlier). Chance-corrected intercoder reliability, using Krippendorff's alpha (Krippendorff, 2004), and the corresponding level of agreement (in percent) is reported for each coding measure (Freelon, 2013). High levels of reliability (Krippendorff's $\alpha \geq .80$) were reached for all measures.

Prominence. The coding captured whether the intergroup encounter appeared in the headline of the news article. Intercoder reliability for the headline measure was $\alpha = 1.00$ (100% agreement).

Differentiation – Muslim entity. This variable assessed whether the Muslim entity in the intergroup encounter is portrayed as a single individual (e.g., a Muslim, an Islamic leader), a group of individuals (e.g., followers of Islam, the Muslim community), an organization (e.g., the Islamic Center of Baltimore, the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamic State, the Islamic Republic of Iran), or an abstract reference to the belief or religion itself (e.g., the Muslim faith, Islamic teachings). The intercoder reliability for this measure was high, $\alpha = .86$ (91% agreement).

Differentiation – non-Muslim entity. Similarly, this variable assessed the other (non-Muslim) entity, using the same coding categories as above. If more than one non-Muslim entity is referenced (for instance, Muslim, Christian, and Jewish worshippers coming together to read and pray), the entity that is mentioned next (in that case the group of Christian worshippers) was

coded as the non-Muslim interactant. The intercoder reliability for this measure was high, $\alpha = .80$ (85% agreement).

Agency. This dichotomous (presence/absence) measure gauged whether the Muslim entity is portrayed as having agency over the intergroup encounter. This includes situations in which the Muslim entity initiates action or causes an intergroup outcome (as opposed to reacting or responding to such causes), such as Muslim leaders carrying out an interfaith event or the Islamic State capturing non-Muslims. The intercoder reliability for this measure was high, $\alpha = .87$ (94% agreement).

Conflict. This measure was applied to determine the extent to which conflict, competition or support shaped the intergroup encounter. Examples of conflictual encounters include attacks carried out by the Islamic State or an Islamophobe's attack against Muslims; examples of support include situations of Muslim/non-Muslim cooperation and help (both one-sided and mutual); examples of competition include those situations that describe rivalries but without conflictual character, such as a sports match that involves a team from a Muslim-majority country. A fourth category was used to code those cases in which neither conflict nor competition nor support shaped the intergroup encounter. In all cases, the specific action, that is, the verb (or gerund) as it was used in the referential unit, was also recorded (e.g., "repress," or "helping"). The intercoder reliability for this measure was high, $\alpha = .82$ (90% agreement).

Valence of the intergroup encounter. Four indicators were applied to code the valence of the outcome of the intergroup encounter: the extent to which the encounter was beneficial (versus harmful) to the Muslim and non-Muslim entity; whether the overall outcome was positive, neutral or negative; the tone used to portray the Muslim entity; and the Muslim entity's relation to violence.

Harm/benefit rating. An intergroup encounter was coded as beneficial to the respective entity if it appeared to be more advanced in its goals than before, if something was gained or earned as a result of the intergroup encounter, or if the entity benefitted from this encounter in some way. Such situations are typical “win” scenarios in which the entity benefits from resource gains, achieving certain objectives, an increased understanding and solidarity, or lives being saved. In contrast, an intergroup encounter was coded as harmful to the respective entity if it appeared to be less advanced in its goals than before, if the entity lost something as a result of the intergroup encounter, or if the entity was harmed or taken advantage of in some way. Such “loss” scenarios typically include experiencing a loss of resources, being threatened, being forced to escape, and lives being taken. For both entities, a three-point rating scale, ranging from harmful to beneficial (including an unspecified, neutral response), was applied. This spectrum was helpful to minimize biases based on coding intentions, as the following two scenarios illustrate. Consider the case of Muslim refugees being helped by Jewish citizens with food and shelter, and the case of the Islamic State enlarging its territory via repression and murder of non-Muslims. In both cases, the Muslim entities benefit from the intergroup encounters in their own unique ways. The intercoder reliabilities were high for both the Muslim ($\alpha = .96$ or 98% agreement) and the non-Muslim entity ($\alpha = .92$ or 96% agreement).

Tone (intergroup outcome). Building on the previous harm/benefit measure, the overall tone used to describe the outcome of the intergroup encounter was assessed. Three outcomes were possible: negative, neutral, or positive. As mentioned above, to minimize biases that stem from the difficulty (and in many cases, impossibility) of coding an actor’s intentions, the following approach was used: An intergroup encounter was coded as negative if at least one entity is harmed in some way as a result from the encounter (including win-lose, lose-win, and

lose-lose situations). For example, while news stories about French journalists murdered by Islamic State loyalists and U.S. airstrikes against the Islamic State garner quite different responses in Western media, it nonetheless boils down to one entity harming another entity, which is overall negative. In doing so, the intergroup encounter can be coded regardless of individual intentions or motives. An encounter was coded as positive if either both entities benefit in some way from the encounter (i.e., a win-win situation) or one entity benefits while the other entity is neither harmed nor explicitly disadvantaged. For example, this includes situations like interfaith events to support local communities or helping others in distress. A neutral code was assigned to those encounters with no clear gain or loss for any entity. The intercoder reliability for this item was also high, $\alpha = .95$ (98% agreement).

Tone (Muslim entity). This measure identified whether the Muslim entity came away from the mention looking positive, neutral, or negative to a typical U.S. audience. Tone was assessed on the basis of the valence of the actions in which the entity engaged as well as the invocation of stereotypes according to the two-dimensional stereotype content model, which helps to attribute an individual's beliefs and feelings about an outgroup in terms of warmth and competence. Specifically, any portrayal of Islam and Muslims that involves mentions of progress and positive stereotypes linked to the warmth dimension (e.g., "peace-loving Muslims") and the competence dimension (e.g., "skilled Muslim factoryworkers") garnered a positive code. Any portrayal that involves mentions of conflict and negative stereotypes linked to the warmth dimension (e.g., "radical Islamists") and the competence dimension (e.g., depicting Islam as backward) received a negative code. Portrayals of Islam and Muslims without a clear evaluative component received a neutral code. The terms used to portray the Muslim entity was also recorded. Intercoder reliability for this measure was high, $\alpha = .90$ (85% agreement).

Relation to violence (Muslim entity). Given the proliferation of narratives involving violence, religious radicalism, and fundamentalism in today's media discourse (Samaie & Malmir, 2017; Zhang & Hellmueller, 2016), this study assessed the extent and ways notions of violence are used in portraying the Muslim entity as part of intergroup encounters. This was coded considering three possibilities: First, violence may be absent from the portrayal; second, if there is a reference to violence, the Muslim entity may be portrayed as an enabler or facilitator of that violence (e.g., a radical Islamist), or as an opponent or target of said violence (e.g., a victim of Islamophobia) (see also Neumann & Geary, 2019). The focus here is on physical violence including acts of physical aggression, bodily harm, assault, torture or killing. Intercoder reliability for this item was also high, $\alpha = .93$ (96% agreement).

Social identities of the Muslim entity. By design, religious identity – being a part of one's social identity – is already made salient in the context of the intergroup encounter (by explicitly referencing Muslim or Islam). However, further identities may shape the intergroup encounter and interact with religious identity cues. The following social identities were coded with respect to the Muslim entity:

National identity. As a core concept in this study, national identity was assessed in two ways. First, did the portrayal mention nationality, citizenship or belonging to a specific country or geographical region in relation to the Muslim entity, such as Muslim Americans or Bosnian Muslims? Second, was a geographical location (e.g., country, region, territory) specified in the intergroup portrayal, such as Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar or Muslims in Central Africa? Additionally, was the focus of the intergroup encounter on the U.S. (e.g., Muslim Americans) or other nations (e.g., Syrian Muslims)? The intercoder reliabilities for these two measures were high, $\alpha = 1.00$ (100% agreement).

Religious identity (subgroups). This variable was used to determine whether the portrayal of the intergroup encounter specified a Muslim subgroup or a specific branch of Islam, including the two main factions Sunni and Shia Islam, but also smaller ones such as Wahhabi Muslims or Salafi Muslims. The intercoder reliability for this measure was high, $\alpha = 1.00$ (100% agreement).

Racial/ethnic identity. This variable was used to measure whether notions of race or ethnicity were invoked in relation to the Muslim entity, such as Black Muslims in the U.S. or ethnic Uighur Muslims in China. The intercoder reliability for this measure was high, $\alpha = 1.00$ (100% agreement).

Occupational identity. This variable was broadly defined as an identity that invokes whether someone is holding an office or a position, having a business, or engages in a particular occupation. This does not need to involve gainful employment as the individual may engage in community work or attend school. Examples include Muslim students, shopkeepers, or Islamic clerics. The intercoder reliability for this measure was high, $\alpha = .80$ (86% agreement).

Religious identity of the non-Muslim entity. Given the salience of religion in the intergroup encounter, the coding also noted whether the religious identity of the non-Muslim interactant was mentioned. In a second step, references to the specific religion mentioned were coded; these included Christianity (such as Evangelicalism and Mainline Protestantism, Catholicism or Orthodox branches), Judaism, non-Judeo-Christian religions (such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism or Taoism), multiple religions, no religions (including explicit mentions of atheists, agnostics, nonbelievers or otherwise unaffiliated), or simply references to non-Muslims. Coding for whether the non-Muslim's religious identity was invoked (i.e., presence coding) and the specific religion of that entity (i.e., type coding) yielded high intercoder reliability, $\alpha = .84$ (92% agreement) and $\alpha = .90$ (94% agreement), respectively.

CHAPTER 4: INTERGROUP PORTRAYALS IN U.S. NEWSPAPERS

Given how little direct experience most non-Muslim Americans have with Muslims, people necessarily rely on news content to better understand this group. The lion's share of research, however, has focused on news portrayals of *individual* actors. As a result, little is known about news coverage about *dyads* or *groups*, that is, interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims. To fill the void in the existing literature and better understand the extent to which intergroup relations between Muslims and non-Muslims are covered in U.S. news media, this study focuses on a type of medium where such constructions have continued potential to shape public opinion: newspapers. This chapter presents the results of a systematic content analysis of articles published in widely circulated daily national, local, and regional newspapers, including their online versions. It is guided by five major research questions, each accompanied by several subordinate research questions to illuminate more specific aspects and nuances in portraying intergroup encounters between Muslims and non-Muslims. My analysis begins by focusing on the locations inside the newspapers where such portrayals are placed.

Locating Portrayals of Intergroup Encounters

To answer the first set of research questions, which ask where portrayals of intergroup encounters are found in U.S. dailies, the respective *news domain* of each unit (as determined by the news outlet) was first recorded (RQ1a). As the black upper bars in the clustered bar chart in Figure 2 show, portrayals of intergroup encounters involving Muslims were primarily embedded in an international (non-U.S.) news context (41%, $N = 126$), followed by national news (22.1%, $N = 68$), and editorials and op-eds (16.6%, $N = 51$). Local or regional events (9.8%, $N = 30$), lifestyle and religion (2.9%, $N = 9$), sports (2.6%, $N = 8$), business (1.3%, $N = 4$), and the arts

(0.3%, $N = 1$) were rather uncommon news contexts for referencing intergroup encounters involving Muslims.⁴ Muslim/non-Muslim encounters were notably absent from news articles in the science/technology and health domains. This distribution is statistically significant, $\chi^2(8) = 404.29$, $p < .001$. Thus to the extent that intergroup portrayals involving Muslims appear in U.S. newspapers, they appear primarily in foreign locations, which tend to be highly politicized.

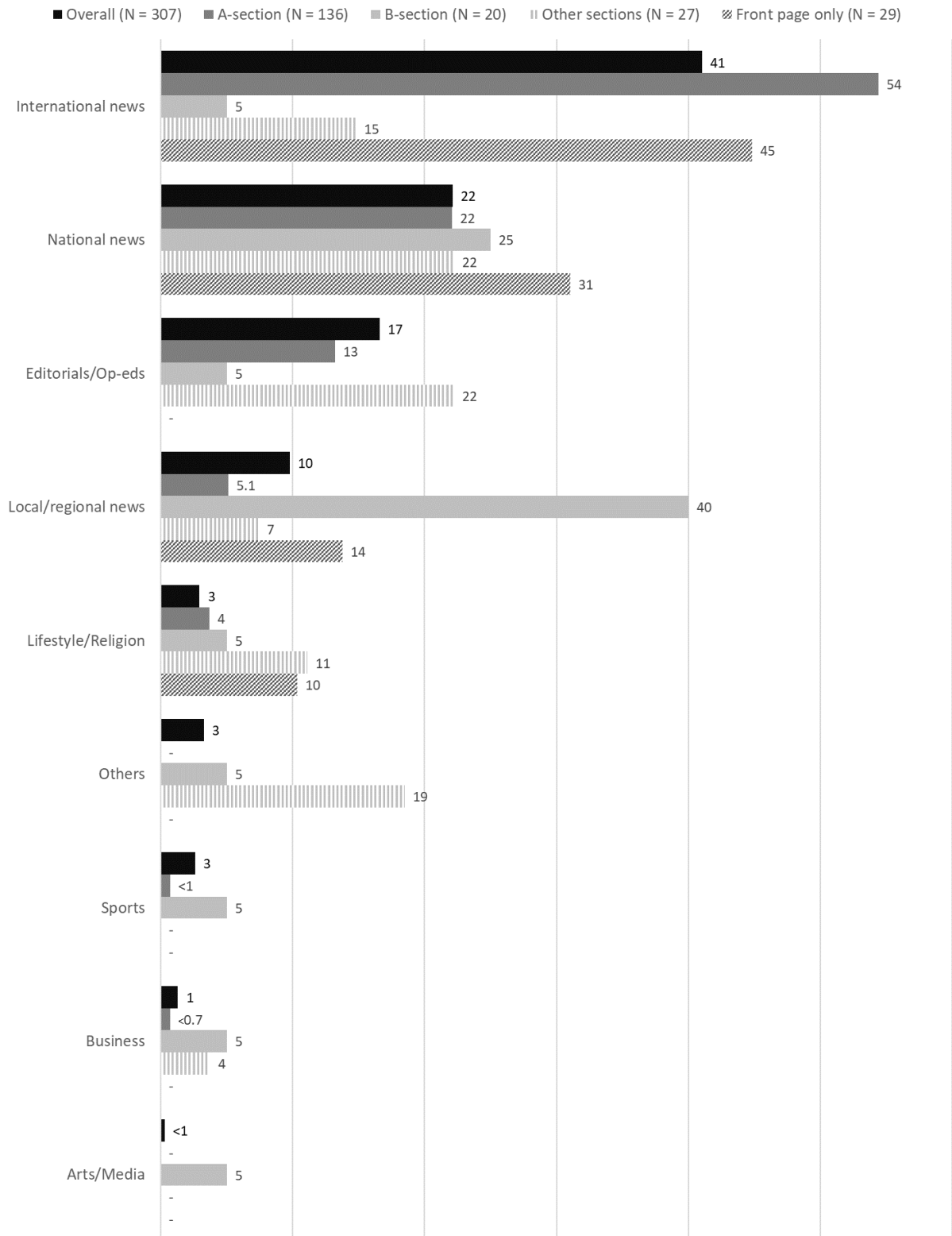
Knowing which news domains are more or less likely to portray intergroup encounters between Muslims and non-Muslims is important, but the physical placement of such stories in a newspaper also affects the audience's chances to come across such intergroup portrayals. Given that audience attention is a generally limited resource, stories published on the first few pages typically get more attention than stories that appear in the back half of a paper. To answer RQ1b, which focuses on the *newspaper section* (as opposed to the domain), the different newspaper segments in which the article that mentions a Muslim/non-Muslim encounter appears were coded. Approximately three in four (74.3%, $N = 136$) portrayals of intergroup encounters can be found in the more prominent A-sections of the different newspapers, and roughly only one in ten (10.9%, $N = 20$) can be found in the next segment (B-section). The remainder (14.8%, $N = 27$) is distributed across other sections. This distribution is statistically significant, $\chi^2(2) = 138.72$, $p < .001$.⁵ Thus, intergroup portrayals involving Muslims can mostly be found in the more prominent A-sections of daily newspapers.

⁴ In 3.3% ($N = 10$) of all cases, intergroup encounters involving Muslims were referenced in other domains of the newspapers, such as in the book review section or in obituaries.

⁵ These percentages do not include those units for which there was no information about the news section available, and in the majority of cases, portrayals that appeared in news articles published on the newspapers' websites. These add up to 40.4% of all portrayals ($N = 124$).

Figure 2

Placement of Intergroup Portrayals, by Newspaper Section and News Domain (in %)



How are portrayals of intergroup encounters distributed across news sections *and* news domains? This pattern is also shown in Figure 2. The previously identified overall pattern (in response to RQ1a) remains the same with respect to the A-section (illustrated by the dark gray bars). More than half of all references to intergroup encounters involving Muslims (54.4%, $N = 74$) can be found in the international news section; roughly one in five references (22.1%, $N = 30$) can be found in national news; and one in eight references (13.2%, $N = 18$) are references in editorials or op-eds. Local/regional news (5.1%, $N = 7$) and business news (0.7%, $N = 1$) are rarely featured in these more prominent sections and thus play only a marginal role in portraying Muslim/non-Muslim encounters. This distribution is statistically significant, $\chi^2(8) = 312.64, p < .001$. As far as the second (B-)section is concerned (illustrated by the light gray bars in Figure 2), a reader will most likely come across portrayals of Muslim/non-Muslim encounters in the local/regional news (40%, $N = 8$) and the national news section (25%, $N = 5$). This pattern is statistically significant, $\chi^2(8) = 23.22, p < .01$. In the remaining sections (illustrated by the light gray bars with vertical lines in Figure 2), portrayals of Muslim/non-Muslim encounters tend to be part of national news (22%, $N = 6$) and editorials/op-eds (22%, $N = 6$). This distribution, however, is not statistically significant, $\chi^2(8) = 15.33, p > .05$.

Clearly, the maximum visibility of intergroup portrayals is obtained by being placed on a newspaper's front page. To answer RQ1c, which asks about the extent to which such portrayals can be found on the front page, all references made on page 1 of the papers' A-sections were analyzed. Overall, approximately one in six portrayals of intergroup encounters (15.8%, $N = 29$)⁶ were featured on front pages across all newspapers. The type of news content featured on those pages (illustrated by the lower gray bar with vertical lines in Figure 2) resembles the overall

⁶ This share is based on all cases for which information about the position (section and page) was available, thus excluding portrayals that appeared in news articles published on the newspapers' websites ($N = 124$; see footnote 5).

pattern described earlier: International news dominate (44.8%, $N = 13$), but every third time an encounter is referenced it is part of a national news story (31%, $N = 9$). Local news (13.8%, $N = 4$) and the lifestyle/religion section (10.3%, $N = 3$) are occasionally used for portraying such intergroup encounters. This pattern is also statistically significant, $\chi^2(8) = 56.38, p < .001$.⁷

Are there meaningful differences between national and local/regional newspapers with regard to referencing intergroup portrayals in specific news domains and newspaper sections? To answer RQ1d, the shares for each news domain and section in both newspaper types were compared. Table 2 lists for each newspaper the three most common news domains in which intergroup encounters are referenced. In both types of newspapers, the international news sections are the most common, national news sections the second most common, and editorials/op-eds the third most common place for encountering portrayals of Muslim/non-Muslim encounters. However, the proportions for each domain are different. While nearly half of all intergroup portrayals in national newspapers (49%, $N = 74$) are embedded in an international context, only a third of the portrayals in local and regional newspapers (33.3%, $N = 52$) describe Muslim/non-Muslim relations in this way. On average, national newspapers are therefore *more likely* than their local/regional counterparts to report on international news, *less likely* to report on national news (17.9% [$N = 27$] vs. 26.3% [$N = 41$]), local/regional news (5.3% [$N = 8$] vs.

⁷ Additional analysis reveals that Muslim/non-Muslim encounters were only part of nine headlines in the entire sample, resembling 3% of all references, with most of them featured in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. 67% ($N = 6$) of those were international news stories (e.g., “Across country, New Zealanders join Muslims in prayers”, *Washington Post*, March 23, 2019), 22% ($N = 2$) were national news stories (e.g., “Obama meets with Muslim American groups”, *Washington Post*, February 7, 2015), and 11% ($N = 1$) were local/regional news stories (“A time to relish King’s legacy: Christians, Muslims, Jews share food, talk, fun, as MLK wanted,” *San Diego Union-Tribune*, January 20, 2015). However, due to the small subsample size, this pattern is not statistically significant, $\chi^2(2) = 4.67, p > .05$. Potential indicators of prominence are whether an intergroup encounter is portrayed as part of a byline ($N = 1$), a highlighted quote ($N = 2$), or mentioned in the first sentence of the article’s body ($N = 26$). Under the assumption that all these locations (i.e., headlines, bylines, highlights, first sentence in text body, $N = 34$) feature prominent positions to portray Muslim/non-Muslim encounters, the aforementioned pattern remains the same, with international news being the most prevalent (52.9%, $N = 18$), followed by national news (23.5%, $N = 8$), editorials/op-eds (14.7%, $N = 5$), local/regional news (5.9%, $N = 2$), and business (2.9%, $N = 1$). This pattern is statistically significant, $\chi^2(4) = 27.47, p < .001$.

14.1% [$N = 22$]) or sports (0.7% [$N = 1$] vs. 4.5% [$N = 7$]), and about *as likely* as local and regional newspapers to cover business news (both 1.3% [$N = 2$]) and publish editorials/op-eds (17.2% [$N = 26$] vs. 16.0% [$N = 25$]) in which Muslims and non-Muslims interact in some way. These differences are statistically significant, $\chi^2(8) = 31.48, p < .001$.⁸

When it comes to news sections, the majority of portrayals in both newspaper types can be found in the papers' A-sections: four in five portrayals in national newspapers (81.4%, $N = 83$) and two in three in local/regional papers (65.4%, $N = 53$). While a nearly equal amount of references can be found in B-section news articles (11.8% [$N = 12$] in national papers versus 9.9% [$N = 8$] in local/regional papers), it is more likely to come across portrayals of Muslim/non-Muslim encounters in later sections of local/regional papers (24.7%, $N = 20$) than national ones (6.9%, $N = 7$). These differences are statistically significant, $\chi^2(2) = 11.42, p < .01$.

To conclude, these findings suggest that non-Muslim readers of national and local/regional newspapers might have very different vicarious contact experiences involving Muslims. Both types heavily employ international and national news, and to some degree, op-eds and editorials, to frame such intergroup relations. Beyond that, however, local and regional newspapers offer a slightly broader range of news domains to describe intergroup portrayals – and those tend to be referenced throughout these dailies.

⁸ More pronounced deviations exist across specific newspapers, with regard to both national newspapers ($\chi^2(8) = 25.82, p < .001$) and local/regional newspapers ($\chi^2(42) = 126.39, p < .001$). As Table 2 also demonstrates, in six of the ten newspapers, the international news section was the primary location for news audiences to read about intergroup encounters involving Muslims. In the remaining four newspapers, it was either the second (*San Diego Union-Tribune*, *New York Post*) or third most dominant section (*Salt Lake Tribune*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*). Across all ten newspapers, three notable outliers are the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and the *Salt Lake Tribune* with a heavy emphasis on editorials and op-eds. More than half of the references to Muslim/non-Muslim relations (61% and 50%, respectively) can be found in those sections), as well as the *San Diego Union Tribune* with a particularly strong emphasis on local and regional news about Muslims and non-Muslims interacting with one another (72.7%). Only few newspapers – the *Chicago Herald* (26.3%), *Bismarck Tribune* (13.3%), *New York Post* (11.1%) – placed more emphasis on reporting intergroup news events involving their local Muslim communities compared to the overall average (9.8%). With regard to the news sections that are overall rather uncommon for portraying Muslim/non-Muslim encounters, the *Chicago Herald* and the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* stand out with their tendency to use sections like sports (15.8%) and religion/lifestyle (22.2%) for such portrayals.

Table 2*Intergroup Portrayals Involving Muslims, by News Domain and Newspaper Type*

Newspaper	News Domain (Share)			Total (%)
	Primary (%)	Secondary (%)	Tertiary (%)	
National	International (49.0)	National (17.9)	Editorials/Op-eds (17.2)	84.1
<i>New York Times</i>	International (55.7)	Editorials/Op-eds (21.6)	Others (9.1)	86.4
<i>Washington Post</i>	International (39.7)	National (33.3)	Editorials/Op-eds (11.1)	84.1
Local/regional	International (33.3)	National (26.3)	Editorials/Op-eds (16.0)	75.6
<i>Charleston Gazette</i>	International (47.4)	National (31.6)	Editorials/Op-eds (10.5)	89.5
<i>St. Louis Post-Dispatch</i>	International (47.4)	National (26.3)	Religion/Lifestyle (10.5)	84.2
<i>Bismarck Tribune</i>	International (46.7)	National (40.0)	Local/regional (13.3)	100.0
<i>Chicago Daily Herald</i>	International (42.1)	Local/regional (26.3)	Sports (15.8)	84.2
<i>New York Post</i>	National (37.8)	International (31.1)	Editorials/Op-eds (11.1)	80.0
<i>Pittsburgh Post-Gazette</i>	Editorials/Op-eds (61.1)	Religion/Lifestyle (22.2)	International (11.1)	94.4
<i>Salt Lake Tribune</i>	Editorials/Op-eds (50.0)	National (40.0)	International (10.0)	100.0
<i>San Diego Union Tribune</i>	Local/regional (72.7)	International (18.2)	Editorials/Op-eds (9.1)	100.0
TOTAL	International (41.0)	National (22.1)	Editorials/Op-eds (16.6)	79.8

Note. Total ($N = 307$). National newspapers ($N = 151$): *New York Times* ($N = 88$), *Washington Post* ($N = 63$); Local/regional newspapers ($N = 156$): *Charleston Gazette* ($N = 19$), *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* ($N = 19$), *Bismarck Tribune* ($N = 15$), *Chicago Daily Herald* ($N = 19$), *New York Post* ($N = 45$), *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* ($N = 18$), *Salt Lake Tribune* ($N = 10$), *San Diego Union Tribune* ($N = 11$)

Identifying the Entities that Constitute Intergroup Encounters

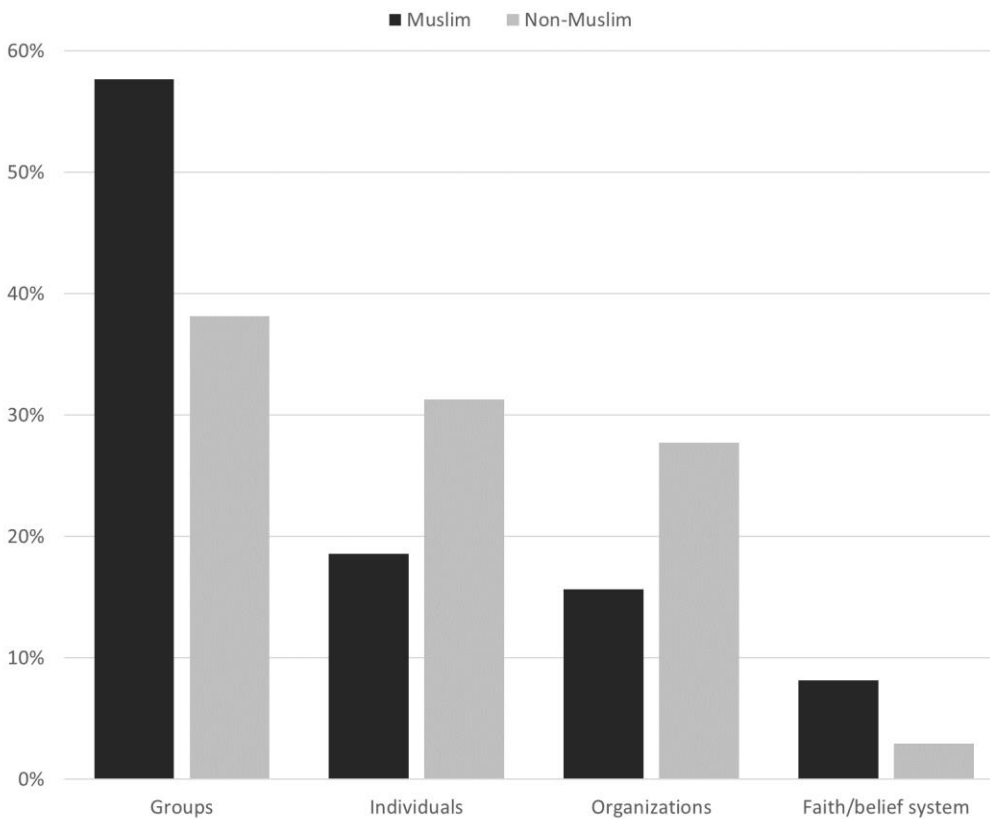
After examining what news domains and newspaper sections are more common spaces for portraying intergroup encounters involving Muslims, the first part of RQ2 asks *what entities* constitute these portrayals. In intergroup communication contexts it can be expected that the protagonists are *people*. The data indicate that this is indeed the case. Of all Muslim entities referenced as part of an intergroup encounter (see the dark columns in Figure 3), roughly three in four references were linked to people (76.2%, $N = 234$), with groups being more prevalent (57.7%, $N = 177$) than individuals (18.6%, $N = 57$). Roughly one in six portrayals (15.6%, $N = 48$) referenced a Muslim or Islamic organization, including cultural institutions and places of worship (e.g., “institutions of Islamic worship, education, association and pilgrimage,” “the Islamic Society”), political organizations (e.g., “Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt”), nations (e.g., “the Islamic Republic of Iran”) or pseudo-states, specifically the “Islamic State (of Iraq and the Levante).” In contrast, more abstract references to the Muslim faith or Islam as a belief system were fairly rare (8.1%, $N = 25$). This pattern, as it relates to the portrayal of Muslims as part of intergroup encounters, is statistically significant, $\chi^2(3) = 181.69, p < .001$.

Among non-Muslim entities, the picture looks similar although more balanced (see the gray columns in Figure 3). Like Muslims, portrayals of people dominate. Roughly two in three references (69.4%, $N = 213$) involve people, with groups having slightly more visibility in news coverage (38.1%, $N = 117$) than individuals (31.3%, $N = 96$). In contrast, abstract references to non-Muslim religions (e.g., Christianity, Judaism) were nearly absent from news coverage (2.9%, $N = 9$) whereas non-Muslim organizations (27.7%, $N = 85$) were referenced nearly as often as non-Muslim individuals. This pattern among non-Muslim entities is also statistically significant, $\chi^2(3) = 86.63, p < .001$. In sum, when Muslims are portrayed vis-à-vis non-Muslims,

they are predominantly presented as groups whereas non-Muslims are nearly equally often portrayed as groups, individuals, and organizations.

Figure 3

Types of Entities in Portrayals of Intergroup Encounters (% of All Intergroup Portrayals)



Note. $N = 307$.

To shed additional light on these intergroup encounters, it is worth examining the type of constellations of those encounters. As Figure 4 shows, the most frequently occurring form is, by far, groups interacting with other groups (25.4% of all references, $N = 78$). Examples include the case of protesters shouting down Muslim speakers (*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, February 2015) or Jewish citizens helping Muslim refugees (*New York Times*, March 2019). This is followed by Muslim groups interacting with non-Muslim organizations (15.3%, $N = 47$) and non-Muslim individuals (15%, $N = 46$). Examples of the former include China’s mass detention of ethnic

Uighurs and other Muslim minority groups (*New York Times*, September 2018) or the case of the Los Angeles Police Department meeting with Muslim leaders to condemn hateful letters sent to mosques in the city (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, December 2016). Examples of Muslim groups interacting with non-Muslim individuals include the case of a van driver attacking the Muslim community in London, UK (*Chicago Herald*, June 2017) or Pope Francis meeting with a group of Muslims (*Bismarck Tribune*, December 2015). These three constellations – group/group, group/individual, and group/organization – constitute more than half of all media portrayals of Muslim/non-Muslim intergroup encounters. The interaction patterns reflected in Figure 4 are statistically significant, $\chi^2(15) = 346.50, p < .001$. Therefore, encounters between Muslim and non-Muslim entities are, in fact, portrayed as groups meeting groups, and to a lesser degree, Muslim groups interacting with non-Muslim organizations and individuals.

Figure 4

Interaction Patterns in Portrayals of Intergroup Encounters (in % of All Intergroup Portrayals)

		non-Muslim				Total
		Individual	Group	Organization	Religion	
Muslim	Individual	8.8	4.2	4.9	0.7	18.6
	Group	15.0	25.4	15.3	2.0	57.7
	Organization	5.2	5.2	5.2	0.0	15.6
	Religion	2.3	3.3	2.3	0.3	8.1
Total		31.3	38.1	27.7	2.9	100.0

Note. N = 307.

Taking a closer look at specific entities that constitute the intergroup encounter, results show that for Muslim individuals ($N = 57$) the most common form of interaction is with other non-Muslim individuals (47.4%, $N = 27$) and, to a lesser extent, with organizations (26.3%, $N = 15$) and groups (22.8%, $N = 13$). This pattern is statistically significant, $\chi^2(3) = 22.09$, $p < .001$. For Muslim organizations ($N = 48$), it is equally likely to interact with other non-Muslim organizations (33.3%, $N = 16$), groups (33.3%, $N = 16$), and individuals (33.3%, $N = 16$), but not with non-Muslim religions in a more abstract sense. This pattern is also statistically significant, $\chi^2(3) = 16.00$, $p < .01$.

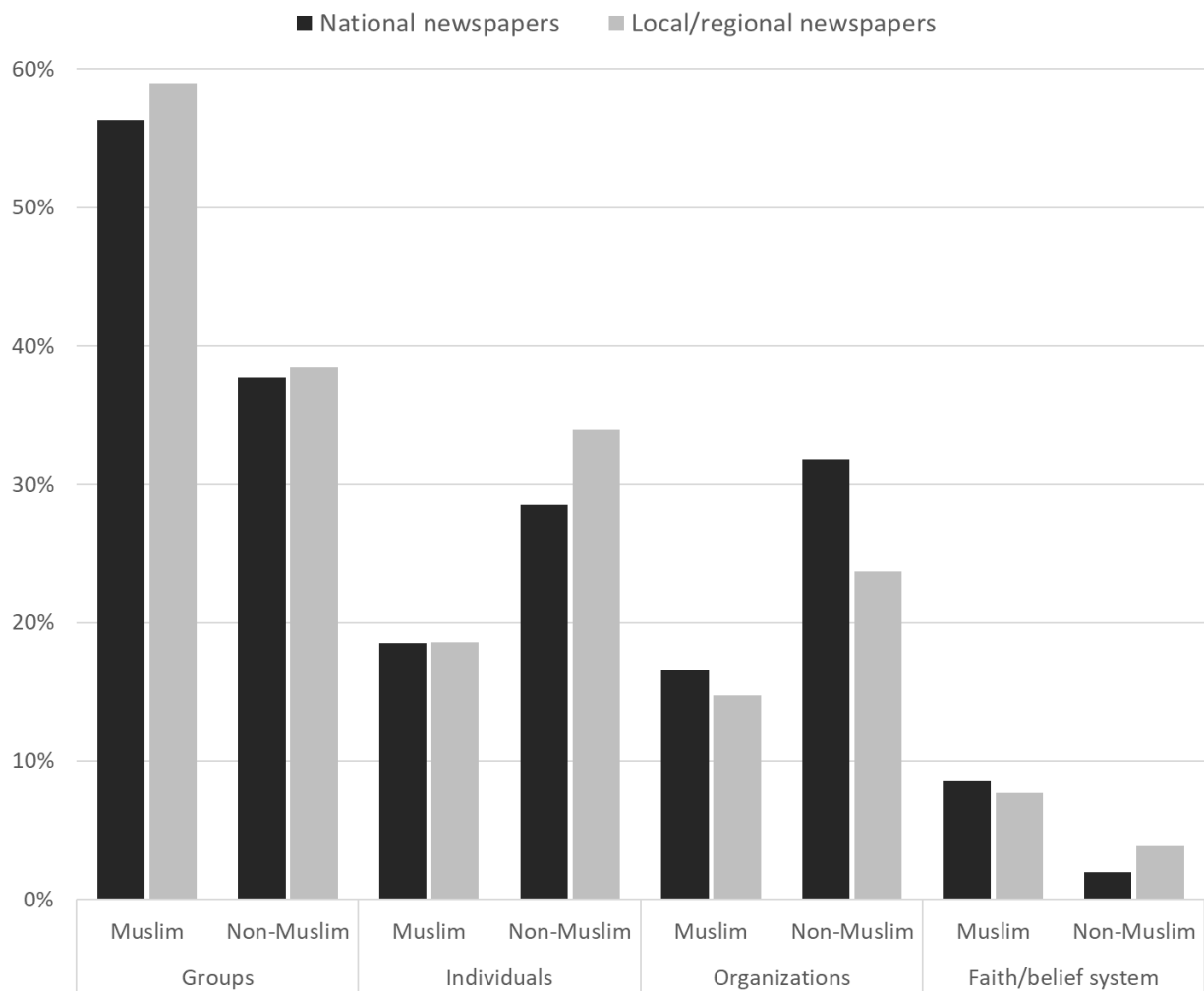
Lastly, in cases in which Islam itself is referenced as part of an intergroup portrayal (for example, in the form of “radical Islam”), it is most likely referenced in conjunction with non-Muslim groups (40%, $N = 10$) and, to lesser extents, non-Muslim individuals (28%, $N = 7$) and organizations (28%, $N = 7$), but rarely with other non-Muslim faiths or religions (4%, $N = 1$). However, this pattern is not statistically significant, $\chi^2(3) = 6.84$, $p > .05$. Thus, in addition to groups, encounters between Muslim and non-Muslim individuals are the second most common of intergroup portrayals. Moreover, the role of organizational actors is not negligible as these constitute a sizable portion particularly among non-Muslim entities.

Do national and regional newspapers differ in the extent to which they depict individuals, groups, organizations, or the religion itself as part of intergroup encounters (RQ2b)? Findings indicate that the two newspaper types do not differ in that regard – neither for the Muslim entity, ($\chi^2(3) = .34$, $p > .10$) nor for the non-Muslim entity ($\chi^2(3) = 3.46$, $p > .05$) (see Figure 5). Additionally, as Figure 6 shows, encounters between two groups is the most common constellation for both types of newspapers (25.2 and 25.6%, respectively), followed by (Muslim) group/(non-Muslim) organization encounters in national newspapers (19.2%) and (Muslim)

group/(non-Muslim) individual encounters in local and regional newspapers (18.6%). Overall, these differences are not statistically significant, $\chi^2(15) = 13.31, p = .58$, indicating that daily newspapers follow fairly similar reporting styles in terms of the types of entities chosen for these intergroup portrayals.

Figure 5

Types of Entities in Portrayals of Intergroup Encounters, by Newspaper Type (in %)



Note. $N = 307$.

Figure 6

Types of Interactions in Portrayals of Intergroup Encounters, by Newspaper Type (in %)

		non-Muslim					
		National newspapers	Individual	Group	Organization	Religion	Total
Muslim	Individual		9.9	2.6	5.3	0.7	18.5
	Group		11.3	25.2	19.2	0.7	56.3
	Organization		4.6	6.6	5.3	0.0	16.6
	Religion		2.6	3.3	2.0	0.7	8.6
Total			28.5	37.7	31.8	2.0	100.0

		non-Muslim					
		Local/regional newspapers	Individual	Group	Organization	Religion	Total
Muslim	Individual		7.7	5.8	4.5	0.6	18.6
	Group		18.6	25.6	11.5	3.2	59.0
	Organization		5.8	3.8	5.1	0.0	14.7
	Religion		1.9	3.2	2.6	0.0	7.7
Total			34.0	38.5	23.7	3.8	100.0

Note. N = 307.

Understanding the Nature of Intergroup Encounters

RQ3a asks to what extent portrayals of Muslim/non-Muslim encounters are shaped by conflict or support. Roughly two-thirds of all portrayals (66%, $N = 202$) are based on some type of conflict (e.g., attacks, intimidation) while less than a third portray an encounter shaped by support (e.g., cooperation, aid) (29.1%, $N = 89$). This stark difference is also statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 43.88, p < .001$, indicating a clear tendency to use conflictive scenarios to portray encounters between Muslims and non-Muslims.

While an encounter may depict a situation that is shaped by different degrees of conflict, the role of the entities that constitute that encounter may be different. RQ3b thus focuses on the agency of the Muslim entity in such encounters. Overall, Muslims tend to be portrayed as having no agency in these intergroup portrayals. More than half of all encounters describe Muslims in this fashion (55.7%, $N = 171$). Less than half of all encounters (44.3%, $N = 136$) portray Muslims with some sort of agency. This difference is statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 3.99, p < .05$, indicating a tendency to portray Muslims without agency in the intergroup encounters of which they are a part.

Combining these two characteristics, results show that conflict and agency are independent. As Figure 7 illustrates, there are no statistically significant differences in terms of agency held by Muslim entities when they are part of conflictual or supportive intergroup encounters, $\chi^2(1) = 0.04, p > .05$. However, considering these four constellations as distinct scenarios provides a more holistic picture.

First, the most common portrayal is one of Muslims having no agency in intergroup encounters that involve conflict (37.8%, $N = 110$). A clear theme emerges from examining those scenarios: These are typically situations in which Muslims are victims of physical attacks or

other Islamophobia-motivated acts. For example, several stories deal with the massacre of Muslims in Christchurch, New Zealand, by a white nationalist assailant (e.g., *Washington Post*, March 2019), the internment and mistreatment of ethnic Uighur Muslims by Chinese authorities (e.g., *New York Times*, December 2018) or the act of a man plowing his van into a crowd of Muslim worshippers in London (e.g., *Chicago Herald*, June 2017). However, not all stories received this much attention. Many other less well-known examples of such hate crimes include local stories like the shooting of a Muslim cab driver in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (*Pittsburgh-Gazette*, December 2015) or foreign news like the mob assault on two Muslim teenagers by villagers in India (*New York Times*, May 2017).

The second most common scenario involves conflictual encounters in which the Muslim entity has agency (31.6%, $N = 92$). These are usually situations in which agency comes in the form of using intentional violence to achieve certain political or religious goals. Examples include international events such as the killing of Coptic Christians in Egypt by “Islamist gunmen” (*New York Times*, November 2018) and the onslaught against religious minorities like the Yazidis in northern Iraq by the Islamic State (*Washington Post*, February 2015), but also domestic events such as the attack of “Muslim gunmen” on the organizers of the “First Annual Muhammad Art Exhibit and Contest” in Texas, including far-right, anti-Islam activist Pamela Geller (*New York Post*, June 2015), or the fatal shooting of two individuals by “a Florida man who had recently converted to Islam” (*New York Times*, February 2018).

In contrast, about half as common as these scenarios are situations shaped by support in which Muslim entities do not have agency (17.2%, $N = 50$). Examples include news stories about “Muslim refugees” being helped by Jewish citizens in Pittsburgh (*New York Times*, March 2019), the “Muslim community in New Jersey” being protected by the FBI after receiving

multiple threats against mosques (*New York Times*, November 2017), or a historical reference to Henry Ford who hired “Arabs and Muslims” in the early days of the Ford Motor Company in Dearborn, Michigan (*Charleston Gazette*, March 2016).

Lastly, the least common way to portray the nature of intergroup encounters relate to support scenarios in which Muslim entities have agency (13.4%, $N = 39$). Examples include news stories about Muslims in Michigan working with members of other religions to aid distressed citizens affected by the Flint water crisis (*Salt Lake Tribune*, June 2016), the increase in “Muslim cooperation” with law enforcement throughout the years (*Washington Post*, June 2016), or the organization of Muslim-Jewish dinner events around New York City to build interfaith understanding (*New York Times*, May 2017).

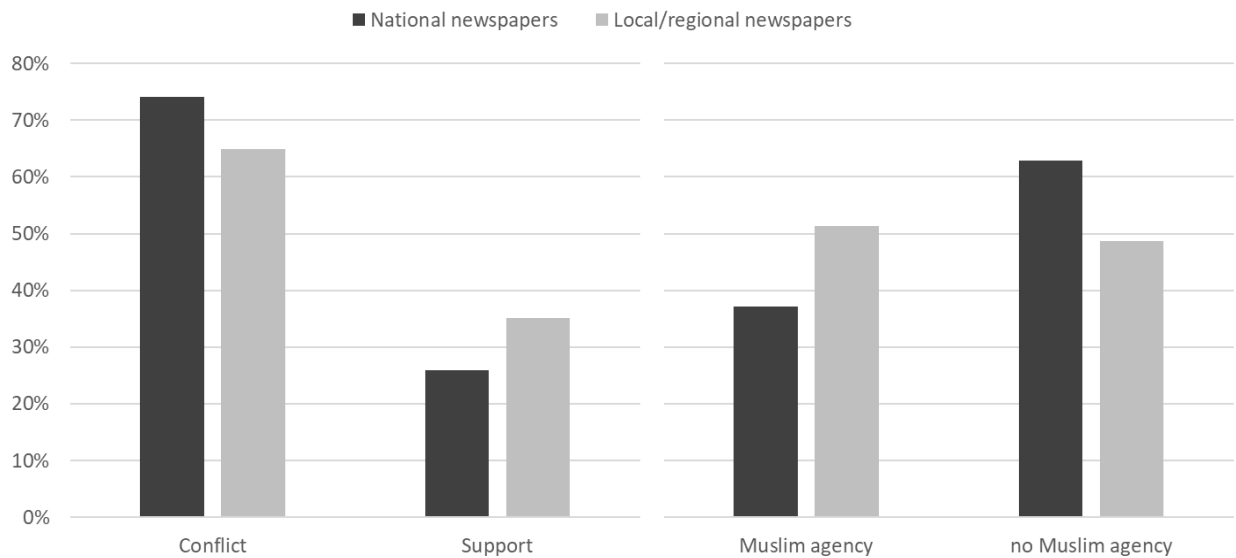
It is evident that this last form of intergroup encounter portrays Islam and Muslim in a considerably more positive light (i.e., as supportive *and* proactive) than the previous scenarios. Specifically, portraying Islam and Muslims as proactively engaging in conflict (i.e., the second scenario described earlier) was more than twice as common as portraying them as proactively supporting non-Muslim others and building rapport and understanding. This distribution is statistically significant, $\chi^2(3) = 47.46, p < .001$.

RQ3c asks how the aforementioned patterns related to conflict and agency differ based on the type of newspaper. For each intergroup portrayal in national newspapers that is characterized by support (25.9%, $N = 37$), there are about three portrayals characterized by conflict (74.1%, $N = 106$; see the two darker columns on the left side of Figure 7). Coverage in local and regional newspapers appears to be slightly more balanced in that regard (see the two gray columns on the left side of Figure 7). For each portrayal characterized by support (35.1%, $N = 52$) there are about two others that describe conflictive encounters (64.9%, $N = 96$). These

differences, however, are not statistically significant, $\chi^2 (1) = 2.94, p > .05$, indicating that national and local/regional newspapers are not fundamentally different from one another when it comes to the level of conflict they use to portray these intergroup encounters. Even though it is more likely for a reader to come across a positively framed story about Muslims and non-Muslims supporting one another in local and regional newspapers, the overall emphasis is on conflict, regardless of the type of newspaper.

Figure 7

Conflict, Support, and Agency in Intergroup Portrayals, by Newspaper Type (I) (in %)



Note. $N = 291$. Not shown are intergroup situations which are shaped by competition ($N = 2$) and in which conflict, competition or support scenarios were absent ($N = 14$).

With regard to agency, the differences between the newspapers are more pronounced. While intergroup portrayals reported in local newspapers present Muslim entities with (51.3%, $N = 80$) and without agency (48.7%, $N = 76$) to nearly the same extent (see the two gray columns on the right-hand side of Figure 7), national newspapers primarily focus on portrayals in

which Muslim entities lack a sense of agency (see the two darker columns on the right-hand side of Figure 7). Almost two-thirds of the portrayals in national papers (62.9%, $N = 95$) do that while one-third portrays Muslim entities as having agency (37.1%, $N = 56$). These differences between national and local papers are statistically significant, $\chi^2 (1) = 6.27, p < .05$.

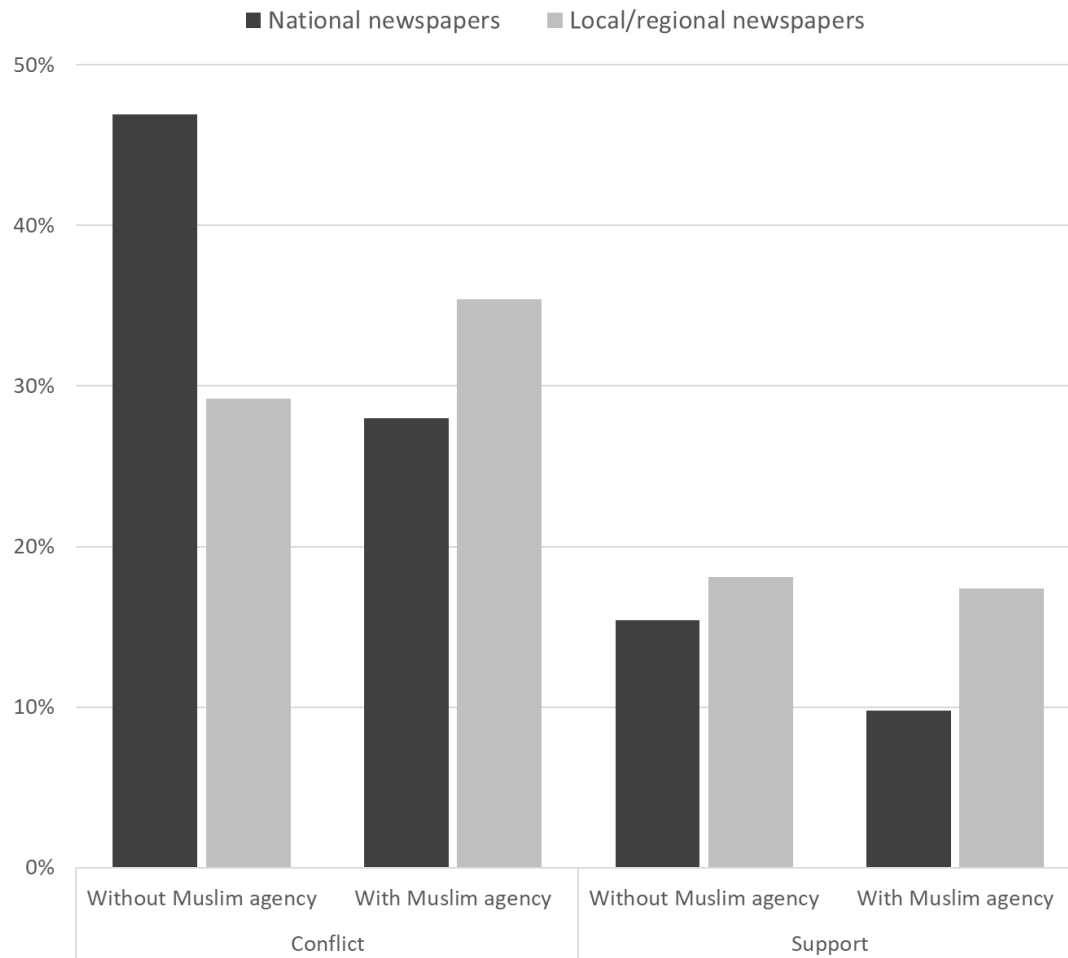
Lastly, the previously identified pattern – with conflict scenarios that highlight Muslims’ lack of agency being the most common portrayal (38% of all intergroup portrayals) – obscures important differences that exist at the level of newspapers. While this remains to be the case for national newspapers (46.2%, $N = 66$, as shown in Figure 8), the most common portrayal in local and regional newspapers includes scenarios characterized by conflict, however, with Muslim agency (35.1%, $N = 52$). When it comes to portrayals of support, local and regional newspapers are more likely to present scenarios showing Muslim entities without agency (18.2%, $N = 27$) and with agency (16.9%, $N = 25$) compared to national newspapers (16.1%, $N = 23$, and 9.8%, $N = 14$, respectively). These differences, based on newspaper type, are statistically significant, $\chi^2 (3) = 9.31, p < .05^9$, indicating that reports about intergroup encounters in local and regional newspapers tend to be more balanced in terms of agency vis-à-vis conflictive and supportive actions in comparison with national newspapers.

⁹ This pattern remains stable even after excluding from the analysis *The New York Post* (with its sensationalist, tabloid-style focus on conflict and negativity), $\chi^2 (3) = 10.11, p < .05$. The pattern for local/regional newspapers, however, is slightly more attenuated, with more emphasis on portrayals shaped by support (38.3% versus 35.1%).

Figure 8

Conflict, Support, and Agency in Intergroup Portrayals, by Newspaper Type (II):

Most and Least Common Portrayals of Intergroup Encounters (in % of All References)



Note. $N = 291$. Not shown are intergroup situations which are shaped by competition ($N = 2$) and in which conflict, competition or support scenarios were absent ($N = 14$).

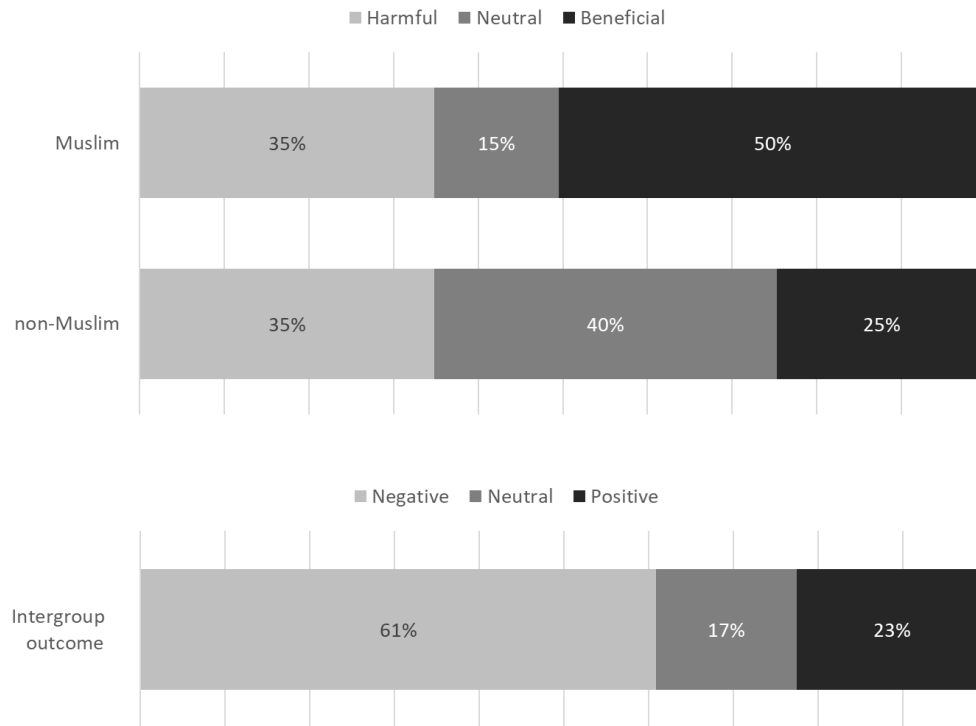
Assessing the Valence of Intergroup Encounters

After illuminating aspects like agency and conflict to describe the nature of the intergroup encounter, it is important to also assess the tone of such portrayals. Given its latent character, several aspects were analyzed to gauge the valence of an intergroup portrayal in the news and answer RQ4a: the degree to which the outcome of the intergroup encounter is portrayed as harmful or beneficial to each entity, and the assessment of the outcome as a whole. In addition, two aspects specifically related to the Muslim entity were examined: the tone used to describe it as well as the extent to which the Muslim entity is linked to notions of violence.

First, for Muslim and non-Muslim entities alike, roughly every third interaction portrayed harm to them (34.9%, $N = 107$). Conversely, Muslim entities experienced an outcome that is beneficial to them about twice as often (50.5%, $N = 155$) as non-Muslim entities (24.8%, $N = 76$). Instances in which the outcome was neither harmful nor beneficial were more common for non-Muslim entities (40.4%, $N = 124$) than for Muslim entities (14.7%, $N = 45$), indicating that the portrayal of Muslims as part of an intergroup encounter is more often linked to a clear outcome – either in line with or against their motives – compared to non-Muslims. For instance, the case of the Greek guards allowing their Muslim prisoners to observe Ramadan (*New York Post*, January 2016) or law enforcement officials assuring Muslims that they would be protected as they prepare for Friday Prayer (*New York Times*, March 2019) illustrate typical situations in which the non-Muslim entity does not directly benefit from the interaction with the Muslim entity. Overall, these differences are also statistically significant, $\chi^2(4) = 66.77, p < .001$, indicating that the consequences for Muslims and non-Muslims are portrayed quite differently, particularly when it comes to beneficial outcomes. The upper bar charts in Figure 9 illustrate this imbalance.

Figure 9

Valence of Intergroup Portrayals (in % of All References)



Note. $N = 307$.

Portraying harmful or beneficial effects, however, does not provide a complete and accurate enough picture about the valence of the intergroup encounter. After all, a Muslim entity that “benefits” from an interaction may range from the case of a Muslim refugee who is being helped by a non-Muslim stranger to the case of an Islamic State cell that gains control over a town inhabited by Yazidis in war-torn Syria. In both cases, the Muslim entity comes away from the intergroup encounter having improved its respective status quo – mere survival in case of the former and territorial gain in case of the latter. Therefore, another indicator was taken into consideration in order to provide a partial answer to RQ4a, that is, the perspective of an observer who is not part of the event as such (see the bottom bar chart in Figure 9). From this point of view, about six in ten intergroup portrayals are negative (60.9%, $N = 187$). The outcome of such

portrayals was considered negative if at least one entity is harmed in some way as a result from the interaction, regardless of intentions and motives. For example, the murder of innocent victims by Islamic State militants and the killing of Islamic State extremists by Western military forces both represent situations in which a participant of an interaction is harmed. Far fewer positive portrayals (22.5%, $N = 69$) exist in which either both entities benefit in some way from being part of an intergroup encounter or one entity benefits while the other is at least not harmed. For example, this involves situations in which Muslims help Christian refugees to hide from IS fighters or interfaith gatherings to help create a sense of community. Overall, these differences in tone are statistically significant, $\chi^2(2) = 106.66, p < .001$, indicating that news portrayals of intergroup encounters involving Muslims tend to be generally negative.

These two indicators, overall tone assessment and the extent to which the interaction is beneficial to the respective entity, are also significantly correlated ($\rho_{\text{Muslim}} = .51, p < .001$; $\rho_{\text{non-Muslim}} = .60, p < .001$). Specifically, among those interactions that are seen as overall positive, Muslim entities are portrayed as benefitting in almost all cases (97.1%, $N = 67$) compared to non-Muslim entities who are portrayed that way in two out of three cases (68.1%, $N = 47$). When the outcome was considered to be overall negative, both are portrayed as being harmed in roughly every other instance (Muslim: 54%, $N = 101$; non-Muslim: 52.4%, $N = 98$). However, in those same situations, non-Muslim entities are rarely seen as benefitting from the interaction (8%, $N = 15$) in contrast to Muslim entities which are portrayed in that fashion in one out of three such instances (34.8%, $N = 65$). This last discrepancy hints at the ubiquity of references to Muslims portrayed as terrorists and Islam as a source of radicalism, succeeding in their goals. Additional analysis that juxtaposes these harm/benefit assessments per entity confirms this pattern and reveals the reliance on skewed portrayals when reporting on intergroup

encounters: There are about four times as many portrayals in which the Muslim entity benefits while the non-Muslim entity is harmed (e.g., news about a terrorist act in the name of Islam; 22.5%, $N = 69$) than vice versa (e.g., news about defeating such actions; 5.2%, $N = 16$). Overall, this disparity in valence is statistically significant, $\chi^2 (1) = 31.82, p < .001$.

Given that harm implies the use of force, the extent to which notions of physical violence are used for portraying Muslim entities as part of intergroup encounters were examined too. In situations in which the outcome was considered negative, Islam and Muslims are portrayed as enabling or facilitating physical violence (e.g., assaults, attacks, killings) in seven out of ten references (71.4%, $N = 65$) versus being an opponent or target of said violence in fewer than three out of ten references (28.6%, $N = 26$). This difference is statistically significant, $\chi^2 (1) = 15.86, p < .001$. More specifically, when taking on the role of an enabler of physical violence in news portrayals, it is far more common to present the outcome as beneficial (67.7%, $N = 44$) than harmful (20%, $N = 13$) for the Muslim entity, $\chi^2 (1) = 15.78, p < .001$.

RQ4b asks about the extent to which Muslims in their encounters with non-Muslims are portrayed positively. To further assess the valence of the intergroup portrayal from the Muslim perspective and minimize bias, coders assessed whether and how evaluative language and stereotypical representations were used in the portrayals. The findings largely confirm previously described patterns. While the majority of references does not employ such language or stereotypes (55.7%, $N = 171$), every other reference does so – but with a clear discrepancy. Negative portrayals of Islam and Muslims were twice as common (29%, $N = 89$) as positive portrayals (15.3%, $N = 47$), a pattern that is statistically significant, $\chi^2 (2) = 71.71, p < .001$.

To further illustrate these patterns with some qualitative evidence, negative portrayals include references such as “hate preachers” (in response to the killing of a French police officer

by a gunman tied to the Islamic State; quote in *New York Times*, May 2017), Islamic terrorism as villainy (in response to the attack on Manchester Arena, *New York Post*, May 2017), barbaric and inhumane (in response to the 2016 Orlando nightclub shooting; *New York Post*, June 2016), and Islamic extremist groups as “vermin” (in response to the 2015 Paris attack; *New York Post*, November 2015). Other negative stereotypical portrayals more clearly invoke notions of power, such as in “the Islamic State’s tentacles” (*New York Post*, June 2016) or by referencing the power of a Muslim rebel alliance in overthrowing the former Christian President of the Central African Republic in 2013 (*New York Times*, January 2016). In contrast, the far less frequent use of positive warmth-based stereotypes include descriptions of Islam and Muslims such as peace-loving (*Charleston Gazette*, December 2015), charity-giving (*Bismarck Tribune*, June 2015) and volunteering (*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, December 2015), and rather weak portrayals such as “relatively benign manifestation of Islam in America” (quote in *New York Times*, November 2017). Examples of positive power-based stereotypes include references that emphasize their economic impact such as Muslim-owned shops and businesses (*New York Post*, December 2015; *Washington Post*, September 2016) or technical skills (e.g., “the greatest Muslim baseball player in history, Pittsburgh Pirates shortstop Sam Khalifa” in *Chicago Daily Herald*, June 2016).

RQ4c asks about the extent to which the patterns described above are portrayed differently in national and local/regional newspapers. The two types of newspapers differ considerably when it comes to the valence of intergroup portrayals. As the bar charts at the bottom in Figure 10 illustrate, portrayals of intergroup encounters in local/regional newspapers tend to be generally more positive (28.2%, $N = 44$) and less negative (58.3%, $N = 91$) compared to national newspapers (16.6% [$N = 25$] and 63.6% [$N = 96$]). This difference is also statistically significant, $\chi^2(2) = 6.87, p < .05$. However, in both newspaper types, negative portrayals of such

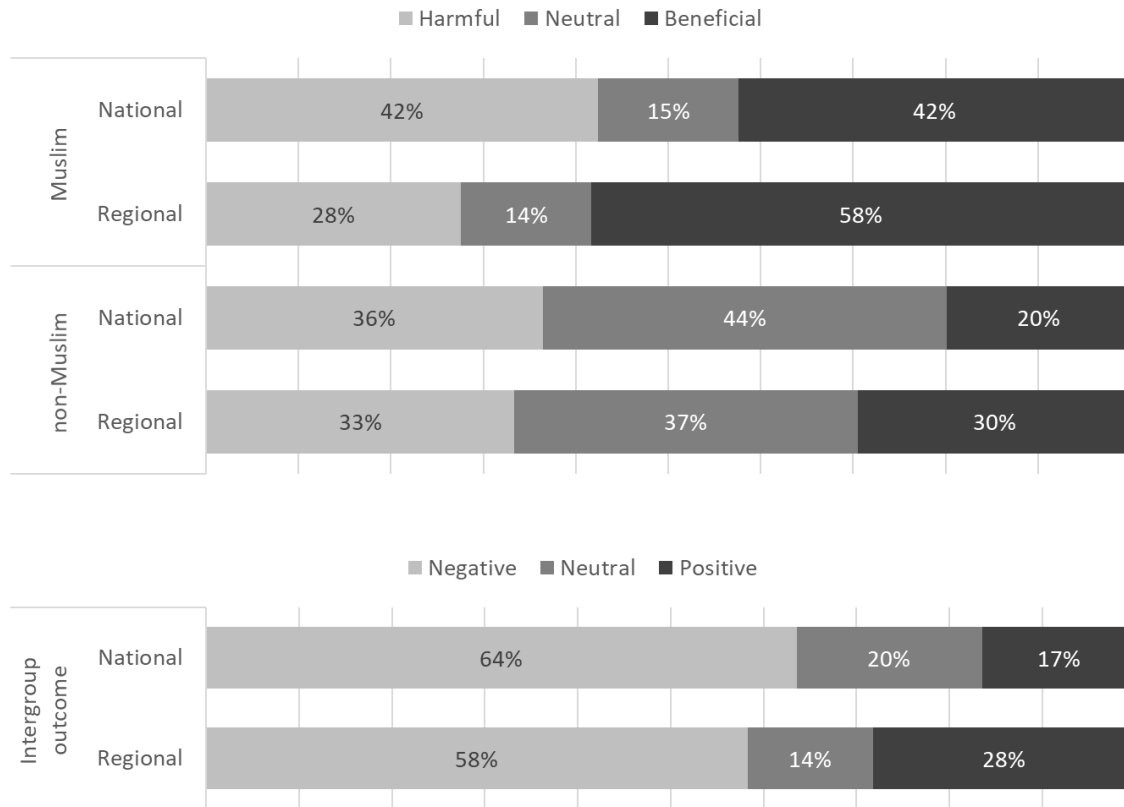
outcomes clearly outweigh positive and neutral portrayals. The upper two charts in Figure 10 show that regional newspapers tend to highlight the beneficial outcomes to both the Muslim (58.3% of all references, $N = 91$) and non-Muslim entity (29.5%, $N = 46$) more than their national counterparts (42.4% [$N = 64$] and 19.9% [$N = 30$], respectively). However, only regional newspapers portray less harm inflicted upon non-Muslim entities (27.6%, $N = 43$) compared to national newspapers (42.4%, $N = 64$) while there are no meaningful differences on that aspect between these two, rendering the overall association between newspaper type and effect on non-Muslim entities statistically nonsignificant, $\chi^2(2) = 3.89, p > .05$. However, with respect to Muslim entities this association is statistically significant, $\chi^2(2) = 8.77, p < .05$, indicating an overall stronger focus on beneficial outcomes for Muslims in local and regional newspapers compared to national newspapers.

In situations where the outcome of the intergroup encounter tends to be negative, Islam and Muslims are portrayed as enablers or facilitators of physical violence more often in local and regional newspapers (79%, $N = 49$) than in national newspapers (55.2%, $N = 16$). In contrast, Islam and Muslims are portrayed as opponents or targets of said violence more often in national newspapers (44.8%, $N = 13$) than in local and regional newspapers (21%, $N = 13$). These differences are statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 5.51, p < .05$.¹⁰

¹⁰ Portraying Islam and Muslims as enablers of physical violence does not seem to be related to article features (length, placement, prominence) or news domain, according to a logistic regression. The embedding of such portrayals in news articles that can be found in the international news section is not statistically significant, $Exp(B) = 2.60 (SE = .58), p > .05$. Being featured in local/regional newspapers, however, is by far the strongest predictor, $Exp(B) = 4.91 (SE = .36), p < .001$, while controlling for all other factors, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .17, df = 8, p < .001$.

Figure 10

Valence of Intergroup Portrayals, by Newspaper Type (in % of All References)



Note. $N = 307$.

To further illuminate these patterns, it was examined whether the overall tone differs based on the news domain *and* the type of newspaper. Based on findings described earlier, it seems plausible that intergroup portrayals that are placed in foreign news stories are predominantly negative in both national and local/regional newspapers. Results indicate no statistically significant differences between national and local/regional newspapers in their way of framing the outcome of the intergroup encounter, regardless of the news domain in which it takes place. This applies to such portrayals in international news stories, $\chi^2 (2) = 0.22, p = .90$, national news stories, $\chi^2 (2) = 0.81, p = .67$, local/regional news stories, $\chi^2 (2) = 1.68, p = .43$,

and editorials/op-eds, $\chi^2 (2) = 3.08, p = .21$. Lastly, language used to describe Islam and Muslims who are part of intergroup portrayals tends to be more evaluative in local and regional newspapers. Specifically, that language tends to be more negative (32.7% $N = 51$) but also more positive (19.2%, $N = 30$) than the language used in national newspapers (27.8%, $N = 51$, versus 11.3%, $N = 17$). In national newspapers, nonevaluative language (60.9%, $N = 92$) outweighs evaluative language (39.1%, $N = 59$). These differences between regional and national newspapers are statistically significant, $\chi^2 (2) = 6.12, p < .05$.

To conclude, three key observations can be noted based on this part of the analysis. First, most outcomes of Muslim/non-Muslim encounters are portrayed negatively. Second, the Muslim entity tends to benefit from the interaction (that is, achieves a certain goal) about twice as often as the non-Muslim entity. Third, these patterns are more clearly visible in local and regional newspapers, which tend to be slightly more positive overall in their coverage of these intergroup encounters compared to national newspapers.

Examining Identity Cues in Intergroup Encounters

The last set of research questions seeks to integrate theories of intergroup contact and social identity with particular emphasis on religious and national identities. RQ5a asks about the extent to which other religious groups and religions characterize the intergroup portrayal involving Muslims and Islam. Whenever Islam or Muslims are invoked as part of an intergroup encounter, within-group diversity is almost never part of it. There was only a single reference (0.3%, $N = 1$) to Sunni Muslims in relation to Chinese officials. Clearly, to a U.S. audience this internal group diversity is highly unlikely to be communicated, increasing chances that the entire group is perceived as one homogenous entity – at least when it comes to portraying them along with other non-Muslim entities. It is, however, far more likely for those news portrayals to focus on interactions between representatives or groups from two distinct religions. In approximately one in six references a religious identity is invoked (17.5%, $N = 58$), with Christians including its various denominations being the main interactant (60.3%, $N = 35$), followed by Jews (19%, $N = 11$), non-Judeo-Christian groups (12.1%, $N = 7$), more general references to “non-Muslims” (6.9%, $N = 4$) and atheists (1.7%, $N = 1$).

RQ5b shifts the focus toward the salience of other group identities in intergroup portrayals, with particular emphasis on national identity. This salience could come in two forms: by describing a community or entity in more specific identity terms, such as emphasizing that it is domestic (i.e., American) or foreign (e.g., Middle Eastern, European), or by invoking a geographical location (e.g., a city, state, region or country). Around six in ten intergroup portrayals (58%, $N = 178$) are framed in those ways. Two-thirds of those references (64.6%, $N = 115$) invoke non-U.S. locations, primarily countries, regions, and cities abroad. Only a third (35.4%, $N = 63$) invoke the United States including Islam or Muslims linked to particular cities

and states or referring to them as part of the nation's religious landscape. However, this latter emphasis was overall not common as only five references in total (8% of those references that invoke the U.S.) explicitly mentioned "Muslim Americans" or "American Muslims." Examples include the headline "Obama meets with *Muslim American* groups" (*Washington Post*, February 2015) and "All too often in the aftermath of terrorism, *Muslim Americans* suffer unthinkable violence and discrimination" (quote in *San Diego Union Tribune*, April 2016). These identity labels are qualitatively different from expressions like "Muslims in America" because the former describes the community as American while the latter emphasizes a geographical location.

Invoking one's national identity is not the only way to create community involving Muslims and Islam. Two other identity aspects were therefore examined: racial/ethnic and occupational identity. Referring to racial or ethnic aspects was extremely rare. Only two portrayals referenced Muslims' ethnicity or ancestry: In both cases they involved ethnic Uighur Muslims in the Xinjiang region of northwestern China (0.7%, $N = 2$). Referring to Muslims' occupational identity, however, was far more common (19.2%, $N = 59$). Specifying someone's role in society is important as it conveys messages of status and power – ascribed characteristics by non-Muslim majorities – as two essential components in the intergroup relations and stereotyping literature. In the media portrayals analyzed, these range from low-status occupations with limited political or economic power, such as Muslim herdsmen (e.g., *New York Times*, November 2018), school children (e.g., *Chicago Herald*, December 2015), factory workers (e.g., *Charleston Gazette*, March 2016) or cab drivers (e.g., *New York Post*, December 2015) to higher-status occupations with significant power, such as mayors (e.g., *New York Times*, July 2017), ambassadors (e.g., *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 2017), company owners (e.g., *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, September 2016) or faith leaders (e.g., *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, December 2016).

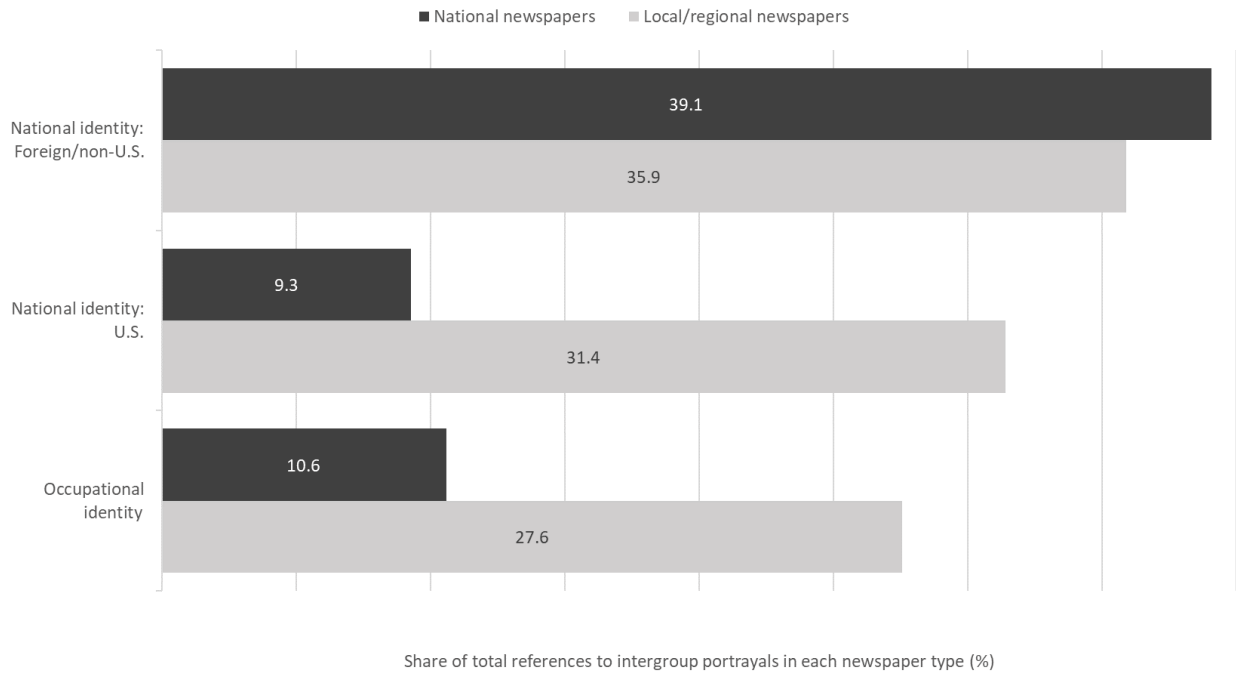
RQ5c asks about the differential coverage of the aforementioned identities as part of intergroup encounters in national and local/regional newspapers. First, the extent to which religious identities are highlighted in intergroup portrayals is handled similarly in both types of newspapers. Both national (44.8%, $N = 26$) and local/regional newspapers (55.2%, $N = 32$) are equally likely to highlight the religious identity of the non-Muslim entity of the intergroup encounter, $\chi^2(1) = 0.44, p > .05$ (see the clustered bar charts on top of Figure 11). Similarly, as the remaining cluster bar charts in Figure 11 illustrate, there are also no meaningful differences when the role of the non-Muslim is filled by Christians, $\chi^2(1) = 0.46, p > .05$, Jews, $\chi^2(1) = 0.36, p > .05$, or followers of other non-Judeo-Christian beliefs, $\chi^2(1) = 2.28, p > .05$.

Second, Muslims' national identity in general is more often referenced in local and regional newspapers (59%, $N = 105$) than national newspapers (41%, $N = 73$). This difference is statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 5.40, p < .05$. National and regional newspapers, however, do not differ with regard to referencing Muslims' foreign national identities as part of the intergroup encounter, $\chi^2(1) = 0.04, p > .05$ (see the clustered bar charts on top of Figure 11). Although both types emphasize the foreign nature of Muslims and Islam equally often, local and regional newspapers are three times more likely (31.4%, $N = 49$) than national newspapers (9.3%, $N = 14$) to highlight Muslims' U.S. national identity, $\chi^2(1) = 18.34, p < .001$ (see the clustered bar charts in the middle of Figure 11). Third, when it comes to Muslims' occupational identities in intergroup portrayals, local and regional newspapers are much more likely to highlight those (27.6%, $N = 43$) than national newspapers (10.6%, $N = 16$), $\chi^2(1) = 11.46, p < .001$ (see the clustered bar charts at the bottom of Figure 11).

Figure 11

National and Occupational Identities of Muslim Entities in Intergroup Portrayals, by Newspaper

Type (in % of All References to Intergroup Encounters)



Note. $N_{\text{national}} = 151$; $N_{\text{local}} = 156$

Additional analysis was performed to further examine the association between national identity cues and the presence of conflict in intergroup portrayals. Linking back to the previous research question on the nature of intergroup encounters (RQ3), it is striking that the vast majority of those references to Muslims and Islamic organizations abroad are shaped by conflict (79%, $N = 92$). With regard to references to Muslims and Islamic organizations in the U.S., those references are only half as common. That is, conflict shapes only less than half of the portrayals of intergroup encounters in the U.S. (40%, $N = 26$). Put another way, whenever Islam and Muslims are invoked in a national context (including states and cities) the tone tends to be more supportive and sympathetic. The opposite can be observed when looking abroad: Intergroup

encounters involving Islam and Muslims are frequently portrayed as attacks carried out by the “Islamic State,” “radical Islam,” “Islamists,” and “Islamic terrorists” – in short, Islam and Muslims as perpetrators or enhancers of violence.

In conclusion, this chapter was guided by five major research questions, each accompanied by various subordinate questions, to examine several aspects that are useful for describing news portrayals about Muslim/non-Muslim encounters. These include (1) where those intergroup encounters tend to appear in U.S. newspapers with regard to the news domain and news section; (2) the type of entities that constitute these portrayals; (3) to what extent the portrayals depict Muslims as having agency and being in conflict with their non-Muslim interactants; (4) the tone used to describe the outcome of the intergroup encounter; and (5) to what extent other social identities are referenced when portraying the interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims, with particular emphasis on national identity. All these message-related aspects were analyzed for both national and local/regional daily newspapers that cover all parts of the United States. Combining these characteristics to analyze media content has utility for studying other encounters between ingroup and outgroup members. Having examined the elements that constitute media content about intergroup encounters, it is important to examine the possible effects this content, specifically variations of it, has on orientations toward outgroups. This is the objective of the ensuing experiment, which focuses on modifying the last two content features (tone and national identity salience). With this in mind, the next chapter outlines the research methodology and design used to study media effects of intergroup portrayals.

CHAPTER 5:
DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY TO EXAMINE
MEDIA EFFECTS OF INTERGROUP PORTRAYALS

This chapter provides an overview of the experimental design used to examine the effects of intergroup (i.e., Muslim/non-Muslim) portrayals on people's orientations toward Muslims, including cognitive and motivational mechanisms through which those effects occur. Specifically, the following pages describe in detail (1) the sampling technique (including sampling type and participant characteristics); (2) the experimental manipulation (including pilot testing and manipulation checks); and (3) the measures used to operationalize the key variables (including dependent and control variables). The study received human-subjects approval (exempt status) by the University of Washington's Institutional Review Board in March 2020 and, after a minor modification was made to the questionnaire, in April 2020.

Participants and Procedure

A total of 687 participants were recruited via Amazon's Mechanical Turk (AMT), a major crowdsourcing platform used to complete human intelligence tasks (HITs), including questionnaires and online experiments. Each person received \$2 for participating in the study. Using AMT has several advantages over conventional undergraduate student convenience samples: Recruitment takes place rapidly (Mason & Suri, 2012; Miller, Crowe, Weiss, Maples-Keller, & Lynam, 2017) and usually results in high data quality (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2016; Peer, Vosgerau, & Acquisti, 2014). Despite its nonrandom, self-selecting nature, AMT samples also ensure a sociodemographic diversity that is more representative of the overall population than a typical student sample (Berinsky, Huber, & Lenz, 2012; Paolacci, Chandler, & Ipeirotis, 2010). AMT respondents also tend to be more attentive to survey instructions than

student respondents (Hauser & Schwarz, 2016). Table 3 presents some key demographics of the sample in relation to the general population.

Table 3

Experimental Sample Demographics

Demographic		Sample	Population
Categorical measures		%	N
Sex^a	Female	48.2	332
	Male	51.8	357
Religion^a	Christian faiths	50.9	352
	Protestant	28.6	198
	Catholic	20.7	143
	Mormon	0.3	2
	Orthodox Christian	0.6	4
	Other Christian	0.7	5
	Non-Christian faiths	6.9	48
	Jewish	1.0	7
	Muslim	0.7	5
	Buddhist	1.4	10
	Hindu	0.9	6
	Other religions/faiths	2.9	20
	Nonbeliever/unaffiliated	42.2	292
Race/	White or Caucasian (only)	73.2	508
Ethnicity^a	Black or African American (only)	12.1	84
	Asian American or Asian (only)	9.5	66
	American Indian or Alaska Native (only)	1.3	9
	Native Hawaiians or Pacific Islander (only)	0.1	1
	Bi- or multiracial	3.0	21
	Hispanic or Latinx	5.6	39
	White or Caucasian (only; not Hispanic or Latinx)	71.8	498
Education^a	High school graduate or higher	99.4	686
	Bachelor's degree or higher	61.7	426
Ordinal and interval measures			
Age^a (in years)		<i>Mdn</i> = 39.0 (<i>M</i> = 41.8, <i>SD</i> = 12.5)	
Household size^a (<i>min</i> = 1, <i>max</i> = 25)		<i>Mdn</i> = 3.0 (<i>M</i> = 2.8, <i>SD</i> = 1.6)	
Household income^a (in USD, brackets)		<i>Mdn</i> = 50,000 - 59,999	

Note. For better comparability with population data, the table reports sample demographics *before* excluding current and former Muslims (*N* = 694). The final sample size, consisting of only non-Muslims, is slightly smaller (*N* = 687). Sources used for reporting population estimates are as follows: (a) *U.S. Census Bureau*, including data from the American Community Survey (ACS) and the Current Population Survey (CPS) (<https://www.census.gov>), for sex, race/ethnicity, education, household income, and household size (see also Fry, 2019); (b) *Pew Research Center's* 2014 Religious Landscape Study (<https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study>) for religion. Descriptive statistics for education reported was shortened in the table due to the reporting standards used in the U.S. Census. In the study, eight response options were provided ranging from "did not finish high school" to "doctorate." The median response was "bachelor's degree."

Data were collected throughout May 2020. Various system qualifications provided by AMT were used to ensure high data quality. For example, participants needed to have a minimum of 97% approval rate of their previous HITs and worked on at least 500 HITs. Initially, the AMT-generated Masters qualification (i.e., high-performance workers as identified by the platform's own statistical methods¹¹) was applied for the pilot survey (see further details below) but unselected for the actual study due to the limited pool of participants. Additionally, given the nature of this study, all participants needed to be based in the U.S., thus excluding all foreign workers. Subjects who participated in the pilot survey were excluded from participating in the actual survey. The experimental manipulation was embedded in a survey created with and hosted by Qualtrics (see Appendix C).

Median response time to complete the entire questionnaire was 19 minutes. However, participants were provided with an estimated time range of 20 to 25 minutes in the survey description on AMT and the study's consent form. A total of three attention checks were placed throughout the survey. In the study's consent form (the first page that opened when entering the survey), participants were made aware that the study contains a number of checks to make sure that they are finishing the tasks truthfully and completely. However, as stated in the form, they were given the opportunity to withdraw at any time or decline to answer any other question they do not wish to answer for any reason. The attention checks used in this study were typical instructional checks using a format like "When you have read this item, please select the second point on the scale (to the right of 'not at all')." Those who failed two or all three attention checks

¹¹ According to the official AMT website, this pool of participants consists of workers who have consistently demonstrated a high level of success in performing a wide range of HITs (as indicated by their approval rates) across many different requesters. Other factors include the time they have been active on the platform. Those workers are identified by specific statistical tools. Requesters can select this criterion for an additional 5% fee. For more detailed information, see <https://www.mturk.com/worker/help>

and those who responded with unintelligible, redundant or irrelevant content to the survey's open-ended questions¹², thus resulting in suspect data (possibly generated by bots or scripts, but primarily inattentive participants), were excluded from the analysis.¹³

At the end of the questionnaire, participants received a randomly generated four-digit survey code they were asked to enter into their AMT HIT list so that they receive the remuneration. This also ensured anonymity since their Worker ID is decoupled from the dataset. Upon completing the study, participants were thanked for their participation and also informed that the event described in the article – the experimental manipulation (see below for more details) – did not take place as such. As part of the debrief, participants were also provided with the author's contact information in case they have any additional questions about the study.

Experimental Stimulus

To analyze effects on people's orientations toward an outgroup and their level of interest in learning about an outgroup, this experiment, designed as a randomized posttest-only control group study, manipulated two aspects of a news story. Specifically, before participants were exposed to the news article, they were asked a series of questions about their feelings toward, trust in, as well as contact and familiarity with various religious groups, without explicitly

¹² Specifically, the questionnaire included several open-ended questions (see Appendix C): (1) "Before reading the article, had you heard or read about this event from another news source? If so, where?" (immediately after the article page); (2) "Where do you get most of your news? Be as specific as possible." (in the media measures section; however, this information was not used for further analysis); (3) "Which group or groups?" (a follow-up question to the filter question "Do you consider yourself a member of a group that is discriminated against in this country?" in the identity measures section; however, this information was not used for further analysis); and (4) "What do you think was the purpose of this study?" (at the end of the questionnaire).

¹³ Those respondents who failed only the last attention check were included in the analysis unless the data were considered otherwise suspect. The last attention check item appeared right before the demographics section after completing roughly 80% of the survey. This might indicate typical survey fatigue effects. Statistical tests were conducted to compare the data on key demographics (e.g., age, gender, race/ethnicity) and administrative variables (e.g., overall completion time, manipulation checks) between those who passed all instructional checks and those who only missed the last check (see Appendix B). No statistically significant differences were found between the two subsamples on these key measures, suggesting that missing the last attention check does not harm data quality.

focusing only on Muslims or Islam (see more details about the independent and control variables in the section below). Each participant was then randomly exposed to an online news article using the same news source (*Wall Street Journal*) and same appearance (e.g., interface with icons, three columns, same font size and type, same author, one image). The stimulus materials can be found in Appendix B. The random assignment of study participants to the experimental conditions occurred automatically via Qualtrics, and appeared to have worked as expected, with no statistically significant between-group differences on key demographic and administrative variables. A randomization check can also be found in Appendix B. The valence of the outcome of the intergroup encounter and the salience of national identity were each independently manipulated, resulting in a 3x2 (tone x salience) factorial design plus an additional control group.

All conditions, except the control condition, included roughly equivalent story elements, and all conditions, including the control one, were consistent in length, structure, and complexity of the news story. Six articles focused on an interfaith event held at the Islamic Center of Washington DC in response to rising hate crimes against religious minorities. The control condition used an article on an entirely different non-religious event that had no relevance to a typical U.S. news audience (i.e., a technology conference on digital agriculture in Australia). Additionally, articles were proofread by two persons with journalistic experience who provided valuable feedback on the story's organization, framing, and language in an effort to increase the overall authenticity of the news article. The *Wall Street Journal* was chosen as a source for this story as it remains to be a fairly equally trusted news medium by readers across the ideological spectrum as opposed to other news outlets such as the *New York Times* or *Washington Post*. Amid growing political polarization, it is also a source that is trusted more than distrusted by both Democrats and Republicans (Jurkowitz, Mitchell, Shearer, & Walker, 2020).

In the 3x2 (tone x salience) factorial design, the first manipulation focused on the tone used to describe the outcome of the interfaith gathering. While such events may generally be perceived as positive given that they are well-meant and constructive forums to bring people of different faith backgrounds together for a common purpose, focusing on the outcome of those events – as opposed to the purpose or motivation – allows for the creation of fairly straightforward manipulations that differ in tone. Therefore, three possible scenarios were designed: a positive outcome (using the headline “Interfaith Community Strengthened by Hate Crimes”), a neutral outcome (“Interfaith Community Gathers in Response to Hate Crimes”), and a negative outcome (“Interfaith Community Struggles in Fight Against Hate Crimes”). This valence frame was reemphasized by corresponding text features such as the subtitle (e.g., “Gathering signals to all communities of faith: Religious differences can be overcome”) and a pullout quote (e.g., “Interfaith event successfully modeled how religious conflict can be overcome”) in each condition. This helped to reemphasize the valence even for those readers who tend to skim through news articles.

The second manipulation focused on the salience of national identity in the article. Two possible scenarios were designed for each of the three aforementioned conditions: a salient and a non-salient condition. For example, the three salient conditions highlighted in the headline that it was the *American* interfaith community that was strengthened, gathered, or struggled in its fight against hate crimes. Throughout the article, terms such as “America(n)”, “the nation” or “U.S.” were used to describe and specify groups (e.g., “Muslim Americans” versus “Muslims,” “bringing Americans together” vs. “bringing people together”) and to add emphasis (e.g., “To create impact, we need to learn to overcome our differences” vs. “To create impact, we – as Americans – need to learn to overcome our differences”). The salient conditions had more than

20 such references compared to the non-salient conditions, resulting in articles that were slightly longer (on average 40 words or less than 10% of the overall word count) than the original, non-salient versions of the story. The article used for the control condition also did not make any reference to the U.S. The seven versions of the news article, as they appeared in the study, are included in Appendix B.

Pilot Testing

All study materials, including the manipulations, were extensively pilot tested with two different samples, a college student sample ($N = 110$) in March 2020 as well as an AMT sample that is more similar to the target sample ($N = 200$) in April 2020. This pilot testing was important because it uncovered potential problem areas, identified certain burdens on the participant, and helped to determine whether they are interpreting the questions, scales, and response categories correctly, or are influenced by the ordering of those (Ruel, Wagner, & Gillespie, 2016). Following the pilot tests, a few changes were made to the materials that can be categorized into three dimensions: the length of the questionnaire, the clarity of the experimental manipulations, and various administrative aspects of the survey itself.

First, the length and complexity of the survey was shortened to minimize survey fatigue effects and improve data quality. For example, instructions were made more concise, matrix questions split across several pages, and longer scales were replaced with short forms (such as need for cognition or attitudes toward Islam/Muslims, as explained below in more detail). Second, some changes were made to the experimental manipulations to better highlight the differences and maximize variance on both key independent variables, and to increase the authenticity of the article. For example, the appearance of the article was changed so that the final version used a more readable three-column format, a newly added pullout quote as well as

revised titles and subtitles to reemphasize the outcome of the event and increase group salience. A third set of changes involved aspects of the survey administration. For instance, these modifications entail built-in timers that are invisible to the participant but are important for checking the amount of time they spent reading the news article and answering the survey items presented as matrix questions (including the attention checks). Other Qualtrics-specific features were used to prevent people from taking the survey more than once (so-called “ballot box stuffing”) and to detect bots by flagging suspicious responses using Google’s reCAPTCHA. The news articles were also inserted as image files only (as opposed to image and text in the pilot version) to prevent those study participants from copy pasting text. The survey was also pilot tested on both a laptop/desktop computer and a smartphone. The former is generally recommended for surveys that utilize images and more complex matrix questions. However, the majority of the AMT sample (96.2% in both the pilot and the final survey) completed the survey on their laptop or desktop computer.

Pilot testing the instrument was also generally useful for assessing the logistics and overall feasibility of AMT as a crowdsourcing platform under conditions equal to the actual survey administration in May 2020. Participants in the pilot test were excluded from participating in the final survey to ensure the independence of participants, however, both were given incentives to compensate for their time.

Manipulation Checks

The study design included testing for the effectiveness of the manipulations of story valence and national identity in several ways. First, immediately following the exposure to the news article, participants were asked, via an open-ended question, whether they had heard or read about the event from another news source (and if so, where). Participants who indicated that

they had read about this *particular* event were excluded from the study because the news article was crafted specifically for this study. Ninety-six percent ($N = 565$) denied having heard about the event (i.e., gave the correct response). Less than 4% ($N = 24$) indicated that they heard about a *similar* event from another source. Those participants were included in subsequent analysis.¹⁴ Similarly, 99% of participants ($N = 97$) in the control condition indicated that they had never heard or read about the event which, in fact, took place in Australia, however at a different time at a different location. Throughout the survey, participants were not able to go back to previous pages, including the article page, in order to prevent them from modifying their responses and appearing in a more favorable light. However, before exposing them to the news story, they were informed (on a separate, text-only page) that they will see an article on a contemporary news topic on the next page; they were instructed to read the article carefully as they will be asked a few questions about the article afterwards. On average, participants stayed on the article page for about two minutes ($Mdn = 118$ seconds, $SE = 8.85$).¹⁵ The recording of time was unknown to them (i.e., no timer was shown on the article page).

To assess the valence of the news article in terms of the outcome of the interfaith event (i.e., *vicarious contact valence*), two questions were asked: how optimistic or pessimistic the article is in general (measured on a five-point scale with $1 = \textit{very optimistic}$ and $5 = \textit{very}$

¹⁴ Among those participants, some referred to the larger sociopolitical context rather than the event itself (e.g., “I had read that hate crimes are rising in other news articles” and “I only heard about the rise of attacks on religious groups over the past few years since Trump has been in office throughout news stations and social media”) while others were unsure but recalled similar events (e.g., “Not that I can say for sure, but it seems like there are a fair number of these types of events”; “I’m not really sure if I’ve heard about it because I heard something about an interfaith event with various faith leaders happening. I remember hearing about it on a Christian radio station. I’m not sure this was the same event though.”), sometimes due to personal experience (e.g., “Not this specific event, but I’ve known of other similar events and I’m involved with an interfaith charity here where I live.”).

¹⁵ On average, participants who were randomly assigned to the negative conditions spent more time on the article page ($Mdn = 138.5$ seconds, $SE = 20.9$) than those in the neutral conditions ($Mdn = 117.7$ seconds, $SE = 13.9$) and positive conditions ($Mdn = 96.6$, $SE = 11.4$). This is not surprising given that the text used for the negative condition was also slightly longer. Respondents in the control group also spent more than two minutes ($Mdn = 137.3$ seconds, $SE = 27.3$) on the page. This is also expected given the use of technical jargon in the text.

pessimistic; reverse-coded), and how likely or unlikely it is for the individuals mentioned in the story to hold another event like this one (measured on a five-point scale ranging from 1 = *very unlikely* to 5 = *very likely*). This was highlighted in the final paragraph as well as the pullout quote in the article. Participants who read the positively framed news article rated the tone to be much more optimistic ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 0.79$) than those who read the neutral version ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 0.91$) and the negatively framed version of the article ($M = 2.56$, $SD = 0.99$), $F(3, 682) = 145.55$, $p < .001$.¹⁶ Similarly, participants who read the positively framed article were more likely to say that an event like this will be held again ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 0.73$) compared to those who read the neutral version ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 0.84$) and the negatively framed version of the event ($M = 2.37$, $SD = 1.14$), $F(3, 682) = 186.208$, $p < .001$.¹⁷

In addition to assessing the valence of the news story, participants were also asked about the feelings elicited by the article. Specifically, they were asked how they felt about and perceived the article, using a five-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*). As expected, participants exposed to the positively framed news story were the ones most likely to state that the outcome of the interfaith event makes them hopeful about such events ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 1.01$) and less pessimistic about them ($M = 1.89$, $SD = 1.10$) while participants exposed to the unsuccessful interfaith event indicated the opposite, i.e., that it makes them less hopeful ($M = 2.31$, $SD = 1.18$) and more pessimistic about such events ($M = 3.62$,

¹⁶ Participants in the control group who read the unrelated news story about a technology conference in Australia rated the valence of that event positively ($M = 4.24$, $SD = .64$), similar to the positively framed intergroup encounter. A post-hoc test (using Dunnett's test) revealed that both the neutral and negative conditions, but not the positive condition, were significantly different from the control group ($p < .001$). Based on Tukey's HSD, the three valence-based conditions are all statistically significant from one another ($p < .001$), as intended by the design.

¹⁷ Similarly, participants in the control group rated the likelihood to repeat the event rather high ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 0.74$). A post-hoc test (using Dunnett's test) revealed that all three valence-based conditions are significantly different from the control group ($p < .001$). Based on Tukey's HSD, these three conditions are all statistically significant from one another ($p < .001$).

$SD = 1.13$). The differences between these groups (including the neutral condition) were statistically significant for both perception measures, $F_{\text{hopeful}}(2, 585) = 123.73, p < .001$, and $F_{\text{pessimistic}}(2, 585) = 113.70, p < .001$. In the same block of questions, participants were also asked to what extent they think the article frames the story in a way that it is important to U.S. news audiences. Participants in the control group were least likely to mention that the article they read (on agricultural technology in Australia) framed the story in a way that it is important to U.S. news audiences ($M = 3.08, SD = 1.22$). With regard to national identity, participants in both the high-salience ($M = 3.85, SD = 1.00$) and no-salience conditions ($M = 3.78, SD = 1.00$) indicated a higher relevance compared to participants in the control condition. While the difference between these two groups is not significant, $t(586) = 0.78, p > .05$, the differences with the control group are significant, $t_{\text{no-salience}}(385) = 5.66, p < .001$; $t_{\text{salience}}(395) = 6.21, p < .001$. Lastly, participants were asked to what degree they perceived the story *realistic* and *authentic*. The article about the successful interfaith event without national identity cues was considered most authentic ($M = 4.25, SD = 0.88$) and most realistic ($M = 4.26, SD = 0.81$) by participants.

To assess the *salience of national identity* cues in the articles, one check was used: Participants were asked approximately how many times the United States was referenced (including mentions like the U.S., America or the nation), using a four-point ordinal scale ranging from “0” (correct answer for the no-salience and control conditions) and “more than 10” (correct answer for the high-salience condition which contained more than 20 references placed throughout the article). As expected, the manipulation of national identity salience was successful. Roughly two in five participants (38.8%, $N = 112$) in the no-salience condition (and four in five participants [80.6%, $N = 79$] in the control group) indicated no mentions. An

additional half (50.9%, $N = 147$) in the no-salience condition (and 16.3% [$N = 16$] in the control group) agreed with the second response option, a low number (“1-5 times”). Arguably, the fact that the interfaith event was portrayed as taking place in Washington DC may have triggered those participants to give this response as opposed to “zero” mentions. Likewise, the text in the control condition uses the acronym NASA, which may have a similar effect. In contrast, 45.8% ($N = 137$) of participants in the high-salience condition estimated that the nation was referenced more than five times (compared to 10.4% [$N = 30$] in the no-salience and 3% [$N = 3$] in the control condition). These differences were statistically significant, $\chi^2(6) = 268.53, p < .001$, indicating that the manipulation was successful. In sum, both experimental manipulations – vicarious contact valence and national identity salience – worked as intended.

Measures: Dependent Variables

Attitudes toward outgroup. A total of seven items, measured on a five-point scale ($1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree$) was used to assess attitudes toward Islam and Muslims. Following the classification by Imhoff and Recker (2012), but using an abridged form, this study focused on three subdimensions: (1) rejection of Islamophobia (one item, “Hostility against Muslims is an intolerable form of discrimination” [$M = 4.09, SD = 1.05$]); (2) rejection of discriminatory practices toward Muslims (one item, “Wherever a large number of Muslims live and attend schools, Islamic religious education should be offered” [$M = 3.04, SD = 1.28$]); and (3) rejection of secular critique of Islam, which reflect more laicistic positions toward the religion (including four items, *Cronbach’s* $\alpha = .63, M = 2.19, SD = 0.72$). These involve aspects such as the role of religious authority within the political sphere (“The strict division of church and state, as practiced in the West, would represent progress in many Islamic countries” [reverse-coded; $M = 2.25, SD = 1.01$], “Islam should not interfere with nonreligious issues” [reverse-coded;

$M = 2.21$, $SD = 1.11$]), gender roles (“Although some women voluntarily wear a veil, other women have been coerced to do so” [reverse-coded; $M = 1.98$, $SD = 0.93$]), and fundamentalism (“It is wrong to ignore the threat of fundamentalist Islam” [reverse-coded; $M = 2.34$, $SD = 1.12$]).

Trust in outgroup. Trust in Muslims was measured with a four-point ordinal scale ($1 = not at all$, $4 = completely$) ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 0.82$). Participants were asked how much they trust people from several religious groups, including Muslims.

Future intergroup contact. One aggregate measure was created (*Cronbach’s* $\alpha = .84$, $M = 3.76$, $SD = 1.07$) based on three quasi-behavioral items that assessed a participant’s willingness for future contact with Muslims, partly adopted from Mazziotta, Mummendey, and Wright (2011), using a five-point Likert scale ($1 = strongly disagree$, $5 = strongly agree$). The items included the following statements: “I would be happy to personally get to know more Muslim people” ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 1.16$), “I would not hesitate to attend a cultural event that is organized by Islamic centers” ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 1.39$) and “Working together with a person from the Muslim community would be no problem for me” ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 1.09$).

Interest in learning about outgroup. As a cognitive measure, an individual’s personal interest in learning about the outgroup was assessed with a five-point scale ($1 = strongly disagree$, $5 = strongly agree$) and a variety of items focusing on different aspects relevant to Muslims. Specifically, participants were asked to what degree they are interested in learning more about Islam in general ($M = 2.90$, $SD = 1.27$), Muslims in general ($M = 2.92$, $SD = 1.28$), Muslim Americans ($M = 2.99$, $SD = 1.27$), Muslims living in their state ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 1.25$), Muslims living in their city ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 1.27$), as well as Muslim/non-Muslim relations in general ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 1.27$). A separate interest measure was established which showed strong internal consistency (*Cronbach’s* $\alpha = .97$, $M = 2.96$, $SD = 1.19$).

Social identity motivations. Two types of motivations were measured, using items adapted from Joyce and Harwood (2020) as well as Harwood (1999): *social enhancement* (representing a primarily affective dimension) and *social uncertainty reduction* (representing a primarily cognitive dimension). Social enhancement motivations were measured using a five-point Likert scale ($1 = \text{strongly disagree}$, $5 = \text{strongly agree}$). Participants were first presented with a precursory text “Below are some reasons why people turn to the news. To what extent do the following reasons apply to you?” Responses reflecting general motivations for news-seeking behaviors (e.g., “to learn about current events of international importance”) were mixed with social identity gratifications. Social enhancement was assessed with three statements including “To read about people that I identify with,” “To feel good about the groups that I belong to,” and “Because I enjoy reading news that depict people like me positively.” This scale showed strong internal consistency ($Cronbach's \alpha = .87$, $M = 2.31$, $SD = 1.13$). Social uncertainty reduction was measured with a total of six statements including “To read about how other people like me interact with other groups,” “To read about how people from other groups interact with people like me,” “To read about how people from other groups behave,” “To read about how people from my group behave,” “To know what is socially appropriate in various situations,” and “To learn new social skills.” This scale was also reliable ($Cronbach's \alpha = .92$, $M = 2.36$, $SD = 1.07$).

Measures: Independent and Control Variables

Eight sets of control variables were considered in this study. Those controls, each measured with several indicators, gauge a participant’s (1) prior intergroup contact; (2) social trust; (3) media behaviors; (4) identity; (5) need for cognition; (6) closed-mindedness; (7) tendency to give socially desirable responses; and (8) sociodemographic background.

Intergroup contact. Prior intergroup contact was assessed on four fronts: feelings about different religious groups, prior contact, perceived familiarity, and trust in those groups.

Outgroup feelings. Participants were first presented with a feeling thermometer to indicate, via a sliding scale, how cold or warm they feel toward various groups. This is a widely used measure (e.g., Pew, 2016) to assess outgroup affect. Lower numbers mean that participants feel more negative while higher numbers mean they feel more positive toward the group. To avoid priming effects, Muslims appeared along with a variety of other religious groups including both minorities (e.g., Mormons, Hindus) and majority groups (e.g., Catholics, Evangelicals). The order of the groups was randomized. Consistent with recent public opinion data (Pew, 2019b), Muslims are among the lowest-ranked religious groups ($M = 53.39$, $SD = 29.24$).¹⁸

Prior outgroup contact. Participants were then asked if they personally know anyone who is a member of the groups they just rated on the previous page. Less than half of all participants (45%, $N = 310$) indicated that they had not (knowingly) met a member of the Muslim community. This share is also among the lowest compared to other religious groups.¹⁹

Outgroup trust. Following the prior outgroup contact items, participants were also asked how much they trust people from those groups, using a four-point ordinal scale ($1 = not at all$, $4 = completely$). Muslims ($M = 2.55$, $SD = 0.85$) were again among the lowest-ranked groups.²⁰

¹⁸ Only Mormons ($M = 50.20$, $SD = 28.57$) and undocumented immigrants ($M = 52.20$, $SD = 30.97$) were ranked lower than Muslims. Evangelical Christians ($M = 54.41$, $SD = 32.54$) were the only other group ranked relatively low. Buddhists ($M = 66.22$, $SD = 27.31$), Jewish ($M = 65.36$, $SD = 25.82$) and Protestants ($M = 63.62$, $SD = 27.82$) were the highest ranked groups on the feeling thermometer.

¹⁹ In contrast, only few people indicated that they had never met a Catholic (10.5%, $N = 72$), a Protestant (26.8%, $N = 184$) or a Jew (27.9%, $N = 192$).

²⁰ Only Mormons ($M = 2.53$, $SD = 0.81$) were, on average, ranked lower in terms of trust. Among the most trusted groups are Buddhists ($M = 2.90$, $SD = 0.77$), Catholics ($M = 2.88$, $SD = 0.74$), Protestants ($M = 2.87$, $SD = 0.74$) and Jewish ($M = 2.86$, $SD = 0.72$).

Perceived outgroup familiarity. Lastly, participants were asked how familiar they would say they are with the five world religions, using a four-point ordinal scale ($1 = \textit{not at all familiar}$, $4 = \textit{very familiar}$). Participants were most familiar with Christianity ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 0.53$), followed by Judaism ($M = 2.67$, $SD = 0.87$), Buddhism ($M = 2.51$, $SD = 0.87$), Islam ($M = 2.49$, $SD = 0.85$), and Hinduism ($M = 2.23$, $SD = 0.85$).

Social trust. To gauge how individuals view society as a whole and how mutual goals may be attained (Putnam, 2007), six items indicative of generalized trust were included in the questionnaire, using a five-point scale ($1 = \textit{strongly disagree}$, $5 = \textit{strongly agree}$): “Most people can be trusted” ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 1.10$), “Most people try to be helpful” ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 0.94$), “Most people try to be fair” ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 0.98$), “Most people try to take advantage of others” (reverse-coded; $M = 3.21$, $SD = 1.17$), “Most people look out for themselves” (reverse-coded; $M = 2.20$, $SD = 1.00$), and “You can’t be too careful in dealing with people” (reverse-coded; $M = 2.49$, $SD = 1.10$). A single item with strong internal consistency was created ($\alpha = .86$, $M = 3.10$, $SD = 0.81$).

Media behaviors. Media control variables can be categorized into four sets of questions: news media consumption, news attention, news elaboration, and trust in news.

Media consumption by source. Using a four-point ordinal scale ($1 = \textit{never}$, $4 = \textit{often}$), participants were asked how often they watch cable television news ($M = 2.51$, $SD = 1.07$), national evening network television news ($M = 2.51$, $SD = 1.04$), local television ($M = 2.69$, $SD = 1.03$), listen to news on the radio ($M = 2.17$, $SD = 0.98$), read newspaper in print ($M = 1.93$, $SD = 0.92$), or get news from a social networking site ($M = 2.74$, $SD = 1.05$) or a website or app ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 0.97$).

News attention. Participants were then asked to indicate how closely they follow different types of news (either in the newspaper, on television, radio, or the internet), using a four-point ordinal scale ($1 = \textit{not at all closely}$, $4 = \textit{very closely}$). They were presented with a list of ten news topics, three of which were most relevant to the frame of the news article used as an experimental manipulation: crime ($M = 2.49$, $SD = 0.85$), national affairs ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 0.81$), as well as people and events in their own community, that is, local events ($M = 2.74$, $SD = 0.86$).

News elaboration. Participants then indicated to what extent they engage with the news they consume (Eveland, Shah, & Kwak, 2003), using four statements measured on a five-point Likert scale ($1 = \textit{strongly disagree}$, $5 = \textit{strongly agree}$): “I often try to relate what I see in the news to my own personal experiences” ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 1.00$), “I often try to think about how what I see in the news relates to other things I know” ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 1.01$), “I often tie what I see in the news with ideas I’ve had before” ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 1.00$), and “I often find myself thinking about what I have seen in the news” ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 1.03$). These four items also showed strong internal consistency (*Cronbach’s* $\alpha = .87$, $M = 3.70$, $SD = 0.85$).

Trust in news sources. Participants were also presented with a list of 12 news sources for which they rated their level of trust (“How much, if at all, do you trust the information you get from ...?”), using a four-point ordinal scale ($1 = \textit{not at all}$, $4 = \textit{a lot}$). Two of those sources were considered for this analysis as they are in line with how the news article was presented: national newspapers ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 0.88$) and news websites ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 0.73$). The two were combined into a single item (*Cronbach’s* $\alpha = .71$, $M = 2.86$, $SD = 0.71$).

Identity. Participants were also asked various questions related to identity, including the importance of specific social identities and strength of U.S.-American national identity.

Identity importance. In thinking about their own identity, participants were asked how important several social identity aspects are to them. A five-point scale ($1 = \text{not at all important}$, $5 = \text{extremely important}$) was used. The two identity aspects that are most relevant to this analysis are religion ($M = 2.61$, $SD = 1.52$) and nationality ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 1.30$), which are also moderately correlated ($\rho = .47$, $p > .001$). All other identity aspects showed weaker correlations with religious identity.²¹

National identity. Participants' strength of U.S.-American national identity was assessed with four items used to measure this construct separate from other similar constructs such as symbolic or constructive patriotism (Huddy & Khatib, 2007; Levendusky, 2018). Participants were asked how important it is being American to them ($1 = \text{not at all important}$, $5 = \text{extremely important}$) ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 1.19$), how well the term American describes them ($1 = \text{not at all well}$, $5 = \text{extremely well}$; $M = 3.65$, $SD = 1.12$), to what extent they see themselves as a typical American ($1 = \text{not at all}$, $4 = \text{a great deal}$; $M = 2.95$, $SD = 0.91$), and how often they say "we" instead of "they" when talking about Americans ($1 = \text{never}$, $5 = \text{always}$; $M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.17$). All four items showed strong internal consistency so that a single national identity measure was created (*Cronbach's* $\alpha = .90$, $M = 3.40$, $SD = 0.96$).

Need for cognition. To assess an individual's ability to engage in and enjoy cognitive efforts such as news consumption, an abridged six-item version (Lins de Holanda Coelho, Hanel, & Wolf, 2020), based on the original 18-item (NCS-18) scale developed by Cacioppo and Petty (1982), was used. Using five-point scales ($1 = \text{strongly disagree}$, $5 = \text{strongly agree}$), the six

²¹ This includes racial/ethnic identity ($\rho = .40$, $p > .001$), gender identity ($\rho = .36$, $p > .001$), regional identity ($\rho = .32$, $p > .001$), social class ($\rho = .23$, $p > .001$), and political ideology ($\rho = .22$, $p > .001$). Individuals who rated their national identity as important also tend to rate their racial/ethnic identity as important ($\rho = .59$, $p > .001$), followed by their regional identity ($\rho = .52$, $p > .001$), gender identity ($\rho = .51$, $p > .001$), social class ($\rho = .40$, $p > .001$) and political ideology ($\rho = .34$, $p > .001$).

items were as follows: “I would prefer complex to simple problems” ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 1.21$), “I really enjoy a task that involves coming up with new solutions to problems” ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 1.12$), “I like to have the responsibility of handling a situation that requires a lot of thinking” ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 1.18$), “I would prefer a task that is intellectual, difficult, and important to one that is somewhat important but does not require much thought” ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 1.19$), “I would rather do something that requires little thought than something that is sure to challenge my thinking abilities” (reverse-coded; $M = 3.40$, $SD = 1.27$), and “Thinking is not my idea of fun” (reverse-coded; $M = 3.68$, $SD = 1.26$). These items resulted in a single measure with strong internal consistency (*Cronbach’s* $\alpha = .92$, $M = 3.56$, $SD = 1.02$).

Closed-mindedness. A five-item subscale of the need for closure scale, adapted from Webster and Kruglanski (1994), was used. Using five-point scales ($1 = strongly disagree$, $5 = strongly agree$), participants were presented with five statements to gauge closed-mindedness: “When considering most conflict situations, I can rarely see how both sides could be right” ($M = 2.48$, $SD = 1.17$), “I do not usually consult many different opinions before forming my own view” ($M = 2.46$, $SD = 1.15$), “When thinking about a problem, I consider as many different opinions on the issue as possible” (reverse-coded; $M = 2.10$, $SD = 0.93$), “I always see many different solutions to problems I face” (reverse-coded; $M = 2.23$, $SD = 0.96$), and “Even after I’ve made up my mind about something, I am always eager to consider a different opinion” (reverse-coded; $M = 2.60$, $SD = 1.06$). These items resulted in a single closed-mindedness measure with strong internal consistency (*Cronbach’s* $\alpha = .70$, $M = 2.37$, $SD = 0.70$).

Social desirability bias. To detect a participant’s tendency to display social desirability response bias in questionnaires, a battery of seven statements, adapted from the more complex Marlowe-Crowne scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960), was presented ($1 = strongly disagree$, $5 = strongly$

agree): “I am always willing to admit when I make a mistake” ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 1.15$), “I have never been irritated when people expressed ideas very different from my own” ($M = 2.43$, $SD = 1.23$), “I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone’s feelings” ($M = 2.66$, $SD = 1.41$), “I like to gossip at times” (reverse-coded; $M = 3.18$, $SD = 1.33$), “There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone” (reverse-coded; $M = 3.12$, $SD = 1.37$), “I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget” (reverse-coded; $M = 3.56$, $SD = 1.40$), and “At times I have really insisted on having things my way” (reverse-coded; $M = 2.52$, $SD = 1.15$). These items resulted in a single measure with strong internal consistency (*Cronbach’s* $\alpha = .75$, $M = 3.04$, $SD = 0.82$).

Demographics. Lastly, because outgroup orientations are typically a function on individuals’ social and political positions, several demographic measures were used (see also sample demographics in Table 3). For all, participants were also offered the response option “Prefer not to answer” or were able to skip the question.

Age. Participants were asked about their year of birth (“*In what year were you born?*”) and were provided a four-digit field to enter the year manually. On average, participants were 42 years old ($SD = 12.45$, $N = 662$).

Gender. Given that gender identities can be a sensitive issue to participants and misinterpretations are possible, a two-step approach to measure gender identity was used (Reisner et al., 2014): sex at birth (“What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate?”) with response options “Female” [48.4%, $N = 330$] and “Male” [51.6%, $N = 352$])

and current gender identity (“How do you currently describe yourself?”) with response options “female” (47.9%, $N = 327$), “male” (51.1%, $N = 349$), and “non-binary” (0.9%, $N = 6$).²²

Education. An ordinal level was employed to assess participant’s highest educational attainment (“What is your highest level of education?”). Response options include “Did not finish high school” (0.6%, $N = 4$), “Graduated from high school” (10.0%, $N = 68$), “Some college” (16.1%, $N = 110$), “Associate’s degree” (11.7%, $N = 80$), “Bachelor’s degree” (45.5%, $N = 311$), “Master’s degree” (13.2%, $N = 90$), “Professional degree” (1.5%, $N = 10$), and “Doctoral degree” (1.5%, $N = 10$).²³

Income. Participants were asked to indicate the income bracket that best describes last year’s household income situation (“In which of these groups did your total household income fall in 2019?”) Twelve response options with income brackets were provided, ranging from “less than \$10,000” (1) to “more than \$150,000” (12). The sample’s median household income was between \$50,000 and \$60,000, similar to the national median household income (see Table 3).

Household size. Participants were asked how many people live in their household (including themselves) by entering the number of household members in a write-in field. A three-person household ($M = 2.80$, $SD = 1.56$) was the most common form in this sample.

Employment. The participant’s current employment situation was assessed with a ten-item inventory question (“Which of these descriptions applies to what you have been doing for the last 7 days? Please select all that apply.”) Most participants were full-time employees

²² Other response options included “transgender,” “genderqueer or nonconforming,” or “a gender category/identity not listed” with a write-in option to specify. One participant indicated “agender/fem.” No other participant indicated another gender identity.

²³ Put differently, less than 1% ($N = 4$) did not finish high school, 10% ($N = 68$) graduated from high school, 16.1% ($N = 110$) completed some college, 57.2% ($N = 391$) completed undergraduate post-secondary education, and 16.1% ($N = 110$) completed graduate post-secondary education.

(66.5%, $N = 457$), followed by part-time employees (13.1%, $N = 90$). In light of the coronavirus pandemic, some indicated that they are unemployed (3.3% actively looking for work [$N = 23$] and 3.1% wanting a job but not actively looking for work [$N = 21$]). Roughly one in ten participants indicated that they were doing housework, looking after children or other persons (9.5%, $N = 65$), retired (5.8%, $N = 40$), students (2.8%, $N = 19$), permanently sick or disabled (1.7%, $N = 12$). Others (4.8%, $N = 33$) specifically indicated that they were furloughed due to the COVID-19 pandemic or freelancing.²⁴

Race and ethnicity. Participants were presented with a list of racial and ethnic identifications and were able to select multiple options (presented in alphabetical order), including “African American or Black” (11.9%, $N = 82$), “American Indian or Alaska Native” (1.3%, $N = 9$), “Asian American or Asian” (9.2%, $N = 63$), “Hispanic/Latinx” (5.7%, $N = 39$), “Middle Eastern or North African” (0.3%, $N = 2$), “Pacific Islander” (0.1%, $N = 1$), “White or Caucasian” (76.1%, $N = 523$) and an “Other” category (0.6%, $N = 4$) with an option to provide a written response.

Religion. Both the participant’s current religious affiliation (“What is your current religion?”) and the religion with which the participant grew up (“With which religion did you grow up?”) were recorded. The same response options were provided for each question. Most participants identified as nonreligious, including atheists and agnostics (42.5%, $N = 292$), followed by Protestants (26.2%, $N = 180$) and Catholics (20.8%, $N = 143$) at the time they took the survey. Fewer identified as Buddhists (1.5%, $N = 10$), Jews (1.0%, $N = 7$) and Hindus (0.9%, $N = 6$).²⁵ The same response options were provided to assess the participant’s former religious

²⁴ No participant indicated community of military service.

²⁵ Forty-three respondents used the write-in option to specify their current religious affiliation. Those were recorded – either into an existing category (such as “none” when they indicated being agnostic or atheist) or a new category:

affiliation, with the only difference that they were offered “some other religion/various” (with a write-in option) to allow for those that grew up in a household with various religious influences. Most people grew up in a Catholic (35.1%, $N = 241$) or Protestant household (35.1%, $N = 241$), followed by non-religious (18%, $N = 124$), Jewish (1.5%, $N = 10$), Hindu (1.3%, $N = 9$), and Buddhist (0.7%, $N = 5$).²⁶ Given the study’s focus on orientations toward Muslims, the relatively few people that identified as current or former Muslims were excluded so that the analysis focuses solely on non-Muslims’ orientations toward Muslims.

Religiosity. The level of religiosity was assessed with three items, adopted from the European Social Survey (ESS): (a) “Regardless of whether you belong to a particular religion, how religious would you say you are?” with an 11-point Likert-type scale ranging from “not at all religious” (0) to “very religious” (10) ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 3.76$); (b) “Apart from special occasions such as weddings and funerals, about how often do you attend religious services nowadays?” ($M = 1.29$, $SD = 1.74$) and (c) “Apart from when you are at religious services, how often, if at all, do you pray?” ($M = 2.57$, $SD = 2.54$), both using a seven-point ordinal scale with response options ranging from “never” (0) to “every day” (6) for both items. A combined measure was developed (*Cronbach’s* $\alpha = .91$, $M = 2.04$, $SD = 2.01$).

Residence. Based on the ESS, two slightly modified questions were used to determine a participant’s past and current living environment: (a) “Which of the following best describes the

Christian/Evangelical (2%, $N = 14$), nonreligious but spiritual (1.6%, $N = 11$), nondenominational or spiritual Christian (0.7%, $N = 5$), Orthodox including Eastern, Greek and Christian (0.6%, $N = 4$), Mormon (0.3%, $N = 2$), Baptist (0.3%, $N = 2$), and Pentecostal (0.1%, $N = 1$), among others.

²⁶ Fifty-seven respondents used the write-in option to specify their former religious affiliation. These include Christian/ Evangelical (2.8%, $N = 19$), Baptist (1.7%, $N = 12$), Mormon (0.6%, $N = 4$), nondenominational or spiritual Christian (0.4%, $N = 3$), Orthodox including Eastern, Greek, Russian and Christian (0.4%, $N = 3$), Presbyterian (0.4%, $N = 3$), Methodist (0.3%, $N = 2$), and Episcopalian (0.3%, $N = 2$). The remainder indicated a combination of religions.

area where you mostly grew up?"; and (b) "Which of the following best describes the area where you currently live?" Both questions used the same response options: urban (28.1% [$N = 193$] and 33.2% [$N = 228$]), suburban (51.7% [$N = 355$] and 50% [$N = 343$]), and rural (20.1% [$N = 138$] and 16.8% [$N = 115$]), indicating a slight trend of moving from rural and suburban to urban areas in the aggregate. An additional question asked about the participant's current state of residence, using a drop-down menu that showed all U.S. states and territories. Most participants indicated that they currently reside in California (10.5%, $N = 72$), Florida (8.6%, $N = 59$), New York (6.8%, $N = 47$), Texas (6.6%, $N = 45$) or Pennsylvania (6%, $N = 41$) – the nation's five most populous states. However, almost all 50 states were represented by study participants in the sample.

Neighborhood diversity. Adopted from the ESS, perception measures of (a) racial/ethnic and (b) religious neighborhood diversity were used, including three response options: "very diverse" so that almost everyone is of a different race or ethnic group (28.3%, $N = 194$) or religious group (11.1%, $N = 76$), "somewhat diverse" so that some people are of a different race or ethnic group (21.7%, $N = 149$) or religious group (61.8%, $N = 423$), and "not very diverse" so that almost everyone is of the same race or ethnic group (50%, $N = 343$) or religious group (27.2%, $N = 186$).

Political ideology. Finally, participants' ideological preference was assessed using the item "How liberal or conservative would you say you are?" and a seven-point ordinal scale ranging from extremely liberal (1) to extremely conservative (7) ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.84$).²⁷

²⁷ The sample's ideological distribution reflects the entire political spectrum and mirrors the population shares in terms of those who identify as moderates but overall includes more liberals than conservatives. The average (median) participant identified as "slightly liberal." Specifically, while roughly four in ten participants identify as liberals (39.7%, $N = 272$), four in ten as moderates (39.6%, $N = 272$), and two in ten as conservatives (20.7%, $N = 142$), 2020 polling data (Brenan, 2020a) reveal that 35% of U.S. citizens consider themselves to be socially

To answer the research questions and test the hypotheses provided in Chapter 2, this chapter sought to outline the methodological steps needed for designing a quantitative study of media effects of intergroup portrayals in the news – as a form of vicarious intergroup contact – on various outcome variables. The following chapter presents the results of this analysis.

conservative (39% economically conservative), 36% to be moderates (38%), and 29% to be socially liberal (21% economically liberal). Similarly, in 2019, a slight plurality of U.S. Americans identified as generally conservative (37%). Almost as many identified as political moderates (35%), and fewer considered themselves to be liberals (24%) (Saad, 2020).

CHAPTER 6:

MEDIA EFFECTS OF INTERGROUP PORTRAYALS

This chapter provides empirical answers to the research questions and hypotheses posited in the second half of Chapter 2. Specifically, it focuses on the direct and indirect effects of intergroup portrayals that vary in tone on outcomes such as outgroup trust (H1), attitudes (H2), behavioral intentions (H3), interest (H4), and the mediating influence of interest (H5) as well as social identity motivations aimed at enhancing social identity (RQ6) and reducing social uncertainty (RQ7). Furthermore, the moderating impact of national identity salience in the intergroup portrayals is examined with respect to these variables (H6, H7, and RQ8). For the sake of parsimony and to facilitate causal inferences, only the experimental effect with the largest effect size is chosen for the more advanced path models reported in the second half of this chapter. Lastly, given that the goal of this study is to better understand media effects on a particular ingroup's (i.e., non-Muslims) orientations toward a particular outgroup (i.e., Muslims), all former ($N = 7$) and current Muslims ($N = 5$) were excluded from all subsequent analyses.

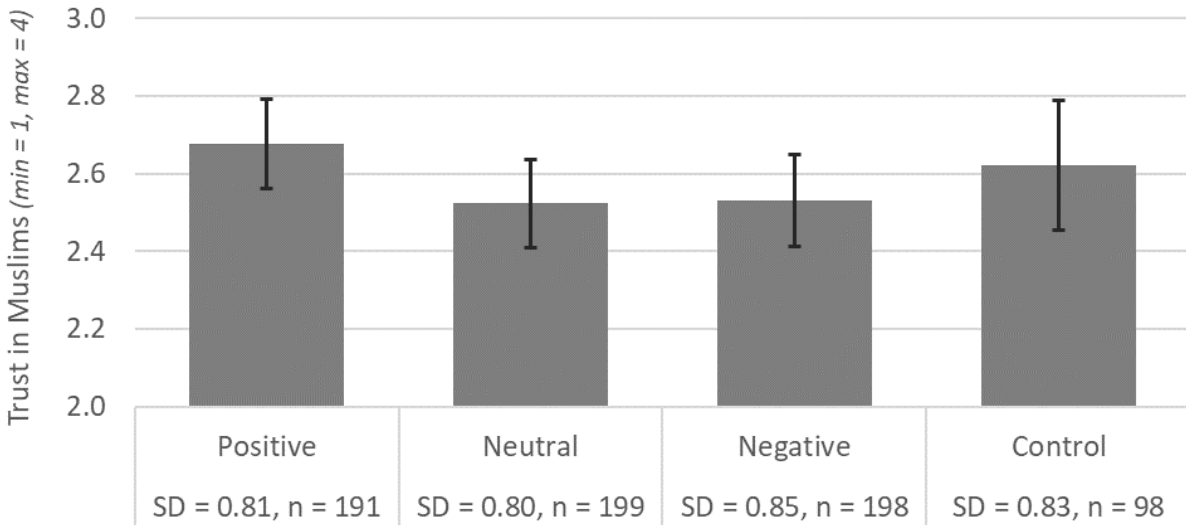
Direct Effects on Orientations toward Muslims

Effects on Trust

To test the first hypothesis that news exposure to an intergroup encounter with a positive outcome would lead to more trust in the outgroup, differences between the four conditions (positive, neutral, and negative tones, as well as control) in terms of trust toward Muslims were compared (see Figure 12 for means and confidence intervals). Results of a one-way ANOVA indicate no statistically significant differences between the four conditions, $F(3, 682) = 1.505$, $p = .21$, $\eta^2 = .007$. Therefore, H1 was not supported: Being exposed to an intergroup encounter that differs in the valence of its outcome does not affect trust toward the outgroup.

Figure 12

Descriptive Statistics for Trust in Outgroup by Valence of Stimulus



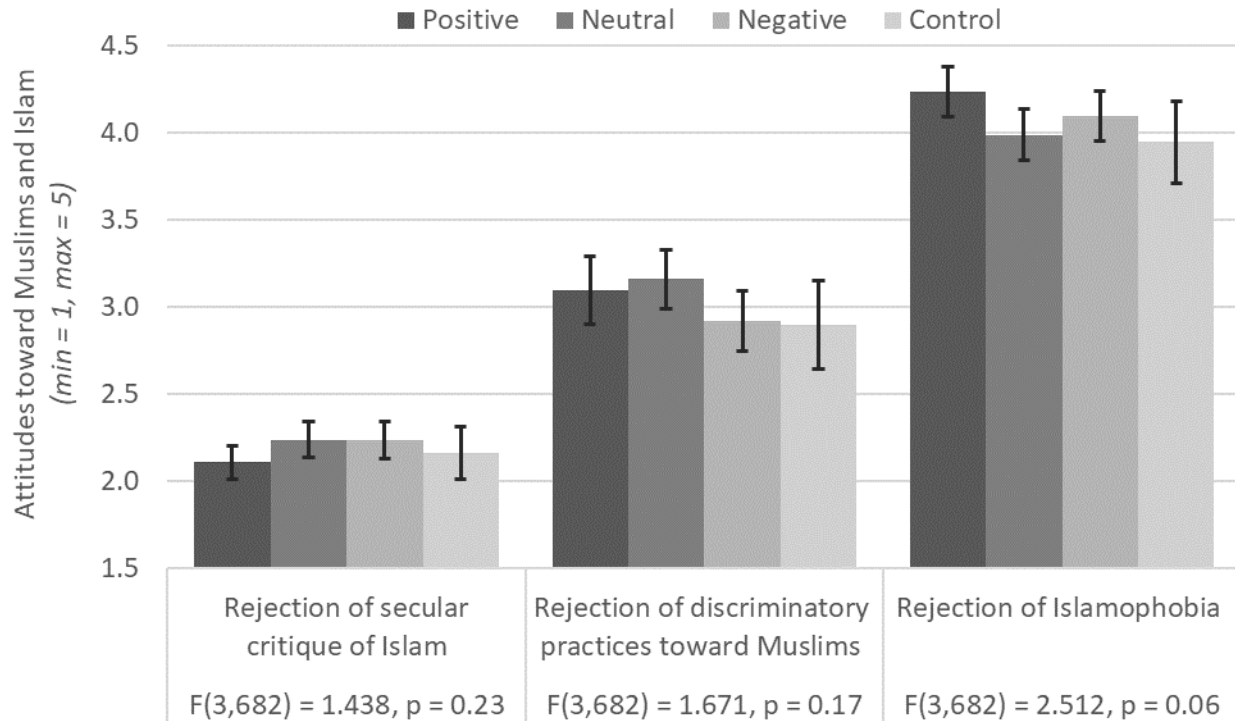
Effects on Attitudes

The second hypothesis predicted that exposure to a positively framed intergroup encounter would lead to more favorable attitudes toward Islam and Muslims. Three attitudinal measures were examined with a one-way ANOVA: rejecting (1) more subtle (i.e., secular) points of critique of Islam (e.g., gender-based roles, separation of church and state); (2) discriminatory practices toward Muslims (specifically denying Islamic religious education to Muslim schoolchildren); and (3) outright prejudice against Islam (i.e., Islamophobia). However, none of those measures resulted in statistically significant differences between the experimental conditions (see Figure 13 with F-values reported below the columns²⁸). Similar to trust, H2 was not supported: Being exposed to a positively framed intergroup interaction involving Muslims did not change individuals' attitudes toward Muslims and Islam.

²⁸ Given that the effects on rejection of Islamophobia were marginally significant based on a one-way ANOVA ($p = .06$), additional post-hoc comparison tests were performed. Using Tukey's HSD, the differences between the positive and the neutral condition were largest but only marginally significant ($\Delta M = 0.25$, $p = .08$). Similarly, using Dunnett's t, the differences between the positive and the control condition were largest but also only marginally significant ($\Delta M = 0.29$, $p = .06$).

Figure 13

Descriptive Statistics for Attitudes Toward Outgroup by Valence of Stimulus



Effects on Behavioral Intentions

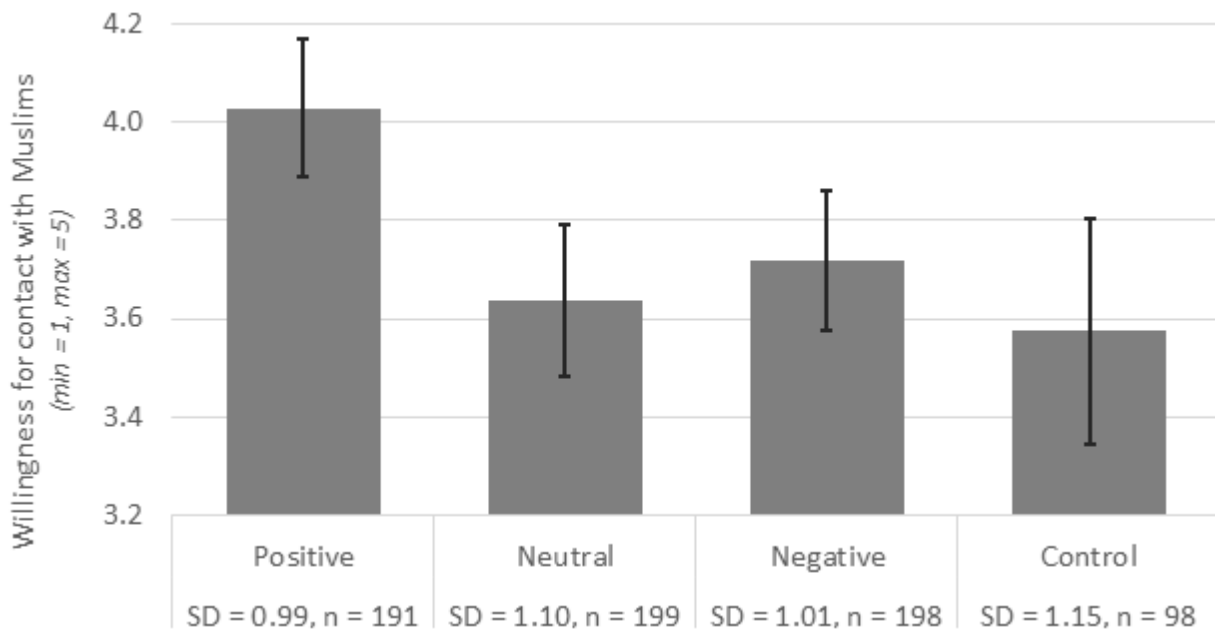
To test the third hypothesis, which predicted that news exposure to an intergroup encounter with a positive outcome would lead to more willingness for contact with the outgroup, the three valence-based conditions (plus control) were compared using a one-way ANOVA (see Figure 14). The omnibus test was statistically significant, $F(3, 682) = 6.16, p < .001, \eta^2 = .026$.²⁹ Study participants who read the positively framed intergroup portrayal showed most willingness to engage in contact with Muslims ($M = 4.03, SD = 0.99$) compared to all other conditions. Specifically, post-hoc tests (Tukey's HSD) showed statistically significant differences between

²⁹ A separate one-way ANOVA of only the positive, neutral, and negative conditions also shows statistical significance, $F(2, 585) = 7.719, p < .001, \eta^2 = .026$. A post-hoc test (Tukey HSD) revealed that the positive condition is different from the neutral and negative conditions.

the positive condition and the neutral condition ($\Delta M = 0.39, p < .001$), the negative condition ($\Delta M = 0.31, p < .05$), and the control condition ($\Delta M = 0.45, p < .01$). H3 was therefore supported: Being exposed to a positively framed intergroup encounter significantly increases one's willingness to engage in different forms of direct contact with the outgroup. As previewed in the introduction of this chapter, willingness for future contact with the outgroup serves as a key focal variable in all subsequent analyses given that the effect size for this outcome variable was strongest compared to attitudes and trust.

Figure 14

Descriptive Statistics for Contact Willingness by Valence of Stimulus



To test whether these positive effects remain stable after controlling for a host of sociodemographic factors, preexisting beliefs about Islam and Muslims, and prior contact with Muslims, an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression was performed to predict willingness to engage in future contact (see Table 4).

Table 4*OLS Regression Analysis for Predicting Willingness to Interact with Muslims*

	B	(SE)	β
Demographics			
Sex: Female	0.008	(0.068)	0.004
Age	-0.001	(0.003)	-0.011
Education	0.021	(0.041)	0.017
Household income	-0.013	(0.012)	-0.037
Household size	-0.007	(0.021)	-0.010
Employment (full-time)	-0.051	(0.076)	-0.022
Race/Ethnicity: African American/Black	-0.053	(0.187)	-0.016
Race/Ethnicity: Asian or Asian American	0.092	(0.183)	0.024
Race/Ethnicity: Hispanic/Latinx	-0.133	(0.173)	-0.029
Race/Ethnicity: White/Caucasian	-0.031	(0.172)	-0.012
Religion: Catholic	0.016	(0.100)	0.006
Religion: Protestant	-0.079	(0.098)	-0.033
Religiosity	-0.004	(0.023)	-0.007
Current residence ^a	0.023	(0.057)	0.015
Former residence ^a	-0.005	(0.056)	-0.003
Racial/ethnic diversity of neighborhood	-0.029	(0.038)	-0.023
Religious diversity of neighborhood	-0.412	(0.117)	-0.231***
Ideology (conservatism)	-0.335	(0.059)	-0.582***
<i>Incremental R² (%)</i>	<i>17.4***</i>		
Prior exposure and social trust			
Feeling about Muslims (feeling thermometer)	0.017	(0.001)	0.464***
Prior or current contact (personally knows a Muslim)	0.149	(0.070)	0.070*
Familiarity with Islam	0.059	(0.041)	0.047
Social trust	0.162	(0.042)	0.125***
<i>Incremental R² (%)</i>	<i>24.8***</i>		
Ideology (conservatism) x religious neighborhood diversity	0.105	(0.029)	0.424***
<i>Incremental R² (%)</i>	<i>1.1***</i>		
Article valence			
Exposure to positive intergroup outcome	0.258	(0.072)	0.109***
<i>Incremental R² (%)</i>	<i>1.1***</i>		
<i>Total R² (%)</i>	<i>44.4***</i>		
<i>N</i>	<i>652</i>		

Note. Entries are upon-entry coefficients from OLS regressions.

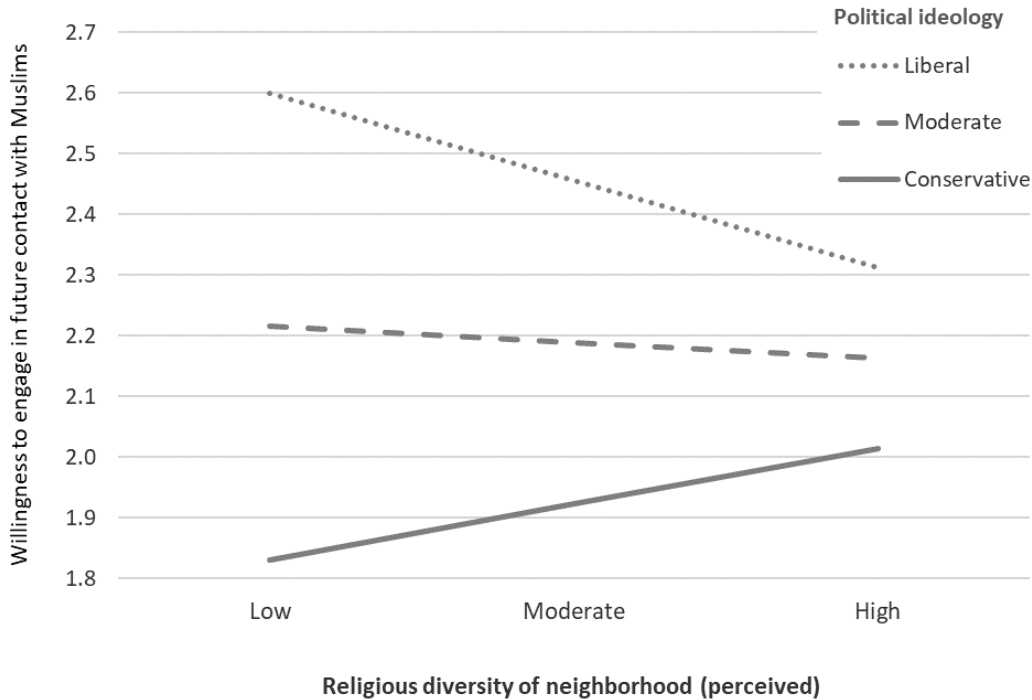
^a Higher values indicate more rural areas.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

The results demonstrate that exposure to the positively framed intergroup portrayal was effective in terms of increasing non-Muslims' willingness to meet Muslims. Individuals who reside in areas marked by religious diversity and conservatives tend to be less willing to engage in future contact with the outgroup. These two variables also showed a statistically significant interaction effect (see Figure 15): Ideological differences seem to matter most in areas with no or little religious diversity. Specifically, in those areas, liberals are most willing, and conservatives least willing, to seek contact with Muslims. In contrast, conservatives who live in more heterogeneous neighborhoods tend to be more open to such contact – and more similar to liberals – presumably because of the increased opportunities that allow them to directly engage in outgroup contact. Other non-demographic and non-geographic factors, however, have far more explanatory power (i.e., roughly 25% of the explained variance in the outcome variable): Individuals who hold more favorable attitudes toward Muslims to begin with, who personally know a Muslim, and who are generally more trusting are more likely to state that they would engage in contact with Muslims, after controlling for all other factors in the model.

Figure 15

Willingness to Engage with Muslims as a Function of Ideology and Neighborhood Diversity



Effects on Interest

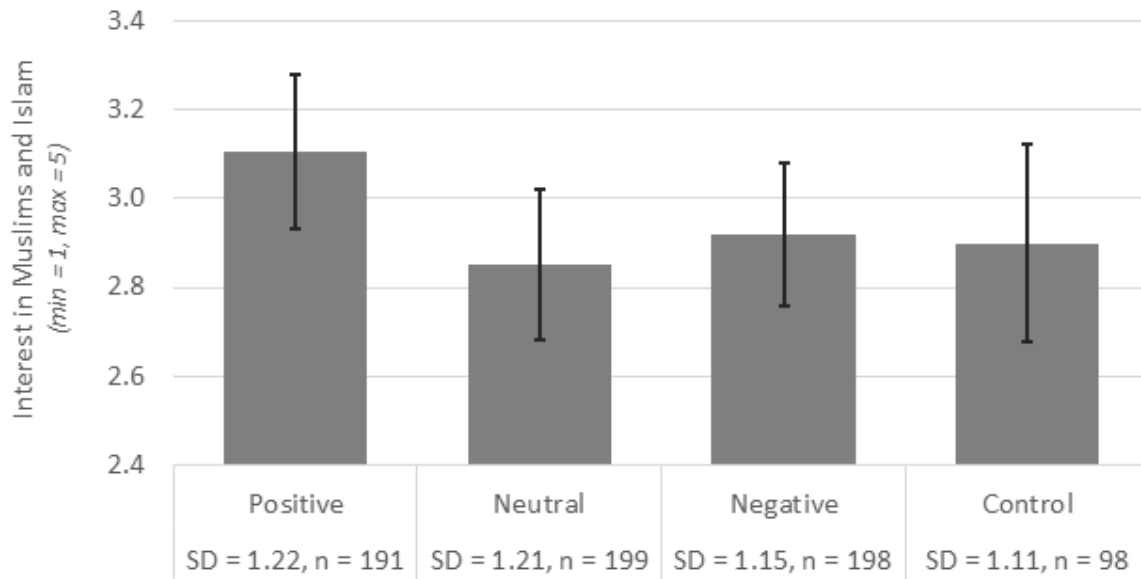
The final direct-effects hypothesis (H4) predicted that news exposure to an intergroup encounter with a positive outcome would lead to more interest in the outgroup. To test this assumption, the four experimental conditions were compared using a one-way ANOVA (Figure 16). The omnibus test was not statistically significant, $F(3, 682) = 2.336, p = .17, \eta^2 = .008$.³⁰ Similar to trust (H1), the group that was exposed to the positively framed intergroup portrayal showed most interest in Muslims ($M = 3.10, SD = 1.22$) vis-à-vis all others, but post-hoc comparison tests, using Tukey’s HSD, showed no significant differences between the four

³⁰ A separate one-way ANOVA of only the positive, neutral, and negative conditions is not statistically significant, $F(2, 585) = 2.35, p > .05, \eta^2 = .008$. A post-hoc test (Tukey’s HSD) revealed that the positive condition is different from the neutral condition, but this difference is also not statistically significant ($\Delta M = 0.25, p > .05$).

experimental groups. Therefore, H4 was also not supported: Being exposed to an intergroup encounter that differs in the valence of its outcome does not affect interest in the outgroup.

Figure 16

Descriptive Statistics for Outgroup Interest by Valence of Stimulus



Mediating Effects of Interest and Social Identity Motivations

Is the effect of the positively framed news story on willingness to engage in future contact a direct effect only? To test whether this outcome is mediated by interest (H5) and social identity motivations, particularly social enhancement (RQ6) and social uncertainty reduction (RQ7), a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach was employed. Specifically, this was tested within the framework of a recursive, serial mediation model with the fully randomized treatment variable (in this case, being exposed to the positively framed news story versus all others) and four endogenous variables – all of them conceptualized as latent variable constructs: social enhancement, social uncertainty reduction, interest in learning more about the outgroup, and willingness to engage in future contact with the outgroup (see Figure 1). Based on prior research (e.g., Joyce & Harwood, 2020; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008), a causal ordering is assumed.

Using the lavaan package in R (Rosseel, 2012), the maximum likelihood technique was used to estimate the parameters of the recursive model. Prior to testing the hypothesized associations among the key variables, correlations between the four latent variables (as described in Chapter 5 and visualized in Figure 1) were computed. A summary of all latent variables and correlations can be found in Table 5.

Table 5

Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations of Latent Variables

	M	SD	N of items	α	1	2	3	4
<i>Social identity motivations</i>								
1. Social enhancement	2.31	1.13	3	.87	<i>1.27</i>	1.03	.18	-.05
2. Social uncertainty reduction	2.36	1.07	6	.92	.86**	<i>1.14</i>	.28	.03
<i>Outgroup orientations</i>								
3. Interest in outgroup	2.95	1.18	6	.97	.13**	.22**	<i>1.40</i>	.73
4. Contact willingness	3.76	1.06	3	.84	-.04	.02	.58**	<i>1.13</i>

Note. $N = 687$; α = Cronbach's alpha; diagonal contains variances (in italics), upper triangle contains covariances; lower triangle contains correlations

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed)

The proposed model had an acceptable fit to the sample data, included 58 parameters to estimate, was just-identified (i.e., saturated), and converged after 53 iterations. Both the relative fit index (comparative fit index [CFI] = .937) and the absolute fit index for SEM (root mean square error approximation [RMSEA] = .089, with a 90% confidence interval (.083, .094), $p < .001$, were largely in line with the recommended thresholds suggested by Hu and Bentler

(1998)³¹ (see Table 6 for a comparison with a more parsimonious mediation model with only interest entered as mediator). Statistical significance of all direct and indirect paths is indicated by a 95% confidence interval, using 1,000 bootstrap draws (the default method).

Table 6

Structural Equation Model Selection Based on Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Model choice	1 experimental variable 1 latent variable as mediator Interest (6 indicators) 1 endogenous/outcome variable Outgroup contact (3 indicators)	1 experimental variable 3 latent variables as mediators Interest (6 indicators) Social enhancement (3 indicators) Social uncertainty reduction (6 indicators) 1 endogenous/outcome variable Outgroup contact (3 indicators)
RMSEA (90% C.I.)	0.146 (0.135 – 0.157) ($p = 0.000$)	0.089 (0.083 – 0.094) ($p = 0.000$)
SRMR	0.052	0.043
CFI	0.933	0.937
TLI	0.909	0.925
Convergence	After 37 iterations	After 53 iterations
Observations (N)	687	687
χ^2	515.525 ($p = 0.000$)	915.898 ($p = 0.000$)
df	33	143

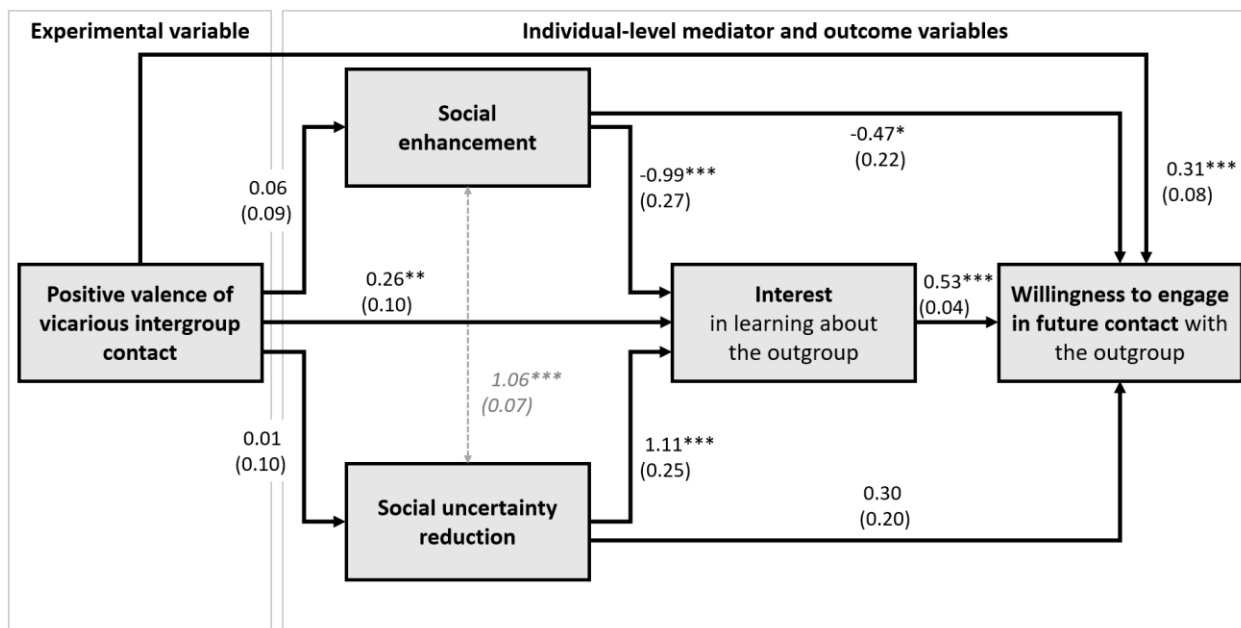
Note. Estimation method: Maximum likelihood (ML). Absolute model fit indices: RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation, SRMR = standardized root mean square residual; relative model fit indices: CFI = comparative fit index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis index.

³¹ Hu and Bentler (1998) consider a CFI above .90 and RMSEA below .08 to be acceptable as model fit indices. Others (e.g., Kenny, 2020) have criticized that the chi square test is too liberal, resulting in too many type-1 errors when variables have non-normal distributions (e.g., kurtosis) or sample sizes are too small.

The final path model, including all coefficients, is presented in Figure 17. Interest partly mediates the relationship between an individual’s exposure to a positively framed intergroup outcome in the news and willingness to engage in future contact with Muslims. Both direct effects ($b_{\gamma_{14}} = 0.26$, $SE = 0.10$, $p < .01$, 95% CI [0.06, 0.46]; $b_{\beta_{45}} = 0.53$, $SE = 0.04$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.45, 0.61]) and the indirect effect on behavioral intentions via interest ($b = 0.14$, $SE = 0.05$, $p < .05$, 95% CI [0.03, 0.24]) were statistically significant. H5 is supported: Positively framed intergroup portrayals spark people’s interest in learning more about an outgroup, and this increased level of interest makes them more willing to seek out actual contact with that outgroup.

Figure 17

Direct and Indirect Effects of Vicarious Contact Valence on Contact Willingness



Note. Entire sample, $N = 687$. The overall model is significant in predicting the second mediator, interest in learning about the outgroup, $R^2 = .14$, $F(3, 683) = 17.02$, $p < .001$, and the dependent variable, $R^2 = .40$, $F(4, 682) = 96.17$, $p < .001$, but not the two social identity gratification mediators, social enhancement, $R^2 = .001$, $F(1, 685) = 0.53$, $p = .47$, and social uncertainty reduction, $R^2 = .00$, $F(1, 685) = .001$, $p = .98$. The line between these two mediators represents the covariance (1.06, $SE = 0.07$, $p < .001$). The total effect is 0.39 ($SE = 0.09$, $p < .001$). All path coefficients are unstandardized with standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

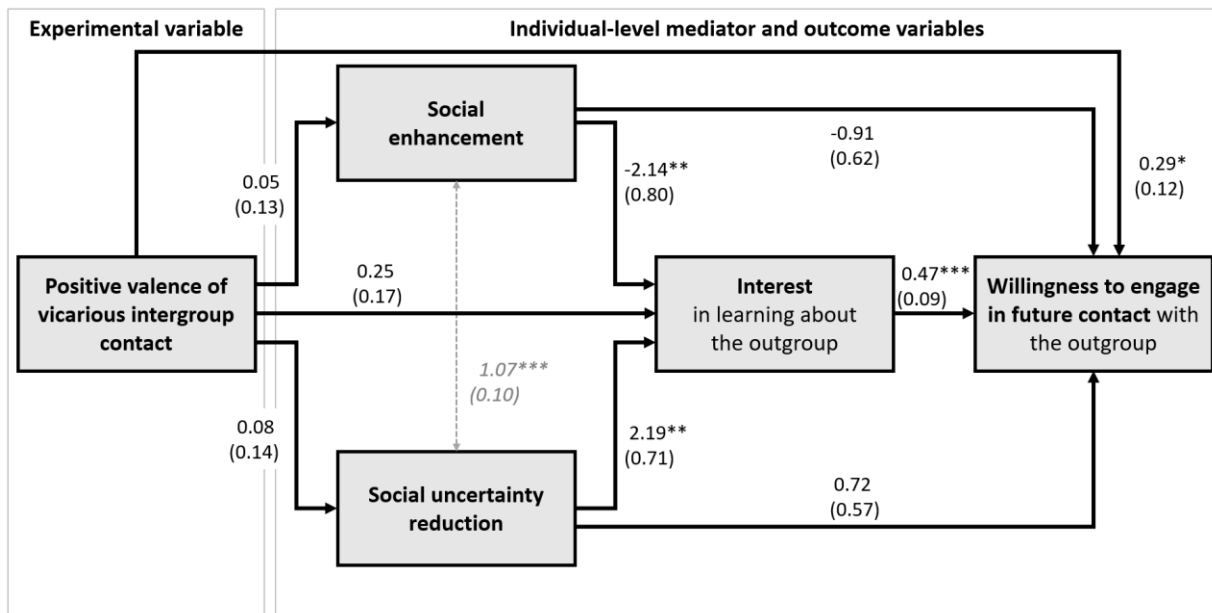
While both social identity gratifications predicted interest, they were not mediators in this path model. Exposure to the positive intergroup outcome did not significantly alter social enhancement ($b_{\gamma_{12}} = 0.06$, $SE = 0.09$, $p = .49$, 95% CI [-0.12, 0.24]) or social uncertainty reduction ($b_{\gamma_{13}} = 0.01$, $SE = 0.10$, $p = .95$, 95% CI [-0.19, 0.20]). However, they both predicted interest in learning about the outgroup – and they did so in theoretically expected directions: Being motivated by reducing social uncertainty (e.g., by reading about how outgroups or outgroup members interact with the ingroup or ingroup members) positively predicted interest in learning about Muslims ($b_{\beta_{34}} = 1.11$, $SE = 0.25$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.62, 1.60]). In contrast, being motivated by social enhancement (e.g., by enjoying content that depicts ingroup members in a positive way) negatively predicted interest in learning about the outgroup ($b_{\beta_{24}} = -0.99$, $SE = 0.27$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-1.53, -0.46]). When it comes to predicting behavioral intentions, only social enhancement was a significant negative predictor for willingness for future contact ($b_{\beta_{25}} = -0.47$, $SE = 0.22$, $p < .05$, 95% CI [-0.90, -0.04]). The path coefficient for the relationship between being motivated by social uncertainty reduction and future contact was not significant ($b_{\beta_{35}} = 0.30$, $SE = 0.20$, $p = .14$, 95% CI [-0.10, 0.70]). In other words, individuals who tend to be motivated by their ingroup’s positive distinctiveness – feeling better about one’s ingroup – while consuming media were not only less interested but also less willing to engage in direct contact with dissimilar others when it comes to religion.

Do these direct and indirect effects of the positively framed news story on willingness to engage in future contact with Muslims differ by the viewer’s religious affiliation? To test for these differences, a post-hoc analysis was conducted with focus on the religious groups that are explicitly featured in the news story and can thus be considered (non-Muslim) ingroup members interacting with (Muslim) outgroup members in the context of the study. Specifically, this

second path analysis is solely based on those participants who currently identify as Catholics, Protestants (both mainline and evangelical) and Jews ($N = 358$), therefore excluding all nonbelievers ($N = 303$) and those who affiliate with other non-Judeo-Christian religions ($N = 24$). Put differently, this analysis is premised on the idea that readers who affiliate with these religions may, to some extent, identify with the individuals and groups referenced in the news article (Joyce, 2017; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Results of these post-hoc analyses are presented in Figure 18, using the same path model structure as before.

Figure 18

Group-specific Effects of Vicarious Contact Valence on Contact Willingness (Judeo-Christians)



Note. Subsample of Judeo-Christian believers, $N = 358$. Path model of direct and indirect effects of exposure to positive vicarious intergroup contact on willingness to engage in future intergroup contact. The overall model is significant in predicting interest in learning about the outgroup, $R^2 = .34$, $p < .001$, and the dependent variable, $R^2 = .44$, $p < .001$, but not the two social identity gratification mediators, social enhancement, $R^2 = .001$, $p > .05$, and social uncertainty reduction, $R^2 = .001$, $p > .05$. The line between these two mediators represents the covariance (1.07, $SE = 0.10$, $p < .001$). The total effect is 0.34 ($SE = 0.14$, $p < .05$). All path coefficients are unstandardized.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

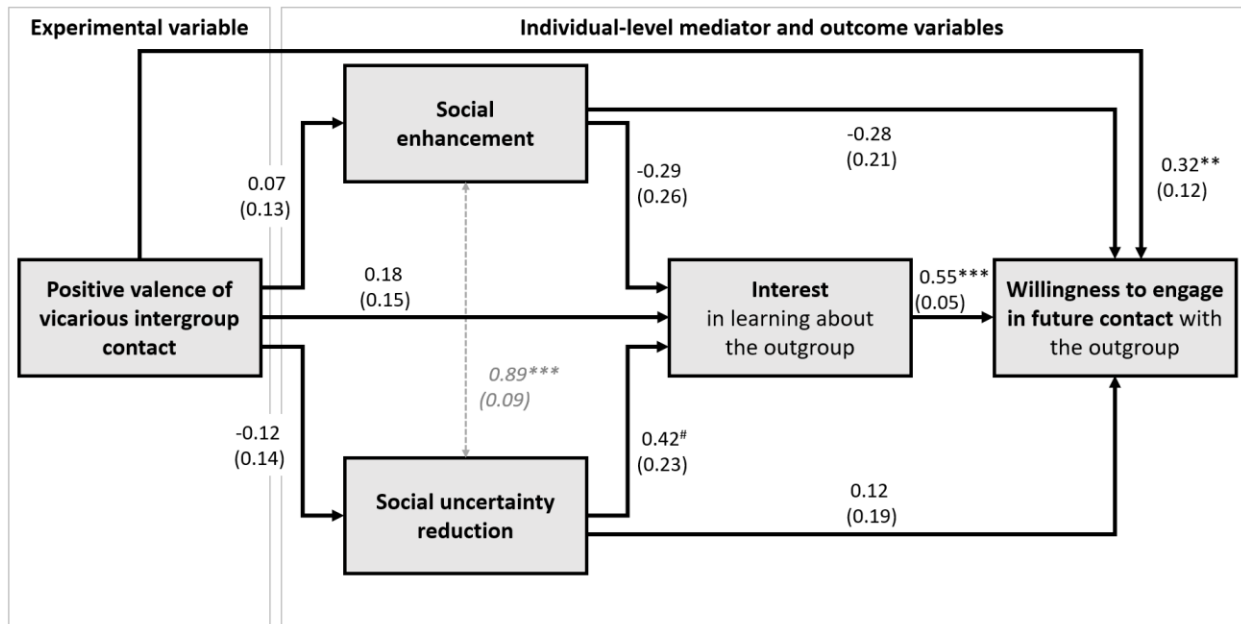
As expected, the previously detected effects of both social identity gratifications are amplified among those who identify as members of Judeo-Christian faiths. Similar to the overall model, the two gratifications operated independent from the experimental manipulation ($b_{\gamma_{12}} = 0.05$, $SE = 0.13$, $p = .68$, 95% CI [-0.19, 0.30]; $b_{\gamma_{13}} = 0.08$, $SE = 0.14$, $p = .58$, 95% CI [-0.19, 0.35]). Social enhancement negatively predicted interest ($b_{\beta_{24}} = -2.14$, $SE = 0.80$, $p < .01$, 95% CI [-3.71, -0.57]) and social uncertainty reduction positively predicted interest ($b_{\beta_{34}} = 2.19$, $SE = 0.71$, $p < .01$, 95% CI [0.80, 3.57]), but both failed to significantly predict willingness to engage in future contact with Muslims (although both point into the expected direction ($b_{\beta_{25}} = -0.91$, $SE = 0.62$, $p = .14$, 95% CI [-2.13, 0.31]; $b_{\beta_{35}} = 0.72$, $SE = 0.57$, $p = .20$, 95% CI [-0.39, 1.84])). The direct effect of being exposed to the positively framed intergroup outcome on future contact willingness remains significant ($b_{\gamma_{14}} = 0.29$, $SE = 0.12$, $p < .05$, 95% CI [0.05, 0.52]) in this group-specific model. Similar to the overall model, exposure to the positively framed news article did not predict social identity gratifications. In sum, among Christian and Jewish believers, the interest in learning more about Islam and Muslims is similarly motivated by social enhancement and social uncertainty reduction, but the effects of those social identity gratifications are overall stronger than in the general model that does not distinguish between groups.

Given the sizable subsample of nonbelievers, the same model was tested on only those participants who currently identify as agnostics and atheists ($N = 303$). Not surprisingly, many significant effects within the model based on the entire sample vanished (see Figure 19). This is expected as the news story about the interfaith gathering did not feature any nonbeliever. With regard to the path model, only two positive effects remained statistically significant: the overall effect of the experimental news treatment on future contact willingness ($b_{\gamma_{14}} = 0.31$, $SE = 0.12$,

$p < .01$, 95% CI [0.08, 0.55]) and the direct effect of interest on future contact willingness ($b_{\beta 45} = 0.55$, $SE = 0.05$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.45, 0.65]). The direct effect of social uncertainty reduction on interest in learning more about Islam and Muslims was marginally significant ($b_{\beta 34} = 0.42$, $SE = 0.23$, $p = .07$, 95% CI [-0.04, 0.87]).

Figure 19

Group-specific Effects of Vicarious Contact Valence on Contact Willingness (Nonbelievers)



Note. Subsample of nonreligious participants, $N = 303$. Path model of direct and indirect effects of exposure to positive vicarious intergroup contact on willingness to engage in future intergroup contact. The overall model is significant in predicting interest in learning about the outgroup ($R^2 = .04$, $p < .01$) and the dependent variable ($R^2 = .38$, $p < .001$), but not the two social identity gratification mediators, social enhancement ($R^2 = .001$, $p > .05$) and social uncertainty reduction ($R^2 = .002$, $p > .05$). The line between these two mediators represents the covariance (0.89, $SE = 0.09$, $p < .001$). The total effect is .34 ($SE = 0.14$). All path coefficients are unstandardized. # $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Moderating Effects of National Identity Salience

Moderated Effects on Social Identity Gratifications

To test whether the effects of a positively framed intergroup outcome are moderated by the salience of national identity cues in the news article, an ANOVA was performed to separate the two main and interaction effects of the experimental stimulus on each social identity gratification. With regard to social enhancement (RQ8a), the main effect of national identity salience was statistically significant, $F(1, 584) = 7.203, p < .01, \eta^2 = .012$, but the main effect of positive valence, $F(1, 584) = 0.327, p = .57, \eta^2 = .001$, and the joint effect were not significant, $F(1, 584) = 0.319, p = .57, \eta^2 = .001$.³² In other words, making national identity more salient in news about intergroup encounters can, in and of itself, appeal to an audience member's motivation to feel good about their ingroup(s) but it does not further amplify the positive effects of the positively framed intergroup portrayal on social enhancement motivations.

With regard to social uncertainty reduction (RQ8b), the pattern is the same. Only the main effect of national identity salience was statistically significant, $F(1, 584) = 6.687, p < .01, \eta^2 = .011$, but the main effect of positive valence, $F(1, 584) = 0.195, p = .66, \eta^2 = .000$, and the combined effect were not significant, $F(1, 584) = 0.651, p = .42, \eta^2 = .001$.³³ Put differently, similar to social enhancement, making national identity more salient in news about intergroup encounters can – on its own – appeal to an audience member's motivation to reduce social

³² $R^2 = .02, p < .05$. The same F -test was performed using the entire valence spectrum (i.e., negative, mixed, and positive outcomes). In this case, both the main effect of national identity salience, $F(1, 582) = 10.083, p < .01, \eta^2 = .017$, and valence were statistically significant, $F(2, 582) = 4.596, p < .01, \eta^2 = .016$, but the interaction effect remained nonsignificant, $F(2, 582) = 0.444, p = .64, \eta^2 = .002 (R^2 = .03, p < .01)$.

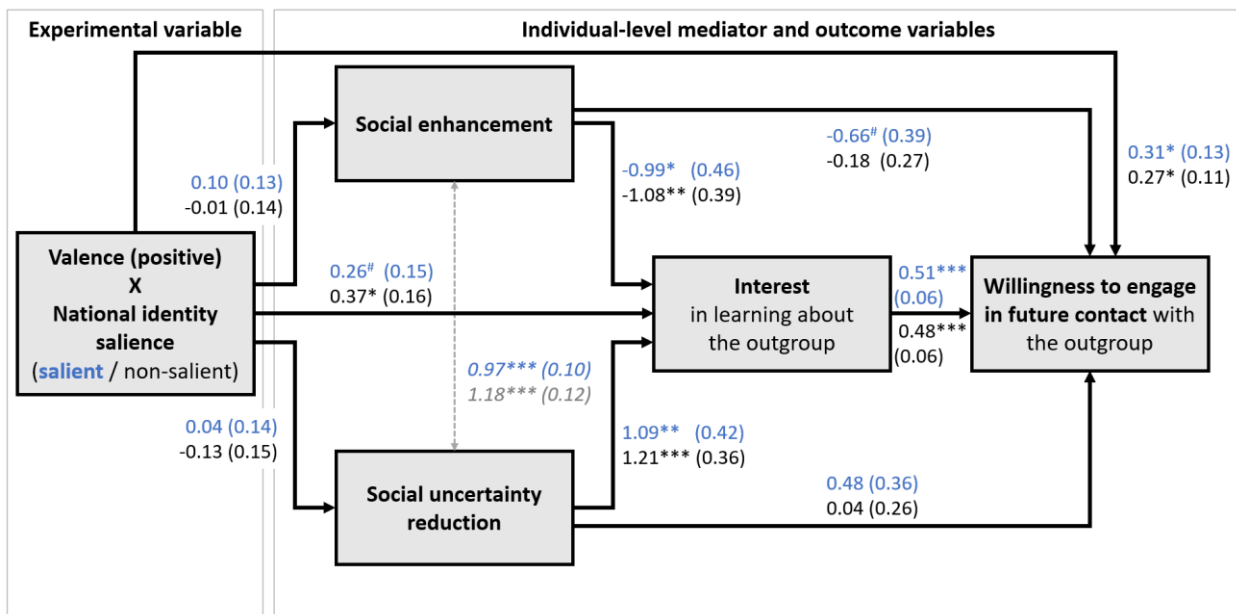
³³ $R^2 = .02, p < .05$. The same F -test was performed using the entire valence spectrum (i.e., negative, mixed, positive outcome). In this case, both the main effect of national identity salience, $F(1, 582) = 9.882, p < .01, \eta^2 = .017$, and valence were statistically significant, $F(2, 582) = 3.574, p < .05, \eta^2 = .012$, but the interaction effect remained nonsignificant, $F(2, 582) = 0.83, p = .44, \eta^2 = .003 (R^2 = .03, p < .05)$.

uncertainty about outgroup(s) but it does not alter the effects of the positively framed intergroup portrayal on this type of motivation.

The path model developed earlier was refined to also examine the condition-based effects of national identity salience on interest and willingness for future contact. Specifically, two different models were tested to separate the effects of the second experimental manipulation (emphasizing versus omitting national identity cues) in the positively framed news story. Path coefficients (blue for salience, black for non-salience) are shown in Figure 20.

Figure 20

Condition-based (Moderated) Effects of National Identity Salience on Contact Willingness



Note. Entire sample except control group, $N = 588$. The path coefficients in blue are based on the condition in which participants were exposed to the positively framed intergroup outcome *and* in which (U.S.) national identity was made salient. The path coefficients in black are based on exposure to the article in the non-salient condition. The total effect is 0.37 ($SE = 0.12$), $p = .003$. All path coefficients are unstandardized.

$p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The effects are largely the same across the two conditions, indicating that a story that seeks to appeal to the audience member's national identity did not operate differently from one that is similar in tone but does not emphasize those identity aspects. The effects on the two social identity gratifications were just slightly stronger when national identity was emphasized; however, those effects remained statistically non-significant. In other words, after reading the positively framed article in which the national context was highlighted, participants were no more likely to indicate that they enjoy reading about people they identify with or how people like them interact with others, compared to all other experimental groups.

Moderated Effects on Interest and Willingness to Engage in Future Contact

The study also hypothesized that the positive effects of the positive intergroup outcome on interest (H6) and willingness for future contact (H7) would be amplified when national identity is emphasized in the article. The direct effect on interest in learning about the outgroup was in fact attenuated in the salient condition, showing only marginal significance ($b_{\gamma 14} = 0.26$, $SE = 0.15$, $p = .09$, 95% CI [-0.04, 0.55]), compared to the non-salient condition ($b_{\gamma 14} = 0.37$, $SE = 0.16$, $p = .02$, 95% CI [0.06, 0.67]). H6 is therefore not supported. Within the context of this study, invoking the nation more frequently and emphasizing a common ingroup (as Americans) seemed to lower, not heighten, interest in learning more about the outgroup.

Likewise, the negative effects of social enhancement ($b_{\beta 24} = -0.99$, $SE = 0.46$, $p = .03$, 95% CI [-1.90, -0.08]) and the positive effect of social uncertainty reduction ($b_{\beta 34} = 1.09$, $SE = 0.42$, $p = .01$, 95% CI [0.27, 1.92]) on interest were also reduced in the salient condition compared to the non-salient condition, and only social enhancement negatively predicted willingness for future contact when national identity was made salient ($b_{\beta 25} = -0.66$, $SE = 0.39$, $p = .09$, 95% CI [-1.43, 0.11]). In both conditions, the direct effects of exposure on future contact

willingness were similar in size, direction, and statistical significance. H7 is therefore also not supported. Making national identity more salient in a news narrative did not alter the audience's willingness to engage with the outgroup.

Additional Analyses

Knowing that making a common ingroup identity like national identity more salient in a news context was not effective in terms of increasing willingness to engage in future intergroup contact in this study context, it is important to examine what other factors may help or hinder such contact. Three sets of control variables were examined. Seeking intergroup contact may be a function of an individual's (a) news behaviors, (b) identity importance, and (c) personality attributes. These were entered into the regression model presented earlier (Table 4) to predict willingness for future intergroup contact (see Table 7). In sum, they explain an additional 10% of variation in the outcome variable ($p < .001$). Notably, even controlling for those factors, the positive effect of the positively framed intergroup portrayal on one's willingness to seek contact with the outgroup remains statistically significant ($b = 0.21$, $SE = 0.07$, $p = .002$).

News behaviors

If a positively framed intergroup encounter has positive effects on people's willingness to meet with dissimilar others, it is important to know to which type of news they tend to pay more attention. Individuals who pay increased attention to international affairs ($b = 0.13$, $SE = 0.05$, $p < .05$) and less attention to government and politics ($b = -0.11$, $SE = 0.05$, $p < .05$) as well as crime ($b = -0.10$, $SE = 0.04$, $p < .05$) are more willing to get in contact with Muslims.³⁴

³⁴ A statistically significant interaction effect was detected between attention to crime in the news and vicarious contact valence (i.e., news story valence). Since this relationship was not hypothesized a priori and thus is beyond the scope of the study, the findings, explained in part by cultivation research, can be found in Appendix D.

Interestingly, attention to local and national news, the type of news platform, and the extent to which one engages with the news they consume are not significant predictors. Higher levels of trust in the news are associated with increased willingness to engage in future intergroup contact ($b = 0.17, SE = 0.05, p < .01$), after controlling for all other factors in the model.

Identity importance

Non-Muslim study participants who place less emphasis on their national identity are significantly more willing to engage in contact with Muslims ($b = -0.12, SE = 0.03, p < .001$). In contrast, religious identity ($b = -0.001, SE = 0.04, p = .98$) and being a member of a marginalized group that has experienced forms of discrimination ($b = -0.03, SE = 0.08, p = .75$) are not significant predictors for willingness for contact.

Personality attributes

Lastly, non-Muslims who possess higher levels of need for cognition are no more likely than those with a lower need for cognition to seek contact with Muslims ($b = 0.03, SE = 0.04, p = .40$). However, closed-mindedness was strongly negatively related to one's willingness for future contact ($b = -0.30, SE = 0.05, p < .001$). People who are more receptive to new ideas and views of others are also significantly more likely to seek contact with dissimilar others.³⁵

Individuals' responses did not demonstrate social desirability bias ($b = -0.02, SE = 0.04, p = .57$).³⁶

³⁵ Closed-mindedness was only marginally related to political ideology (Pearson's $r = .09, p = .05$), indicating that study participants from across the ideological spectrum were more or less equally likely to be open to new ideas.

³⁶ A participant's social desirability bias was gauged with a battery of seven Likert-type items, adapted from the more complex Marlowe-Crowne scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960).

Table 7*OLS Regression for Predicting Willingness to Interact with Muslims, with Additional Controls*

	B	(SE)	β
Demographics	18.5***		
Prior intergroup contact and social trust	24.8***		
News behaviors			
Trust in news	0.166	(0.053)	0.112**
News elaboration	0.058	(0.045)	0.046
News attention			
- Government and politics	-0.113	(0.051)	-0.092*
- People and events in own community	0.031	(0.043)	0.025
- National affairs	-0.005	(0.056)	-0.003
- International affairs	0.131	(0.051)	0.102**
- Crime	-0.098	(0.045)	-0.079*
- Sports	0.025	(0.031)	0.027
- Business and finance	-0.010	(0.040)	-0.009
- Science and technology	0.046	(0.045)	0.036
- Health	-0.075	(0.047)	-0.056
- Entertainment	0.022	(0.039)	0.019
News consumption			
- Print newspapers	0.045	(0.038)	0.039
- Radio	0.014	(0.034)	0.013
- Television	0.028	(0.042)	0.024
- Social networking sites	0.041	(0.032)	0.041
- News app/website	0.018	(0.035)	0.016
<i>Incremental R² (%)</i>	4.6***		
Social identity			
Importance of religious identity	0.001	(0.035)	0.002
Importance of national identity	-0.116	(0.030)	-0.142***
Discrimination experience	-0.053	(0.076)	-0.023
<i>Incremental R² (%)</i>	1.7***		
Personality attributes			
Closed-mindedness	-0.296	(0.053)	-0.194***
Need for cognition	0.030	(0.036)	0.029
Social desirability bias	-0.024	(0.042)	-0.018
<i>Incremental R² (%)</i>	3.1***		
Article valence			
Exposure to positive intergroup outcome	0.211	(0.068)	0.089**
<i>Incremental R² (%)</i>	0.8***		
<i>Total R² (%)</i>	53.5***		
<i>N</i>	652		

Note. Entries are upon-entry coefficients from ordinary least squares regression.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

The goal of this chapter was to provide empirical answers to the effects-oriented research questions and hypotheses proposed in Chapter 2. Based on an array of multivariate techniques, including structural equation modeling, findings helped to illuminate several direct, mediated, and moderated effects on orientations toward Muslims. Those are discussed in their sociopolitical and historical context in the next chapter. First, findings suggest that *only* positively framed news portrayals of Muslim/non-Muslim encounters – as a form of vicarious intergroup contact – have potential to increase non-Muslims’ willingness to interact with Muslims. This effect was not detected for other intergroup outcomes such as trust and attitudes, which seem to be more stable and harder to change with media messages alone. Notably, the positive effect on people’s contact willingness remains significant even after controlling for a host of third variables, such as prior contact, identity importance, news behaviors, and other personality factors. Second, this relationship is partly mediated by interest in learning more about the outgroup. The more positive the vicarious contact experience, the more interested individuals tend to be in learning more about Islam and Muslims more generally. While unaffected by the experimental stimulus, underlying social identity motivations are nonetheless important drivers for sparking that interest and seeking direct contact with Muslims. And third, contrary to expectations, using a common-identity approach by making (U.S.-American) national identity more salient in intergroup news narrative involving Muslims does *not* moderate the effects on non-Muslims’ willingness to engage in contact with Muslims. The next and final chapter integrates the findings presented in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6 with existing scholarship, addresses study limitations, provides some directions for future research, and discusses implications for managing intergroup relations in general.

CHAPTER 7:

DISCUSSION

Motivated by the need to better understand intergroup relations involving Muslims, this study examined media portrayals of encounters between Muslims and non-Muslims, and their effects on orientations toward Muslims. In doing so, two theoretical perspectives that lend themselves to explaining intergroup relations were combined: intergroup contact theory and social identity theory. While both theories are wide in scope and offer ample research directions, this study combines specific aspects of each theory. Specifically, three contributions are offered. Situated at the intersection of religious and national identity, the study (1) illuminates the role of vicarious intergroup contact; (2) integrates it with the recategorization (or common-ingroup-identity) perspective from the social identity literature; and (3) employs intergroup encounters rather than outgroup individuals as the unit of analysis for studying media content.

First, as a form of mediated, indirect intergroup contact, vicarious contact has shown its effectiveness in past research (Mazziotta et al., 2011; Paluck, 2009). Despite its low personal involvement (as one simply observes ingroup members interacting with outgroup members), the intergroup experience can still be rich due to the use of identity cues and news values that shape the portrayal of the intergroup encounter. As Harwood (2010) argues, the more fruitful types of contact may actually be low in richness. Observing intergroup contact via media may serve as a prejudice-reduction strategy. Particularly for individuals who are hesitant, introverted or anxious of new situations (like meeting strangers), or who simply do not have the opportunity to meet people from other groups because they live in nondiverse areas or are afraid of alienation, this type of contact has much potential and can be a crucial step toward seeking more meaningful, direct contact. Experiencing vicarious contact facilitates liking of outgroups (via parasocial

relationships), identifying with ingroup and outgroup members (via social identification processes), and social learning (via social cognitive processes) (Joyce, 2017).

Second, as one of the early advocates of intergroup contact, Allport (1954) already specified structural conditions under which intergroup contact can thrive and lead to reduced levels of prejudice toward outgroups. The recategorization approach (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000) highlights two of those conditions: sharing a common goal and being of equal status. In addition, the content material created for the experimental part of the dissertation sought to incorporate the remaining two conditions into the news narrative, that is, highlighting intergroup cooperation and receiving institutional support (Allport, 1954). Given the intergroup tensions that exist in today's world based on religious differences on the one side and the powerful narrative about the American national identity on the other side, it seems plausible to test if a superordinate, all-inclusive identity like U.S. national identity can minimize some of those underlying tensions.

Third, heeding the call of Harwood and colleagues (2013, p. 87), this study shifts the focus toward examining portrayals at the dyadic level of analysis as opposed to individual characters as the unit of analysis. Although media content is frequently used to create and manipulate experimental stimuli, relatively little is known about the extent and ways in which intergroup encounters are *actually* portrayed in the news media. Chapter 4 of this dissertation seeks to fill this gap in the literature. Intergroup portrayals – rather than individual outgroup portrayals – in the news also inform much of the experimental design considerations that constitute the second part of this study.

The remainder of the chapter outlines several noteworthy findings presented in chapters 4 and 6, discusses study limitations and directions for future research, and outlines different ways of thinking for improving intergroup relations from a news media perspective.

Key Findings

Muslim/non-Muslim interactions are mainly framed as foreign events to U.S. news audiences

Several findings from this two-pronged study are worth highlighting. First, U.S. news audiences vicariously experience interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims in just a handful of news domains, with the international news section being the primary source for such encounters. Taken together, eight out of ten portrayals of Muslim/non-Muslim encounters can be found in only three sections: international news, national news, and editorials/op-eds. Only every tenth encounter appears in the local or regional section of the newspapers analyzed in this study. Perhaps most stunning is the virtual absence of Muslim/non-Muslim encounters from other news domains: News audiences are rather unlikely to read – and therefore learn – about those interactions from the sports, business, arts, or science pages, to name just a few. Stories about Muslim interactions with non-Muslims seem to be concentrated on politics and conventional hard news. News audiences get everything but a multi-faceted view on Islam and Muslims vis-à-vis non-Muslims.

Muslim/non-Muslim interactions often take place in settings shaped by conflict

Second, most intergroup encounters are shaped by conflict rather than support. Not surprisingly, the majority of intergroup portrayals show Islam or Muslims as being the enabler (e.g., attacks carried out by the Islamic State) or the target of violence (e.g., as victims of Islamophobic attacks) – and the majority of those encounters focus on events abroad. The portrayals of these intergroup encounters largely mirror research on individual portrayals of Islam and Muslims, which demonstrate Islam as a violent religion, tend to cast Muslims in a negative light, and frequently link them to news about 9/11, terrorism, migration, and war

(Ahmed & Matthes, 2017). Essentially, these media portrayals are *still* not much different from Edward Said's early assessments (Said, 1981) and later works (Said, 2008) about Orientalist themes in Western news. Nor do they differ from the many studies that found a predominately negative tendency in portraying Islam and Muslims across Western media (e.g., Bowe, Fahmy, & Wanta, 2013; Ewart, 2012; Poole, 2011; Powell, 2011).

Local news about Muslim/non-Muslim interactions tend to be more positive

Third, while the majority of portrayals tend to be negatively framed, this share is higher for national newspapers. On the other hand, news audiences are more likely to come across articles about positive Muslim/non-Muslim encounters in local and regional newspapers. With regard to the news domain, local news stories in local and regional newspapers were most likely to depict positive intergroup outcomes involving Muslims (i.e., about six in ten stories published in the local section of those newspapers tend to be positive). In contrast, international news stories and editorials and op-eds in both national and local newspapers are predominately negative in their portrayals of such intergroup outcomes (i.e., more than two-thirds of encounters published in those sections tend to be negative). This is, to some degree, expected as national newspapers tend to report on macro-level events of national and/or international importance, which are often shaped by conflict and violence (Oliver & Myers, 1999). National newspapers like the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post* also report on national and international large-scale events simply because they have the resources to do so (e.g., foreign bureaus and correspondents, financial resources to acquire newswire material) (Murrell, 2019) compared to smaller papers with less circulation. Furthermore, unless intergroup events happen in the metropolitan area served by a national newspaper (e.g., Washington DC, New York), there is little to no reason to report on a local, small-scale intergroup event that happened at the other

side of the country, unless those events are of national importance. In fact, newspapers with less circulation and that are aimed at smaller metropolitan areas and regions tend to focus on smaller – and often more peaceful – community events. Research on news coverage about inclusionary, pro-immigrant events initiated and carried out by local residents and organizations across U.S. metropolitan areas confirms this pattern (Okamoto & Ebert, 2016). More generally, content in local newspapers is often motivated by the goal to build community and stimulate civic participation (McLeod, Scheufele, & Moy, 1999; Ray, 1999; Shah, McLeod, & Yoon, 2001).

Exposure to positive Muslim/non-Muslim interactions in the news has prosocial intergroup outcomes

Fourth, this dissertation tested the effect of portrayals of intergroup portrayals on a variety of outcome variables. The effect of the positively framed news story on one's willingness to engage in future contact with the outgroup stands out and remains significant even after controlling for numerous factors. That positive effects result from observing the modeling of positive behaviors and interactions is in line with research based on social cognitive theory (e.g., Fujioka, 1999, Joyce & Harwood, 2014; Ortiz & Harwood, 2007; Wojcieszak & Azrout, 2016; see also Coyne et al., 2018; Mares & Pan, 2013 for recent meta-analytic work on positive effects from prosocial and educational media). When it comes to indicating one's willingness to meet Muslims, there were no discernible differences between the neutral, negative, and control condition. This suggests that audiences may be more used to such stories, and less familiar with positive news stories, which would provide a refreshing, unconventional view on Muslim/non-Muslim relations. The results of the content analysis confirm this trend, with more negative stories focusing on intergroup encounters abroad and reported by national newspapers, and more positive stories focusing on such encounters at home and more likely to appear in local

newspapers. In fact, when asked about the validity of the news story, participants exposed to the positive/non-salient article rated their version most authentic and most realistic among all.

Prosocial intergroup behaviors are impacted differently by people's social identity motivations

Heeding the call of Joyce and Harwood (2020), this study also utilized a larger sample that facilitated a comparison of the simultaneous effects of both types of social identity gratifications. While none of the two experimental manipulations (vicarious contact valence and national identity salience) significantly altered an individual's desire to seek out media content about intergroup encounters, those preferences do exist and impact one's interest in learning more about outgroups, meeting outgroup members, or participating in activities organized by outgroup members. Specifically, people whose media behaviors are driven by social uncertainty reduction were *more* likely to be interested in Islam and Muslims. In contrast, people whose media behaviors are driven by social enhancement turned out to be *less* interested in learning about, and meeting, Muslims. These two contrasting effects were amplified for people who were followers of Judaism and Christian religions (two groups explicitly featured in the news story used in this experiment), and nearly disappeared for nonreligious people (which were not mentioned in the article).

Prior contact, diversity exposure, liberalism, open-mindedness, social trust, and trust in news contribute to prosocial intergroup behaviors

Lastly, while the positively framed intergroup encounter was most effective at triggering behavioral intentions, altering one's willingness to engage with dissimilar others is a complex function of a variety of attitudinal, perceptual, and personality-based variables. As expected, liberals were more likely than conservatives to say they would seek out contact with Muslims,

but this difference disappears in neighborhoods that are perceived to be high in religious diversity. This demonstrates the importance of considering opportunity structures: Liberals residing in diverse areas may not feel an additional desire to engage with dissimilar others likely because they might have already done so, but more conservative-minded who are offered the opportunity to get in contact with Muslims (because they live nearby) may actually take advantage of such an opportunity. This is a promising sign for intergroup relations, especially with regard to people who are more reluctant to meet others to begin with. Additionally, those with prior or current contacts (i.e., people who personally know a Muslim) and those who feel more positive toward Muslims in the first place were also more likely to engage in contact with Muslims. In terms of personality and more general views on society, those with higher levels of social trust and trust in news as well as more open-minded individuals were also more willing to engage in future contact. Lastly, individuals who pay more attention to news about international affairs were more interested in outgroup contact. Considering the strong negativity and constant associations between Muslims and conflict in international news stories, one may speculate whether those individuals seek contact with Muslims as a corrective to invalidate some of the negative portrayals of Muslim/non-Muslim encounters they see in the news with potentially positive encounters they may experience themselves.

Increasing the salience of U.S. national identity does not increase news audience members' willingness to engage in prosocial intergroup behaviors

Perhaps one of the more unexpected results is the ineffectiveness of highlighting a common ingroup – Americans – to generate higher levels of interest in Muslims or willingness to engage with Muslims. Regardless of the tone of the intergroup outcome, the effects of making national identity more salient in a news story were in fact slightly *attenuated* across all

conditions (although the differences were not statistically significant). Guided by social identity theory, the opposite effect was hypothesized, that is, cognitive and behavioral outcomes would be amplified when an overarching identity like national identity is highlighted (e.g., Cunningham, 2005; Riek, Mania, Gaertner, McDonald, & Lamoreaux, 2010; Transue, 2007). While these findings do not provide support for the recategorization, or common ingroup identity, model (Gaertner et al., 1989), it also does not support the decategorization model (Brewer & Miller, 1984) according to which category labels are minimized altogether.

In fact, the way the stories, which did not highlight a common ingroup, were framed resembled what scholars refer to as the *categorization model* (Hewstone & Brown, 1986). Garnering the most prosocial outcomes (in terms of willingness to meet Muslims), this message strategy is based on the idea of maintaining group boundaries and keeping them intact and salient during intergroup encounters, as long as the identities of the groups involved are not threatened (Hewstone & Brown, 1986; Kenworthy, Turner, Hewstone, & Voci, 2005). Also referred to as the mutual intergroup differentiation model (Brown & Hewstone, 2005), reducing identity threats – and protecting positive group distinctiveness – is achieved through maintaining group salience during contact and recognizing each group’s strengths, as opposed to deemphasizing the differences between the groups (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). Put differently, differences are celebrated and honored rather than ignored or minimized, and similarities as well as differences may be highlighted to generate positive feelings – toward the ingroup *and* the outgroup(s) – representing the idea of “balanced multiculturalism” (Moghaddam & Solliday, 1991).

Why was the recategorization framing (focused on making one common ingroup – Americans – more salient) slightly less effective than the categorization framing (focused on making multiple groups more salient at once)? Three ideas may partly explain this finding,

namely (1) the nation's current political circumstances and public opinion about the country; (2) social identity complexity; and (3) the historical significance religion – as an identity source – has on U.S. culture and society. First, nearly four years under the Trump administration have left a mark on society, with a large proportion of U.S. citizens feeling significantly less proud about their nation. According to a 2020 Gallup poll, national pride has reached its lowest point and continues a downward trajectory amid the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis in 2020. Specifically, while roughly 80% of Americans stated that they are 'extremely' or 'very' proud of being American in 2016, this share dropped by nearly 20 percentage points in just four years (Brenan, 2020b). This trend is also reflected in Trump's approval ratings and people's satisfaction with the country's direction in general, with 80 percent of Americans saying that the country is heading into the wrong direction (AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, 2020). With regard to this study, making U.S. national identity more salient in a news story about different religious communities may not represent a persuasive enough reason anymore in the Trump era. The data, in fact, partly support this argument: Individuals who give less importance to their national identity were significantly *more* likely to say they would engage with Muslims.

A second related reason touches on the idea of social identity complexity. An increase in diversity in one's environment – both real and mediated – makes multiple social identities more salient. Managing these intersecting identities can be complex (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). It is possible that religious identity outweighs national identity and that being a believer in a higher deity – rather than being American – more accurately represents the common ingroup. Scholars have argued that religion can be a powerful source of identity because, as a belief system, it provides its members with a distinctive worldview, a robust social support system, and "eternal" group membership that hardly any other social group can offer (Ysseldyk et al., 2010). In

societies that have experienced religious conflict, religious identity is consistently ranked highest in comparison to all other identity sources, including nation, caste, and class (Freeman, 2003). This is plausible because an environment shaped by interreligious hostilities represents a constant threat to one's self-concept and sense of safety and stability (Kinnvall, 2004; Muldoon, Trew, Todd, Rougier, & McLaughlin, 2007). In this study, a substantial portion of the sample identified as agnostics or atheists for whom religious identity understandably is of not much importance. However, among Judeo-Christian believers, religious identity is on par with gender and national identity in terms of importance to one's self-concept. It follows that if these identity-shaping sources are equally important to individuals, it may be difficult to identify an overarching identity that outweighs the relevance of other social identities. Thus religious identity may simply be too powerful to be considered subordinate to national identity.

A third explanation involves the *view of religion* in the U.S. context. Separating religious and national identities may be particularly difficult given how intertwined these two are from a historical perspective. Although the U.S. was not founded as a Christian nation (Haberski, 2012) and its legitimacy is based on popular will, as opposed to a higher deity (Green, 2015), much of U.S. culture has been defined by the powerful influence of Christianity, especially Protestantism (Fea, 2016). Notions like "Christian America" or America as a "Christian nation" permeate much of the nation's political discourse, especially in presidential rhetoric (Domke & Coe, 2010), but linking founding narratives with Judeo-Christian ideals and symbols has decreased since the 1990s in an effort to appeal to a more diverse citizenry (Coe & Chenoweth, 2015). With regard to public opinion, most Americans (roughly four in five) still consider the U.S. a "Christian nation," although only half of them believe that it has always been (and currently is) one while the other half believe it was only a Christian nation in the past (Jones, Cox, Dionne,

Galston, Cooper, & Lienesch, 2016). Thus religion and nationality are heavily intertwined – much more than other identity aspects like gender or class – thus creating a challenge when it comes to determining which of the two is *subordinate* and which is *superordinate*.

Study Limitations and Directions for Future Research

As with all studies, certain caveats need to be taken into consideration in interpreting the findings. First, this study focuses on a historically underrepresented, marginalized, and heavily stereotyped community in the U.S., but scholars have only recently begun to systematically examine the broader trends and patterns of media representations of Muslims (e.g., Ahmed & Matthes, 2017; Bleich, Stonebraker, Nisar, & Abdelhamid, 2015), much less in tandem with other non-Muslim groups. Future studies can utilize and expand the analytical framework developed for this project by focusing on portrayals of an *intergroup encounter* as the unit of analysis, including the message characteristics to describe these portrayals. In doing so, a variety of (understudied) social groups in different national and sociocultural contexts, especially non-Western ones, can move to the center of scholarly attention.

Second, although this study examined the online and offline versions of the nation's two newspapers of record as well as a host of smaller local newspapers, people's media diets are much more diverse nowadays. Data collected as part of this study suggest that three in four Americans (77%) at least sometimes get their news from a website or app (the format used in this online experiment), which was by far the most common news seeking behavior among the study participants. In addition, trust in news websites ranks among the highest compared to other news sources (i.e., 20% indicated they trust news websites a lot, and an additional 58% trust some information they get from news websites). This removes at least some of the artificiality that experiments typically entail, that is, participants were exposed to news content in a format

they regularly consume and trust. However, future studies should investigate different media platforms and formats, and employ different experimental designs that are more suitable to the current high-choice media environments. For example, this could be done by conducting quasi- or field experiments in which the independent variable is exogenous, and participants are given the choice to select from a variety of news outlets. In addition, other media formats that are more oriented toward visual content and storytelling and that feature intergroup narratives (Joyce & Harwood, 2020) may be more captivating and enduring than news about intergroup events.

Third, examining the patterns and contours of portrayals of intergroup encounters is important, but little is known about the forces that shape this type of news content. Future research should therefore consider news content as the outcome variable and take into account some macro-level explanatory variables, including organizational structures, ideological slants, journalistic routines and preferences, the demographic profiles of the reporters and editors responsible for the news content, and the audience demographics of a newspaper's service area. Other non-news determinants are important too. For example, to better understand the conditions that facilitate the reporting of intergroup encounters in the first place, it is necessary to also examine the relative size of the outgroup in a newspaper's service area, the representation of the outgroup via local or statewide political offices, the party in power, or the degree of segregation in a given metropolitan area. Future research in this area may be guided by scholarly works like Okamoto and Ebert (2016) who identify macro-level factors that help or hinder the reporting about inclusionary events that bring together different social groups.

Fourth, this study took into consideration some theoretically important control variables to test alternative explanations for why people seek out outgroup contact. Individuals who are more open-minded, more liberal, have higher levels of trust in news and society in general,

personally know a Muslim, and feel more positive toward Muslims were all more likely to engage in future contact with Muslims. Scholars are advised to also include other variables into their study designs depending on the type of media being studied, for example the extent to which audiences like the in- and outgroup characters being portrayed, or the degree to which they identify with the respective ingroup character(s). Research on group threat theory suggests to also include perceived threat into study designs while the theory of planned behavior and other persuasion-based theories with the goal of explaining behavioral changes highlight the role of self-efficacy as a key mechanism.

Lastly, intergroup relations are complex phenomena and, as history has shown, a space that is often difficult to navigate. While the experimental manipulation of the media content in this study invoked multiple religious groups that were part of the interfaith event, it was beyond the scope of this study to disentangle these effects for specific religious groups. Some important differences were found between the Judeo-Christian and nonbeliever subsamples, most notably with regard to social identity gratifications and their cognitive and behavioral effects. However, future research should aim for larger samples that allow researchers to separate the effects for even more specific subpopulations, explore additional variables, and perform more large-scale structural equation models in combination with hierarchical regression models. In contrast, given the complexities of identity-shaping processes and intergroup contact, as well as the strong post-positivist orientation of this body of scholarship (much of it advanced by social psychologists), a stronger involvement of qualitative methodologies is needed. The heavy reliance on quantitative research methods may obscure important underlying issues and concerns, and constrain our understanding of some of the complexities of intergroup relations in specific contexts, for example when dealing with multiple social identities. Surprisingly, such efforts remain relatively

scarce and the few studies that have been published receive little attention in established academic journals with emphasis on intergroup-relations scholarship (e.g., Halualani, 2008; Jackson & Sherriff, 2013), particularly with regard to communication research (Seate, Joyce, Harwood, & Arroyo, 2015).

These findings not only advance the academic literature, but also offer ways of thinking about different stakeholders and how intergroup relations can be improved. Some of those practices are top-down and institution-driven while others are bottom-up and people-driven. For example, early intergroup-relations research already identified support of authorities and legal institutions as one of the key conditions to support contact and interactions between groups (Allport, 1954). Besides institutions as contact facilitators and community builders, people also share a responsibility as community members. However, given this study's focus on media portrayals of intergroup relations, this section outlines the role of journalists in positively shaping and maneuvering intergroup relations, with emphasis on Muslims. Specifically, this can be done by reconsidering different types of interrelated media biases. Employing the conceptual dimensions commonly used in media bias analysis (e.g., D'Alessio & Allen, 2000), these are: (1) gatekeeping (or selection) biases; (2) coverage (or visibility) biases, and (3) statement (or presentation) biases (see also Eberl, Wagner, & Boomgaarden, 2017).

First, journalistic roles and role perceptions are undergoing considerable changes, and so is the idea of *gatekeeping* shaped by a defined set of news values (Vos, 2015; see also Bro, 2019). Early research already identified the role of the "advocate" in addition to the conventional conception of the journalist as a "gatekeeper" (Janowitz, 1975). In today's world, journalistic ideals and desires in reporting largely still overlaps with the public's expectations toward journalists (i.e., objective reporting, analysis, explanation), but promoting tolerance and diversity

increasingly becomes part of the portfolio of expected journalistic tasks (Loosen, Reimer, & Hölig, 2020). Increasingly, journalists see themselves as critical change agents who drive political and social reform (Downman & Murray, 2018; Hanitzsch, 2011; Pintak, 2014). In addition to their ongoing commitment to public-service journalism and informing the public (Beam, Brownlee, Weaver, & Di Cicco, 2009), journalists have a “developmental-educative function” by “actively contributing to public education, enlightenment, social change, and social harmony” (Hanitzsch, 2017, p. 14; see also Hanitzsch & Vos, 2018). However, all these normative ideals must also be considered against the backdrop of contemporary journalists’ individual backgrounds (shaped by different social origins and professional trajectories) and the larger context in which they operate (shaped by hierarchies and unequal conditions for fulfilling these journalistic ideals) (Powers & Vera-Zambrano, 2020). Nonetheless, when it comes to covering intergroup relations at the local or national level, journalists can balance their roles as storyteller, truth-teller, and mediator between differently represented social groups.

Second, in addition to story selection bias, the findings in this study suggest a rethinking of certain *coverage biases*, that is, the extent and the ways in which intergroup relations, specifically conflicts, are covered. That major national news outlets like the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post* report on foreign conflicts is the norm and generally expected. Informing citizens about intergroup conflicts around the world, which are inherently negative, is essential. For instance, it is vital for news audiences to be provided with information about humanitarian crises and human rights offenses, such as the internment of ethnic Uighurs in Chinese concentration camps or the atrocities committed by fighters who pledge allegiance to the Islamic State. However, placing such news in later sections (as opposed to the front page) of a newspaper, and balancing such news with stories about national events (which also tend to be

less negative) and more promising, or less contentious, international events can help depict an overall more positive image of Muslim/non-Muslim encounters. This is possible as shown by the data (such as the story about Hindu-Muslim interactions during each group's observed holidays in India), but the frequency with which those stories occur and their placement in the newspaper suggest that news audiences rarely get to see those stories. As a result, non-Muslims' views of Muslims are unlikely to change given the repeated exposure to stories about negative intergroup events, processes, and outcomes. Moreover, the fact that these stories focus on Muslims abroad may even reinforce conventional, antagonistic us-versus-them thinking, especially among those non-Muslims without any direct experience with Muslims.

Third, as a form of *statement bias*, the use of language in news stories has the potential to ameliorate intergroup relations. Given that the tone used to describe Muslim/non-Muslim encounters is primarily negative, avoiding fuzzy and misleading terms like "Islamist" in combination with violence, terrorism, and extremism can be helpful to minimize this negativity. Notions like "Islamic terrorism" implies a (causal) relationship between religion and violence, or at least creates and reinforces that perception in news audiences. This has been consistently and one-sidedly applied to Islam, but not other religions.³⁷ Frequent invocations of the "Islamic State" in news coverage and political discourse may prime audiences to associate Islam with violence committed by this group. In addition to contextualizing single events, journalists can refer to the "Islamic State" by using their original name ("Daesh") just like it was done with other groups in the past (e.g., Al-Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah).³⁸ Similarly, negativity was strongest in the opinion sections in both national and local newspapers. While these opinions

³⁷ For example, in Western news one barely sees descriptions of the Ku Klux Klan or anti-abortion activists as assaults committed by "Christian terrorists."

³⁸ For more suggestions about language use see Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU), 2020.

often reflect the views of a newspaper's audience (e.g., letters to the editor), they also stem from political or intellectual elites (e.g., op-eds), or the editorial staff itself. Editorial journalism therefore assumes a powerful role in shaping political debate and public opinion (Firmstone, 2019). Exposure to a newspaper's opinion section that references conflictive Muslim/non-Muslim encounters is likely to perpetuate negative views about Islam, Muslims, and their interactions with non-Muslims.

Much potential therefore lies in the combined gatekeeping and framing potential editors have over selecting content and changing the tone of op-ed material to reduce the amount of reporting about failed intergroup encounters on the one hand and increase the extent of reporting about successful encounters on the other hand. While the negativity of international news stories can be partly explained by a set of news values (i.e., covering large-scale, high-intensity events shaped by conflict, negativity and powerful elites, see Bednarek & Caple, 2017; Bell, 1991), one can only speculate about the possible reasons why editorial journalism tends to be so negative when it comes to addressing Muslim/non-Muslim relations. The lack of diversity of editorial boards – typically dominated by white middle-class males – may drive some of that coverage and help reproduce and legitimize their status and power in society (e.g., Duff, 2008; Harp, Bachmann, & Loke, 2014; Van Dijk, 1992). Diversification of editorial boards may be a path forward in order to ensure fairness and opinion diversity at the highest level of journalistic decision-making. In this respect, several U.S. news organizations have made promising advances when it comes to giving voice to marginalized communities (e.g., *Huffington Post's* Communities section including Black Voices, Latino Voices or Queer Voices, or *NPR's* Code Switch), but largely fail to do so regarding smaller religious communities such as Muslims.³⁹

³⁹ A notable exception is the *Muslim Voices Project*, which was created in 2018 by the public radio program *The Moth* with the goal to connect Muslim and non-Muslim communities via the art of storytelling.

To conclude, navigating intergroup relations is a complex and richly textured process that involves many micro-, meso-, and macro-level considerations. At the individual level, lived experiences, personality attributes, cognitions, emotions, and behaviors shape how we interact with others. At the group level, conflicts within and between groups, openness, group cohesion, and communication patterns are relevant for structuring intergroup relations. At the societal and institutional level, media systems, policies, and infrastructure can provide the venues and opportunities for bringing together people of different backgrounds – or keeping them apart and segregated. While nothing replaces the value of direct contact in terms of experience richness and personal involvement (Harwood, 2010), vicarious contact may in fact be the most common and most accessible form of contact people can experience. As a prejudice-reduction tool, it can be especially beneficial to those who lack actual contact opportunities, for example, due to living in rural, segregated or otherwise homogeneous areas, or because they have preexisting biases or feel anxiety when meeting strangers. These constraints highlight the role of the media as a facilitator of contact and thus an informer about intergroup relations near and far, a framer of a collective identity, and a creator of an “imagined community.” The concepts and the analytical approach used herein may inform studies of intergroup relations in a variety of other contexts – involving different groups, media, times, geographical and sociocultural spaces – to address larger questions of how people, media, and political elites define “identity” and “community,” and how such interpretations can translate into identity-shaping and community-building processes in increasingly diverse environments. On today’s media and political landscapes, shaped by deep group-based chasms and a growing reluctance to engage with non-likeminded and dissimilar others, this dissertation hopefully offers both scholars and practitioners the opportunity to understand how people can reach across lines of difference.

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APPENDIX A: CODING MATERIALS

Appendix A.1: Political endorsements of newspapers in the 2016 and 2020 general elections

Newspaper	2016 endorsement	2020 endorsement	Ideological orientation
<i>New York Times</i> ¹	Clinton (D)	Biden (D)	Liberal
<i>Washington Post</i> ²	Clinton (D)	Biden (D)	Liberal
<i>New York Post</i> ³	–	Trump (R)	Conservative
<i>Pittsburgh Post-Gazette</i> ⁴	Clinton (D)	Trump (R)	Moderate
<i>Charleston Gazette</i> ⁵	–	Biden (D)	Moderate
<i>Chicago Daily Herald</i> ⁶	Clinton (D)	Biden (D)	Liberal
<i>St. Louis Post Dispatch</i> ⁷	Clinton (D)	Biden (D)	Liberal
<i>Bismarck Tribune</i> ⁸	–	–	Moderate
<i>San Diego Union Tribune</i> ⁹	Clinton (D)	Biden (D)	Liberal
<i>Salt Lake Tribune</i> ¹⁰	Clinton (D)	None	Moderate

Note. A newspaper was considered *liberal* when it endorsed Democratic candidates in 2016 and 2020. A newspaper was considered *moderate* when it (a) switched party endorsements from 2016 to 2020 (e.g., Pittsburgh Post-Gazette) or (b) endorsed one candidate in one election and none in the other (e.g., Salt Lake Tribune) or (c) did not endorse any candidate in any of the two elections (e.g., Bismarck Tribune). The only newspaper in the study sample considered *conservative*, The New York Post, withheld official endorsement from Trump in the 2016 general election but endorsed him in the Republican primary earlier that year.

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- 9: <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/opinion/editorials/sd-hillary-clinton-endorsement-for-president-20160929-story.html>;
<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/opinion/editorials/story/2020-10-02/joe-biden-endorsement-for-president-san-diego-union-tribune-editorial-board>. Notably, the newspaper's endorsement of Clinton in 2016 marked the first time the paper had supported a Democrat for president since 1868 (see <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/11/06/donald-trump-just-got-another-very-rare-newspaper-endorsement/>).
- 10: <https://archive.satrib.com/article.php?id=4455498&itype=CMSID>; given the newspaper's reorganization into a tax-exempt nonprofit organization in 2019, federal law forbids to make any endorsement of candidates for public office (see <https://www.satrib.com/opinion/commentary/2020/10/23/george-pyle-flaw-chris/>).

Appendix A.2: Codebook

Unit of analysis (filter variable): Each individual reference to an intergroup encounter

For the purpose of this study, an intergroup encounter (IGE) describes a *situation in which a member of an explicitly mentioned social group (i.e., Muslim(s)) or an identity source (i.e., Islam) interacts with at least one other social group or an identity source.*

Previously coded metadata with TextQuest (not part of manual coding)

- ID #
- Unit # in previous dataset (one for each newspaper)
- Article ID # (previously assigned for automated text processing)
- Newspaper
- Section (placement in newspaper)
- Domain/"Desk" (content domain)
- Page number
- Number of words
- Time of publication (YYYY-MM-DD)
- Search term in reference ("Muslim," "Moslem," "Islam")
- Referential unit / excerpt (to be used for subsequent coding, see below)

CODING MEASURES

1. Actors/entities of the IGE (*qualitative*): Record which actors/entities constitute the IGE.

- 1.1. First mentioned actor/entity
- 1.2. Second mentioned actor/entity

2. Headline (*quantitative*): Record whether the term (Islam, Muslim) appears in the article's headline.

(Note this should be evident from the excerpt, e.g., you should also see some of the article's metadata there, such as the author, copyright, length, page number, etc.)

0. No (not mentioned in headline)
1. Yes (mentioned in headline)

3. Number of actors/entities (*quantitative*): Are there more than 2 distinct actors/entities that constitute the IGE?

0. No
1. Yes → if yes, focus on the actor/entity mentioned next / that appears closest to the reference of the Muslim actor/entity for all subsequent coding decisions

4.1. Differentiation/level of abstraction – Muslim actor/entity (*quantitative*): Record if the character referenced in the excerpt is ...

1. A single individual (e.g., a Muslim, an Islamic leader)
2. A group of individuals (e.g., followers of Islam, the Muslim community)
3. An organization (e.g., Islamic Center of Baltimore, Muslim Brotherhood)*
4. A nation or group of nations (e.g., Muslim-majority countries, Islamic Republic of Iran)*
5. A reference to the belief or religion itself incl. its symbols (e.g., the Muslim faith, Islamic teachings, symbols used to refer to the belief/religion)

4.2. Differentiation/level of abstraction – non-Muslim actor/entity (*quantitative*): Record if the character referenced in the excerpt is ...

1. A single individual (e.g., a non-Muslim, a Christian)
2. A group of individuals (e.g., the Jewish community)
3. An organization (e.g., the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington)*
4. A nation or group of nations (e.g., United States)*
5. A reference to the belief or religion itself incl. its symbols (e.g., the Catholic faith; teachings or symbols used to refer to Christianity)

** Note that categories "3" and "4" were collapsed into a single category that focuses on institutional entities.*

SECTION ON INTERGROUP CONTACT MEASURES

5. Nature of IGE – Agency of Muslim actor/entity (*quantitative*): Record whether the Muslim actor/entity is the primary actor, i.e., the entity that is sending a message, acting toward others, initiating an action, etc. (equivalent to being the *subject* in a sentence) versus receiving a message, responding to a message or action, etc. (equivalent to being the *object* in a sentence).

0. No
1. Yes
9. Unable to determine

6. Nature of IGE – Goal orientation (*quantitative*): Record whether the interaction is shaped by

1. Conflict (incl. situations of opposition, rivalry, antagonism, etc.)
2. Competition (incl. situations that describe rivalries, but without a conflictual character, e.g., sports match)
3. Support (incl. situations of cooperation, collaboration, friendship, teamwork, aid, etc.)
4. None of the above

Nature of the IGE – Goal orientation (*qualitative*): Record the verb that is used to describe the encounter (e.g., “threaten”, “support”, “empathize”, “protest against”, “compete”, etc.).

7. Valence: Overall (*quantitative*)

7.1. Muslim actor/entity: Record the valence (tone) that best describes the Muslim entity in the IGE. Does the actor come away from the IGE looking...

1. Positive
2. Neutral / neither positive nor negative (no clear evaluative component used to describe actor)
3. Negative

7.2. Second (non-Muslim) actor/entity: Record the valence (tone) that best describes the second (e.g., non-Muslim or unspecified) actor in the IGE. Does the actor come away from the IGE looking...

1. Positive
2. Neutral / neither positive nor negative (no clear evaluative component used to describe actor)
3. Negative

8. Valence: Harm-Benefit Rating (*quantitative*)

Using a 3-point rating scale, evaluate the outcome of the intergroup encounter from each perspective.

8.1. Muslim actor/entity: For the Muslim actor/entity, what is the effect of the IGE outcome?

1. Harmful (loss)
2. Neither harmful nor beneficial (neither win nor loss) / unclear / not specified
3. Beneficial (win)

8.2 Non-Muslim actor/entity: For the non-Muslim actor, what is the effect of the IGE outcome?

1. Harmful (loss)
2. Neither harmful nor beneficial (neither win nor loss) / unclear / not specified
3. Beneficial (win)

Guiding questions and examples

- Win**
- Does the actor/entity appear to be more advanced in their goals than before?
 - Did they gain/earn anything as a result of the intergroup encounter/dynamic?
 - Did the actor/entity benefit from the intergroup encounter/dynamic in some way?

Examples of “win” situations: resource gain, life(s) being saved, increased attention, understanding, acceptance, solidarity (e.g., via joint events, invitations by ‘others’), political gains (e.g., being elected to office), but also terrorists (regardless of ideology) who achieve their goals via attacks

- Loss**
- Does the actor/entity appear to be less advanced in their goals than before?
 - Did the actor/entity lose anything as a result of the intergroup encounter/dynamic?
 - Was the actor/entity harmed or otherwise taken advantage of in some way?

Examples of “loss” situations: resource loss, life(s) being taken (e.g., victims of terrorist attacks, harassment, slurs, vandalizing, etc.), losing a trial in court, being forced to escape

9. Valence: Reference to physical violence (*quantitative*): Record how the Muslim actor/entity is portrayed vis-à-vis physical violence (e.g., attack, killing, invasion, aggression, assault, harm, etc.) Please also enter the term/phrase.

0. Absent / not mentioned (e.g., “the world can learn from Islam”)
1. Enablers or facilitators of physical violence (e.g., “Islamic radicalism is responsible for the attack”)
2. Opponents, mitigators, targets or victims of physical violence (e.g., “peace-loving Muslims have been attacked by ...”)

10. Valence: Third-Party Perspective (*quantitative*)

From a third-party perspective (e.g., someone that is not part of the IGE, an audience member, a distant, objective, neutral observer etc.), how can the overall outcome of the IGE be evaluated, regardless of the intentions of the Muslim and non-Muslim actors involved?

1. Positive
2. Neutral
3. Negative

Guiding questions and examples

Positive: A positive intergroup encounter includes situations in which EITHER both actors/entities benefit in some way from the encounter (similar to win-win situations) OR one actor benefits while the other actor is not harmed.

For example, this would include fairly obvious situations in which both parties gain something from being involved in the encounter (e.g., shared understanding, increased solidarity, sense of community, etc.). However, one entity might be helped by another entity, but that entity may not directly benefit from being part of the encounter (e.g., Muslims helping Christian refugees to hide from ISIS fighters).

Neutral: A neutral intergroup encounter includes situations with mixed outcomes. There is no clear gain or loss described for either entity/actor in the encounter.

Negative: A negative intergroup encounter includes situations in which at least one entity/actor is harmed in some way as a result from the encounter (incl. win-lose, lose-win, and lose-lose situations), for example, killing/attacking (including both innocent victims and militant extremists).

While it is appealing to code references like “IS fighter killing innocent Yazidi women in Iraq” and “French journalists murdered by ISIS loyalists” as negative and “US airstrikes against ISIS” and “police officers ending the shooting carried out by an ISIS fighter” as positive, the intergroup encounter – moved to a more abstract/conceptual level – translates into “Actor 1 harming Actor 2”, which is overall negative. Thus the encounter can be coded regardless of the actors’ individual intentions/motives.

SECTION ON SOCIAL IDENTITY MEASURES

Record (using “1”) whether the following identity aspects are mentioned to describe the Muslim actor/entity. If the identity is not further specified (e.g., “victims of an attack” without any reference to identity aspects) then leave this cell blank. Check each column to see if the identity is invoked (such as “geographical identity” for “French Muslims”). If none of the categories apply, use the “Other Identities” column and describe the identity aspect. For each marked cell, provide the word/term/phrase in the adjacent column as it appears in the excerpt.

11. Geographical identity incl. mentions of nationality, region, state, city, citizenship, and place (e.g., Muslim Americans, Bosnian Muslims)

12. Religious identity incl. mentions of affiliation w/ religious organizations, sect, subgroup, sub-denominations (e.g., Sunni, Shia, Wahhabis, etc. -- *NOT “radical Islam”*)

13. Occupational identity incl. mentions of occupational roles, professions, (elected) offices, leadership positions (e.g., shopkeeper, student, worker, faith leader, cleric, volunteer, troop, marine, etc.)

14. Racial/ethnic identity incl. mentions of any racial/ethnic identifier (e.g., African American Muslims)

15. Other identities (please specify)

Record (using “1”) whether identity aspects are mentioned to describe the non-Muslim actor/entity. If the identity is not further specified (e.g., “victims of an attack” without any reference to identity aspects) then leave this cell blank.

16. Geographical identity incl. mentions of nationality, region, state, city, citizenship (e.g., Catholic towns in *Iraq*)

17. Religious identity incl. mentions of affiliation w/ religious organizations, sect, subgroup, sub-denominations, faith-based community (e.g., Christian, Sikh, Hindu, Jewish)
→ *if selected, specify code #21 below*

18. Occupational identity incl. mentions of occupational roles, professions, (elected) offices, leadership positions (e.g., shopkeeper, student, worker, faith leader, cleric, volunteer, troop, marine, etc.)

19. Racial/ethnic identity incl. mentions of any racial/ethnic identifier (e.g., Native Americans)

20. Other identities (please specify)

21. Religious identity of the second actor/entity: Muslims most likely are mentioned in relation to/along with other religious groups. If this is the case (i.e., if “1” is coded for item #17), record the religion/religious group/faith that is part of the intergroup encounter.

0. Nonreligious (incl. atheists, agnostics, unaffiliated – *those must be explicitly mentioned*)
1. Christianity (incl. evangelical and mainline Protestantism, Catholicism, Orthodox)
2. Judaism
3. Non-Judeo-Christian (incl. Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Taoism, etc.)
4. Multiple

SECTION ON STEREOTYPING MEASURES

22. Use of positive stereotypes – Warmth (*qualitative*): What positive terms related to warmth (according to the stereotyping content model), if any, are used to portray the Muslim actor/entity?

Examples of positive terms include *trustworthy, reliable, friendly, sincere, pleasant, peace-loving, peaceful, sympathetic*.

0. No
1. Yes

23. Use of negative stereotypes – Warmth (*qualitative*): What negative terms related to warmth (according to the stereotyping content model), if any, are used to portray the Muslim actor/entity?

Examples of negative terms include *untrustworthy, unreliable, unfriendly, insincere, hostile, dangerous, radical, fundamentalist, aggressive*.

0. No
1. Yes

24. Tone – Warmth (*quantitative*): Based on these terms and their relative frequencies in the context of the IGE, how would you evaluate the overall tone used to portray the Muslim actor in the IGE?

0. No evaluative terms / warmth-based stereotypes associated with Muslim actor
1. Primarily negative connotations related to perceived warmth of Muslim actor
2. Primarily positive connotations related to perceived warmth of Muslim actor

25. Use of positive stereotypes – Competence (*qualitative*): What positive terms related to competence/power, if any, are used to portray the Muslim actor/entity?

Examples of positive terms include *skilled, capable, competent, efficient, creative, ingenious, foresighted, intelligent, knowledgeable, clever*.

0. No
1. Yes

26. Use of negative stereotypes – Competence (*qualitative*): What negative terms related to competence/power, if any, are used to portray the Muslim actor/entity?

Examples of negative terms include *unskilled, incapable, unable, incompetent, inefficient, ineffective, backward, uninformed, ignorant*.

0. No
1. Yes

27. Tone – Competence (*quantitative*): Based on these terms and their relative frequencies in the context of the IGE, how would you evaluate the overall tone used to portray the Muslim actor in the IGE with regard to competence/power?

0. No evaluative terms / competence-based stereotypes associated with Muslim actor
1. Primarily negative connotations related to perceived competence of Muslim actor
2. Primarily positive connotations related to perceived competence of Muslim actor

28. Additional remarks/comments: Record anything you consider particularly informative that is not already part of the coding scheme, any challenges you encounter (to be able to revisit the coding unit), questions you may have, or a comment about a compelling example.

Appendix A.3: Coding form

Excel spreadsheet based on two examples

Coder ID	1		2	
Unit ID	1112 01 99 04 99 1278 2018 12 18 1		2512 02 01 02 12 1190 2019 03 18 1	
Referential unit (excerpt)	stan ' s ethnic cleansing of the Hindus who are seen to represent it . Just as Muslims take on the character of their vanished Hindu enemies by persecuting low-caste Christians if only in the name of religion , so do Hindu militants in India lynch Muslims by acting the part of medieval invaders who happened to be their coreligionists . Familiar across the subcontinent , such playacting involves practices such as caste restrictions , forcible conversion and other , more grotesque forms of bod		estion last week that Rep . Ilhan Omar (D-Minn .) did not support the Constitution because she is Muslim and wears a hijab . Trump ' s tweet defending Pirro was roundly criticized by his critics as being discordant in the wake of the massacre of Muslims in New Zealand by an assailant espousing white nationalism . " Stop working soooo hard on being politically correct , which will only bring you down , and continue to fight for our Country . The losers all want what you have , don ' t give	
ARTICLE FEATURES				
Unit (TQ ID)	1050		160	
Article ID	1112		2512	
NP	1		2	
Section	99		1	
Domain/Desk	4		2	
Page	99		12	
Words	1278		1190	
Year	2018		2019	
Month	12		3	
Day	18		18	
Term	1		1	
CONTENT FEATURES				
1.1 Actor 1		[text entry] Hindu militants in India		[text entry] Muslim victims in NZ
1.2 Actor 2		[text entry] Muslims		[text entry] white nationalist assailant
2 Headline	[numerical entry]		[numerical entry]	
3 Number of actors/entities	[numerical entry]		[numerical entry]	
4.1 Differentiation - Muslim actor/entity	[numerical entry]		[numerical entry]	
4.2 Differentiation - non-Muslim actor/entity	[numerical entry]		[numerical entry]	
5 Nature of IGE – Agency of Muslim actor/entity	[numerical entry]		[numerical entry]	
6 Nature of IGE – Goal orientation	[numerical entry]	[text entry]	[numerical entry]	[text entry]
VALENCE MEASURES				
7.1 Overall - Muslim actor/entity	[numerical entry]		[numerical entry]	
7.2 Overall - non-Muslim actor/entity	[numerical entry]		[numerical entry]	
8.1 Harm-Benefit - Muslim actor/entity	[numerical entry]		[numerical entry]	
8.2 Harm-Benefit - non-Muslim actor/entity	[numerical entry]		[numerical entry]	
9 Reference to physical violence	[numerical entry]		[numerical entry]	
10 Perception 3rd party perspective	[numerical entry]		[numerical entry]	
SOCIAL IDENTITY MEASURES				
Presence/absence coding, Muslim actor/entity				
11 Geographical (citizenship/nationality/region)	[numerical entry]	[text entry]	[numerical entry]	[text entry]
12 Religious identity	[numerical entry]	[text entry]	[numerical entry]	[text entry]
13 Occupational identity	[numerical entry]	[text entry]	[numerical entry]	[text entry]
14 Racial/ethnic identity	[numerical entry]	[text entry]	[numerical entry]	[text entry]
15 Other identities	[numerical entry]	[text entry]	[numerical entry]	[text entry]
Presence/absence coding, non-Muslim actor/entity				
16 Geographical (citizenship/nationality/region)	[numerical entry]	[text entry]	[numerical entry]	[text entry]
17 Religious identity (general)	[numerical entry]	[text entry]	[numerical entry]	[text entry]
18 Occupational identity	[numerical entry]	[text entry]	[numerical entry]	[text entry]
19 Racial/ethnic identity	[numerical entry]	[text entry]	[numerical entry]	[text entry]
20 Other identities	[numerical entry]	[text entry]	[numerical entry]	[text entry]
21 Religious identity (specific)	[numerical entry]		[numerical entry]	
STEREOTYPING MEASURES (Muslim actor/entity only)				
22 Use of positive stereotypes (warmth)	[numerical entry]	[text entry]	[numerical entry]	[text entry]
23 Use of negative stereotypes (warmth)	[numerical entry]	[text entry]	[numerical entry]	[text entry]
24 Tone (warmth)	[numerical entry]		[numerical entry]	
25 Use of positive stereotypes (competence)	[numerical entry]	[text entry]	[numerical entry]	[text entry]
26 Use of negative stereotypes (competence)	[numerical entry]	[text entry]	[numerical entry]	[text entry]
27 Tone (competence)	[numerical entry]		[numerical entry]	
28 Add'l remarks		[text entry]		[text entry]

APPENDIX B: EXPERIMENTAL TREATMENTS

by row: positive, neutral, negative, control

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL



Interfaith Community Strengthened by Hate Crimes

Gathering signals to all communities of faith: Religious differences can be overcome

BY JUAN F. PÉREZ

WASHINGTON—Amidst a rise in hate crimes, people from many religious backgrounds are joining forces to show their support for one another. This week, a group of faith leaders co-hosted an event at the Islamic Center of Washington that focused on “building bridges of peace and understanding between different communities of faith.”

The center’s imam, Talib Shareef, said the leaders hoped to “stand up and voice our solidarity against hate crimes. In these times of concern and anxiety, we need concrete suggestions to promote civic engagement and dialogue.”

The number of hate crimes directed against religious minorities has been on the rise. The FBI recorded more than 235 bomb threats against Jewish and Islamic institutions in 2019, up from 220 the previous year, in addition to numerous other attacks targeting Jews, Muslims and other religious communities.

João Acosta, a participant and member of the city’s Roman Catholic Archdiocese, said, “It is important that despite all our differences we come together to fight back against the rise in hate incidents we have seen in recent times.” At the end of the event, Arik Brandman, another participant from the local Jewish community, said, “Events like this are so important. What we’ve achieved here, the sense of community we’ve created, and the differences we’ve overcome, is remarkable.”



“I recommend two things,” Bishop Elaine Waters, head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, who joined the event, stated. “One, speak out against hate, and two, vote. That’s our privilege, to look at who’s at the top and ask if that person has a message of love and unity, or of hatred and division.” She added, “You can decide who is going to be the person at the top. It’s

time now for us to stand up and voice our objection to hate. It’s time now to speak out against hate.”

Interfaith event successfully modeled how religious conflict can be overcome.

Given the overwhelmingly positive response from the attendees, the hosts agreed to hold a similar event in the near future to reemphasize their message and build upon the momentum they have gained, the center’s imam said. Faith leaders plan to organize workshops for victims and bystanders to hate crimes. These workshops will focus on how to respond to expressions of hate as well as growing divisions in society.

“This interfaith event can continue to be a model, like we are doing now, creating alliances and proposing our common vote for higher values for our communities,” the imam said to other faith leaders at the event’s closing ceremony in the Islamic Center’s courtyard.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL



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Gathering signals to all Americans: Religious differences in the U.S. can be overcome

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The center’s imam, Talib Shareef, said the leaders hoped to “stand up and voice our solidarity against hate crimes. In these times of concern and anxiety that stifle America, we need concrete suggestions to promote civic engagement and dialogue.”

The number of hate crimes directed against religious minorities in the United States has been on the rise. The FBI recorded more than 235 bomb threats against Jewish and Islamic institutions in 2019, up from 220 the previous year, in addition to numerous other attacks targeting Jewish and Muslim Americans and other religious communities nationwide.

João Acosta, a participant and member of the city’s Roman Catholic Archdiocese, said, “It is important that despite all our differences we come together — as Americans — to fight back against the rise in hate incidents we have seen in our country.”

At the end of the event, Arik Brandman, another participant from the local Jewish community said, “Events like this are so important. What we’ve achieved here, the sense of community we’ve created, and the differences we’ve overcome, is remarkable. It shows that we can work together for a better future of our country.”



“I recommend two things,” Bishop Elaine Waters, head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, who joined the event, stated. “One, speak out against hate, and two, vote. That’s our American privilege, to look at who’s at the top and ask if that person has a message of love and unity, or of hatred and division.” She added, “You can decide who is going to be the person at the top. It’s time now

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL



Interfaith Community Gathers in Response to Hate Crimes

Gathering signals to all communities of faith: Challenges and opportunities ahead in closing the religion gaps

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João Acosta, a participant and member of the city’s Roman Catholic Archdiocese, said, “It is important that despite all our differences we come together to fight back against the rise in hate incidents we have seen in recent times.” At the end of the event, Arik Brandman, another participant from the local Jewish community said, “Events like this are so important, but they’re not always easy, especially when bringing together many different faiths under one roof. It’s easy to lose focus on the overall goals of this conversation, but it is important to keep trying anyway.”



“We have discussed several ideas,” Bishop Elaine Waters, head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, who joined the event, stated. “One, speak out against hate, and two, vote. That’s our privilege, to look at who’s at the top and ask if that person has a message of love and unity, or of hatred and

division.” She added, “You can decide who is going to be the person at the top. It’s time now for us to stand up and voice our objection to hate. It’s time now to speak out against hate.”

Mixed reactions emerged from interfaith event to resolve religious conflict.

Given the reticent response, the hosts remained vague as to whether or not they will hold a similar event in the near future: “It might be too early to judge the event as a failure, but balancing participants’ different interests was a challenge we need to address to fight hate and growing divisions in society.” “This interfaith event started with good intentions, but a great deal of work still lies ahead of us. To create impact, we — all of us — need to learn to overcome our differences and focus on what we have in common,” the imam said to other faith leaders at the event’s closing ceremony in the Islamic Center’s courtyard.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL



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Gathering signals to all communities of faith the challenges of uniting religions

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João Acosta, a participant and member of the city’s Roman Catholic Archdiocese, said, “It is important that, despite all our differences, we come together to fight back against the rise in hate incidents we have seen in recent

times.” He said many attendees felt they needed to compromise their religious identity in order to “fit in,” while many others sensed that they had become targets of missionary work by those attempting to convert them.

At the end of the event, Arik Brandman, another participant from the local Jewish community said, “Events like this are so important, but things were not as effective as we had hoped for. It’s easy to lose focus on the overall goals of this conversation. Of course, it’s important to keep trying to bring people together, but it is always easier said than done.”



“Several ideas were discussed, but only half-heartedly,” Bishop Elaine Waters, head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, who joined the event, admitted. “One, speak out against hate, and two, vote. That’s our privilege, to look at who’s at the top and ask if that person has a message of love and unity, or of hatred and division.” She added, “You can decide who is going to be the person at the top. It’s time now for us to stand up and voice our objection to hate.

It’s time now to speak out against hate.” Her views were well-received, but the initial enthusiasm quickly vanished.

Interfaith event failed in resolving religious conflict.

Given the disappointing outcome, the hosts decided to adjourn indefinitely a similar event they had planned: “Too many differences and too few similarities shaped most discussions and obstructed progress on an issue that affects all of us – hate and growing divisions in today’s society.”

“This interfaith event started with good intentions, but too much work lies ahead of us. To create impact, we – all of us – need to learn to overcome our differences and focus on what we have in common. We had high hopes, but unfortunately the way we envisioned it did not work at all,” the imam said to other faith leaders at the event’s closing ceremony in the Islamic Center’s courtyard.



American Interfaith Community Struggles in Fight Against Hate Crimes

Gathering signals to all Americans the challenges of uniting religions in the U.S.

BY JUAN F. PÉREZ

WASHINGTON— Amidst a rise in hate crimes around the country, Americans from many religious backgrounds are joining forces to show their support for their fellow citizens. This week, a group of faith leaders co-hosted an event in the nation’s capital, at the Islamic Center of Washington, that focused on “building bridges of peace and understanding between different communities of faith across the nation.”

The center’s imam, Talib Shareef, said the leaders hoped to “stand up and voice our solidarity against hate crimes. In these times of concern and anxiety that stifle America, we need concrete suggestions to promote civic engagement and dialogue.”

The number of hate crimes directed against religious minorities in the United States has been on the rise. The FBI recorded more than 235 bomb threats against Jewish and Islamic institutions in 2019, up from 220 the previous year, in addition to numerous other attacks targeting Jewish and Muslim Americans and other religious communities nationwide.

João Acosta, a participant and member of the city’s Roman Catholic Archdiocese, said, “It is

important that despite all our differences we come together – as Americans – to fight back against the rise in hate incidents we have seen in our country.” He said many attendees felt they needed to compromise their religious identity in order to “fit in,” while many others sensed that they had become targets of missionary work by those attempting to convert them.

At the end of the event, Arik Brandman, another participant from the local Jewish community said, “Events like this are so important, but things were not as effective as we had hoped for. It’s easy to lose focus on the overall goals of this conversation. Of course, it’s important to keep trying to bring Americans together, but it is always easier said than done.”



“Several ideas were discussed, but only half-heartedly,” Bishop Elaine Waters, head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, who joined the event, admitted. “One, speak out against hate, and two, vote. That’s our American privilege, to look at who’s at the top and ask if that person has a message of love and unity, or of hatred and division.”

She added, “You can decide who is going to be the person at the top. It’s time now for us to stand up and voice our objection to hate. It’s time now for Americans to speak out against hate.” Her views were well-received, but the initial enthusiasm quickly vanished.

Interfaith event failed in resolving religious conflict in America.

Given the disappointing outcome, the hosts decided to adjourn indefinitely a similar event they had planned: “Too many differences and too few similarities shaped most of the discussions and obstructed progress on an issue that all of us Americans affects – hate and growing divisions in American society.”

“This interfaith event started with good intentions, but too much work lies ahead of us. To create impact, we – as Americans – need to learn to overcome our differences and focus on what we have in common. We had high hopes, but unfortunately the way we envisioned it did not work at all,” the imam said to other faith leaders from around the nation at the event’s closing ceremony at the Lincoln Memorial.



Advances in Digital Agriculture Showcased at Science Symposium

Next generation GPS systems and driverless tractors to enable massive agriculture productivity growth and business opportunities

BY JUAN F. PÉREZ

BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA— Advances in spatial technology that enable digital agriculture, including a next-generation national positioning system and real-time monitoring of soil moisture levels from space, took center stage at the Australia Symposium on Digital Earth & Locate20 in Brisbane last month.

A new positioning system accurate to one to four inches – as opposed to 16 feet with today’s satellite-based GPS – will boost Australia’s economy by \$73 billion over the next 20 years, much of it in agriculture, says Dr. Peter Woodgate, CEO of the Cooperative Research Centre for Spatial Information (CRCSI).

“To adopt techniques like precision agriculture and controlled traffic farming, farmers need to be able to position equipment and sensors with about 2 inches accuracy. The conference showcased space-based augmentation systems – including Australia and New Zealand’s joint initiative – which, subject to testing, are well on the way to achieving that,” said Woodgate. “Leveraging other regional efforts,

such as a Japanese satellite-based system recently tested in Queensland, it will even be possible to remotely control unmanned autonomous vehicles like driverless tractors from space.”

Woodgate and fellow Working Group Co-Chair, Glenn Cockerton, Managing Director of Spatial Vision, made the first public presentation of the symposium, outlining 30 transformative initiatives for Australia.

In another highlight of the event, the Australian Space Agency held a special session to promote capacity building and use of data from its Soil Moisture Active Passive (SMAP) Observatory. According to Phil Tickle, Program Development Manager at CRCSI, SMAP data complement data from a range of sensors used in digital agriculture, including soil moisture probes, weather stations, and animal tracking devices. Tickle presented the benefits of an online farm monitoring solution for the grazing industry.



Tickle said the conference was an opportunity for farmers and land managers to learn about the spatial technologies transforming

their industry, as well as to discuss potential issues, such as the ownership of agricultural big data.

“We are seeing enormous development in digital agriculture capabilities and often farmers don’t have control of their own data,” said Tickle. “When you have sensors on farms feeding into data warehouses and generating broader benefits, why shouldn’t the farmer get a cut? And what does a farmer do if they want to change providers and their data is locked up in a proprietary system?”

The conference event featured eight topic areas and more than 130 speakers from Australia and New Zealand.

With a program featuring more than 130 speakers from Australia and New Zealand, Digital Earth & Locate20 provided a unique opportunity to understand the latest digital transformation practices, and to develop and leverage geospatial data.

The two main conference days were split into eight separate streams with topics including smart cities, intelligent transport, agriculture, engineering/utilities, water and climate, disaster and emergency management, and the geospatial economy.

Table B.1*Randomization Check*

	Test statistic	Significance
<i>Administrative variables</i>		
Study response time	$F(6, 679) = 1.060$	NS ($p = .39$)
Time spent on article page	$F(6, 679) = 1.581$	NS ($p = .15$)
Device use (laptop/PC vs. smartphone/tablet)	$\phi(6) = 0.094$	NS ($p = .42$)
<i>Demographics</i>		
Sex at birth	$\chi^2(6) = 1.246$	NS ($p = .98$)
Educational attainment		
Completed high school	$\chi^2(6) = 3.640$	NS ($p = .73$)
Completed undergraduate post-secondary education	$\chi^2(6) = 3.130$	NS ($p = .79$)
Completed graduate post-secondary education	$\chi^2(6) = 11.400$	NS ($p = .08$)
Race/ethnicity		
African American/Black	$\chi^2(6) = 9.160$	NS ($p = .16$)
Asian American	$\chi^2(6) = 4.000$	NS ($p = .68$)
Latinx/Hispanic	$\chi^2(6) = 5.840$	NS ($p = .44$)
White/Caucasian	$\chi^2(6) = 0.740$	NS ($p = .99$)
Religious affiliation (current)		
Catholic	$\chi^2(6) = 3.910$	NS ($p = .69$)
Protestant	$\chi^2(6) = 9.220$	NS ($p = .16$)
Non-Christian	$\chi^2(6) = 3.540$	NS ($p = .74$)
Nonbeliever	$\chi^2(6) = 3.400$	NS ($p = .76$)
Age	$F(6, 654) = 0.298$	NS ($p = .94$)
Household income	$F(6, 666) = 0.410$	NS ($p = .87$)
Political ideology	$F(6, 678) = 1.026$	NS ($p = .41$)

Note. $N = 687$. NS = nonsignificant ($p > .05$); all p -values are based on two-tailed tests.

Table B.2

Differences Between Participants Who Failed the Last Attention Check (N = 63) and Those Who Did Not Fail Any Attention Check (N = 624)

	Test statistic	Significance
<i>Administrative variables</i>		
Study response time	$t(685) = 1.003$	NS ($p = .32$)
Time spent on article page	$t(685) = 1.085$	NS ($p = .28$)
Manipulation check #1 (valence)	$t(685) = 1.562$	NS ($p = .12$)
Manipulation check #2 (valence)	$t(685) = 0.827$	NS ($p = .41$)
Manipulation check #3 (salience)	$\chi^2(3) = 1.804$	NS ($p = .62$)
Random assignment to experimental condition	$\chi^2(6) = 2.965$	NS ($p = .81$)
Device use (laptop/PC vs. smartphone/tablet)	$\phi(1) = 0.008$	NS ($p = .84$)
<i>Demographics</i>		
Sex at birth	$\chi^2(1) = 1.420$	NS ($p = .23$)
Gender identity	$\chi^2(4) = 2.227$	NS ($p = .69$)
Educational attainment	$\chi^2(7) = 4.884$	NS ($p = .67$)
Age	$t(660) = 0.999$	NS ($p = .32$)
Race/ethnicity: African American/Black	$\chi^2(1) = 0.002$	NS ($p = .97$)
Race/ethnicity: Asian American	$\chi^2(1) = 0.540$	NS ($p = .46$)
Race/ethnicity: Latinx/Hispanic	$\phi(1) = 0.035$	NS ($p = .36$)
Race/ethnicity: White/Caucasian	$\chi^2(1) = 0.786$	NS ($p = .38$)
Religious affiliation (current)	$\phi(13) = 0.169$	NS ($p = .11$)
Religious affiliation (former)	$\phi(14) = 0.162$	NS ($p = .21$)
Household income	$U = 18768.500 / z = .305$	NS ($p = .76$)
Political ideology	$U = 18764.500 / z = .583$	NS ($p = .56$)
Current residence (U.S. state)	$\chi^2(47) = 57.644$	NS ($p = .14$)

Note. NS = nonsignificant ($p > .05$); all p -values are based on two-tailed tests.

Table B.3*Power Analyses (A Priori)*

Statistical test/model	# groups	Effect size (f)	Significance level^c	Power of test^d	Target N (per group)
<u>ANOVA^a</u>					
Condition 1: Contact valence	4	.20	.05	.80	69
	4	.20	.05	.90	90
Condition 2: Identity salience	3	.20	.05	.80	81
	3	.20	.05	.90	106
Statistical test/model	# predictor variables	Effect size (f)	Significance level^c	Power of test^d	Target N
General linear model ^b	1	.15	.05	.80	53
	5	.15	.05	.80	90
	25	.15	.05	.80	171
	1	.15	.05	.90	70
	5	.15	.05	.90	115
	25	.15	.05	.90	210

^a Based on balanced one-way analysis of variance power calculation

(`pwr.anova.test(k = , n = , f = , sig.level = 0.05, power =)`)

^b Based on multiple regression power calculation

(`pwr.f2.test(u = , v = , f2 = , sig.level = 0.05, power =)`)

^c Type I error probability

^d 1 minus Type II error probability

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE AND INFORMED CONSENT

STUDY TITLE:

"Perceptions of religious groups in the U.S."

PURPOSE and PROCEDURES:

You are invited to participate in a web-based survey about attitudes toward various groups. This is a research project being conducted at the University of Washington in Seattle. The survey should take approximately 20-25 minutes and includes general demographic questions as well as questions related to contemporary social issues, religion and religious groups, and media use. You also will be asked to read a news story and answer questions about that news story.

RISKS and BENEFITS:

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study other than those associated with basic computer tasks, including boredom or fatigue, and answering personal/sensitive questions. Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You may refuse to take part in the research or exit the survey at any time. You are free to decline to answer any particular question you do not wish to answer for any reason. Other than the compensation specified below, the likely benefits to you are limited to the learning experience you gain from participating in a research study. However, the benefit to society is the contribution to scientific knowledge that might inform public policy to address important social issues.

COMPENSATION:

You will be paid an amount of \$2 for completing the survey. Mechanical Turk (MTurk) does not allow for prorated compensation. In the event of an incomplete Human Intelligence Task (HIT), you must contact the researcher and compensation will be determined based on what was completed and at the researchers' discretion. This study contains a number of checks to make sure that participants are finishing the tasks honestly and completely. If you fail these checks or complete the tasks with less than full integrity, resulting in suspect data, your HIT will be rejected.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Your MTurk Worker ID will be used to distribute payment to you but will not be stored with the research data that are collected from you. Please be aware that your MTurk Worker ID can potentially be linked to information about you on your Amazon public profile page, depending on the settings you have for your Amazon profile. We will not be accessing any personally identifying information. Any reports and presentations about the findings from this study will not include your name or any other information that could identify you.

CONTACT:

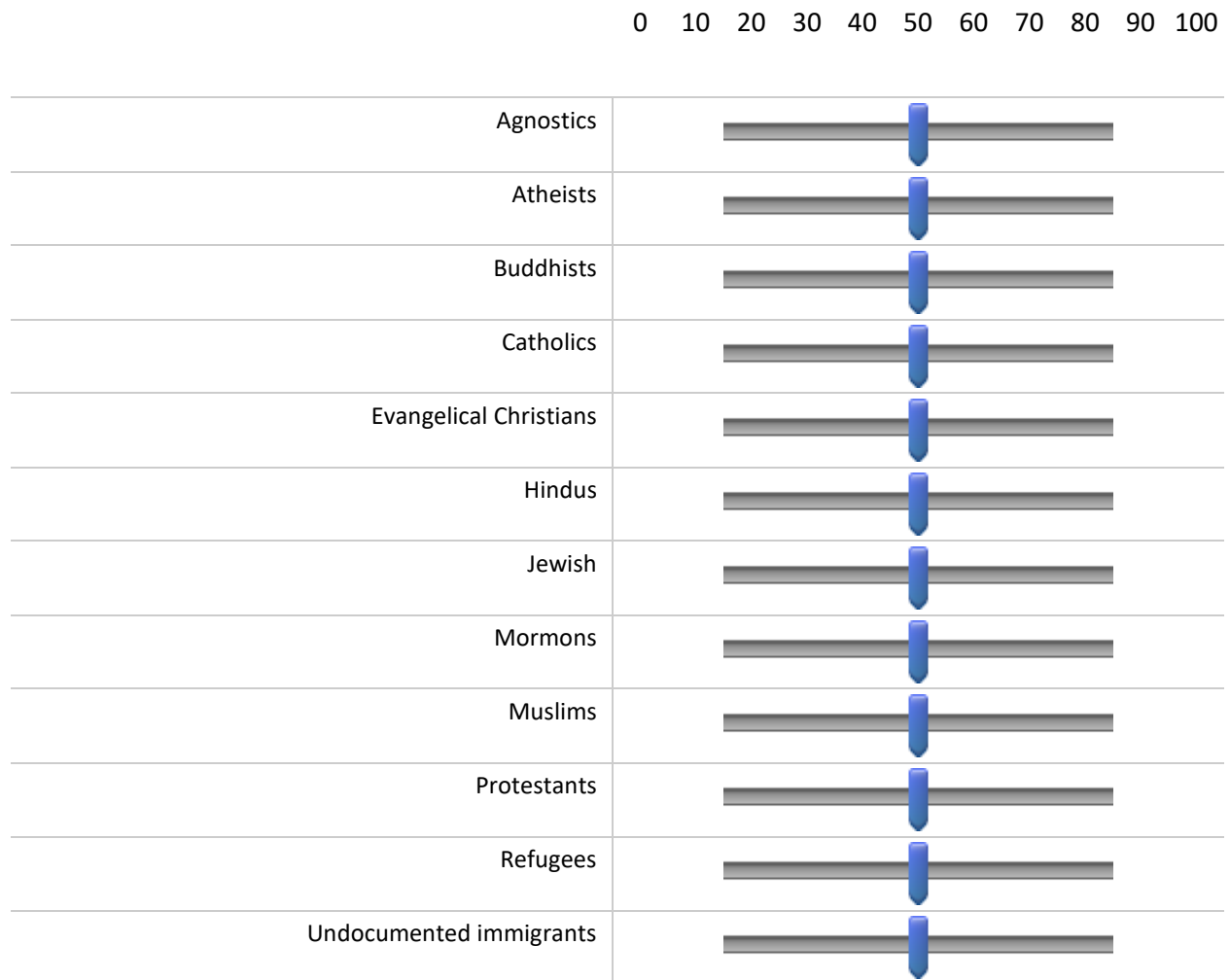
If you have any questions or problems related to the study, you can contact Rico Neumann at rneu@uw.edu. For questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University of Washington's Institutional Review Board at (206) 543-0098 or hsdinfo@u.washington.edu.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Clicking on "I agree" below indicates that:

- You have read and understood the above information
- You voluntarily agree to participate in this online research study
- You are at least 18 years old
 - o I agree
 - o I disagree



For each group listed below, please indicate how cold or warm you feel toward this group. Lower numbers mean you feel more cold or negative, and higher numbers mean you feel more warm or positive, toward the group.





Do you personally know anyone who is a member of the following groups?

	No	Yes
Agnostic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Atheist	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Buddhist	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Catholic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evangelical Christian	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hindu	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jewish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Protestant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mormon	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Muslim	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Undocumented immigrant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Refugee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement below.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
You can't be too careful in dealing with people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most people can be trusted.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most people try to be helpful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most people look out for themselves.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most people try to take advantage of others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most people try to be fair.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



How much do you trust people from the following religious groups?

	Not at all	Not very much	Somewhat	Completely
Agnostics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Atheists	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Buddhists	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Catholics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evangelical Christians	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hindus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jewish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mormons	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Muslims	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Protestants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break



How familiar would you say you are with the following religions?

	Not at all familiar	Not too familiar	Somewhat familiar	Very familiar
Buddhism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Christianity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hinduism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Islam	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Judaism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Do you consider yourself a member of a group that is discriminated against in this country?

- Yes
- No

*Skip To: End of Block If Do you consider yourself a member of a group that is discriminated against in this country?
= No*

Which group or groups? _____



In thinking about your own identity, how important is your:

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Gender	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nation/nationality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State of residence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Race/ethnicity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Political ideology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Start of Block: Conditions Text

On the next page, you will see an article on a contemporary news topic. Please read the article carefully. Afterwards you will be asked a few questions about the article.

End of Block: Conditions Text

Start of Block: 1A

Timing
First Click
Last Click
Page Submit
Click Count

-
-
-

End of Block: Control



Before reading the article, had you heard or read about this event from another news source?
If so, where?

Page Break

In general, how optimistic or pessimistic is the article?

- Very optimistic
- Optimistic
- Neither optimistic nor pessimistic
- Pessimistic
- Very pessimistic

Page Break

According to the article, how likely or unlikely is it for the individuals mentioned to hold another event like this one?

- Very unlikely
- Unlikely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Likely
- Very likely

Page Break

According to the article, where did the event primarily take place?

- The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington
- The Edlavitch Jewish Community Center of Washington
- The Islamic Center of Washington
- None of the above

Page Break



In which newspaper did this article appear?

- New York Times
- Wall Street Journal
- Washington Post
- Los Angeles Times
- Chicago Tribune
- USA Today

Page Break



For each group listed below, please indicate whether it was mentioned in the article.

	No	Yes
Catholics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Muslims	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jews	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Members of the LGBTQ community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Blacks/African Americans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Latinx/Hispanics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evangelicals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break

Approximately how many times was the United States referenced (e.g., "U.S.", "America", "the nation")?

- 0
- 1-5
- 6-10
- More than 10

Page Break



Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The outcome of the event mentioned in the article makes me hopeful about such events.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The outcome of the event mentioned in the article makes me pessimistic about such events.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The article frames the story in a way that it is important to U.S. news audiences.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The news story seems authentic.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The news story seems realistic.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break



Below are some reasons why people turn to the news. To what extent do the following reasons apply to you?

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	A great deal
To read about people that I identify with	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To feel good about the groups that I belong to	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Because I enjoy reading news that portray people like me positively	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To read about how other people like me interact with other groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To read about how people from other groups interact with people like me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To read about how people from other groups behave	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To read about how people from my group behave	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To know what is socially appropriate in various situations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To learn new social skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To read about important events in my community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To learn about current events of national importance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To learn about current events of international importance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To stay informed about events that may affect me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To be entertained	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To have something to do with my free time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When you have read this item, please select the second point on the scale (to the right of 'not at all').	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



I am interested in learning more about ...

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Islam in general	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Muslims in general	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Muslim Americans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Muslims living in my state	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Muslims living in my city	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Muslim/non-Muslim relations in general	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break



How much do you trust people from the following religious groups?

	Not at all	Not very much	Somewhat	Completely
Atheists	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Catholics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evangelical Christians	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jews	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Muslims	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break



Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement below.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The strict division of church and state, as practiced in the West, would represent progress in many Islamic countries.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Although some women voluntarily wear a veil, other women have been coerced to do so.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The rigid Islamic gender division should not be conceded.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is wrong to ignore the threat of fundamentalist Islam.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religion becomes a problem when people try to take holy writings literally.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Islam should not interfere with nonreligious issues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religion—no matter which one—brings out the best within humans.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Universal human rights and certain legal norms should always hold, regardless of religious rules.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hostility against Muslims is an intolerable form of discrimination.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wherever a large number of Muslims live and attend schools, Islamic religious education should be offered.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break



In general, I believe it is important to learn more about ...

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Norms and values associated with Islam	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
History and culture of Islam	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Similarities and differences between Islam and other religions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contributions of Islam to U.S. society	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Islamic organizations in the U.S.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Muslim Americans and their concerns, experiences, and place in U.S. society	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Muslim/non-Muslim relations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break



Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement below.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I would be happy to personally get to know more Muslim people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would not hesitate to attend a cultural event that is organized by Islamic centers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working together with a person from the Muslim community would be no problem for me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Where do you get most of your news? Be as specific as possible.



How often do you ...

	Never	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Often
read newspapers in print?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
listen to news on the radio?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
watch local television?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
watch national evening network television news?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
watch cable television news?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
get news from a social networking site?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
get news from a website or app?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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How closely do you follow each type of news, either in the newspaper, on television, radio, or the internet?

	Not at all closely	Not very closely	Somewhat closely	Very closely
Government and politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People and events in your own community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Business and finance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Science and technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Entertainment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Crime	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health news	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National affairs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
International affairs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break



Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I often find myself thinking about what I have seen in the news.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often tie what I see in the news with ideas I've had before.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often try to relate what I see in the news to my own personal experiences.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often try to think about how what I see in the news relates to other things I know.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When you have read this item, please select the second point on the scale (to the right of 'strongly disagree').	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break



How much, if at all, do you trust the information you get from ...

	Not at all	Not too much	Some	A lot
Cable television	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National newspapers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National broadcast television	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National radio programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local newspapers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local television	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local radio programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friends, family and acquaintances	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
News aggregators, such as Google News	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
News websites	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
International news media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Thinking is not my idea of fun.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would rather do something that requires little thought than something that is sure to challenge my thinking abilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would prefer complex to simple problems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to have the responsibility of handling a situation that requires a lot of thinking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I really enjoy a task that involves coming up with new solutions to problems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would prefer a task that is intellectual, difficult, and important to one that is somewhat important but does not require much thought.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When you have read this item, please select the fourth point on the scale (to the left of 'strongly agree').	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
When thinking about a problem, I consider as many different opinions on the issue as possible.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When considering most conflict situations, I can rarely see how both sides could be right.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I always see many different solutions to problems I face.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not usually consult many different opinions before forming my own view.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Even after I've made up my mind about something, I am always eager to consider a different opinion.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am always willing to admit when I make a mistake.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have never been irritated when people expressed ideas very different from my own.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to gossip at times.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At times I have really insisted on having things my way.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Finally, a few questions about yourself.

What is your highest level of education?

- Did not finish high school
- Graduated from high school
- Some college
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctorate
- Professional degree
- Prefer not to answer

Page Break

Which of the following best describes you? Check all that apply.

- African American or Black
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian American or Asian
- Hispanic/Latinx
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Pacific Islander
- White or Caucasian
- Other (write in): _____

In what year were you born?

- _____
- Prefer not to answer

What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate?

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to answer

How do you currently describe yourself?

- Female
- Male
- Transgender
- Non-binary
- Genderqueer or gender nonconforming
- A gender category/identity not listed here (please specify)

- Prefer not to disclose

Page Break _____

What is your current religion?

- Buddhist
- Catholic
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Protestant
- Some other religion _____
- None

With which religion did you grow up?

- Buddhist
 - Catholic
 - Hindu
 - Jewish
 - Muslim
 - Protestant
 - Some other religion / various (please specify):
-

None

Regardless of whether you belong to a particular religion, how religious would you say you are?

- 0 (Not at all religious)
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 (Very religious)

Page Break

	Never	Less than once a month	Once a month	Several times a month	Once a week	Several times a week	Every day
Apart from special occasions such as weddings and funerals, about how often do you attend religious services nowadays?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Apart from when you are at religious services, how often, if at all, do you pray?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Which of the following best describes the area where you mostly grew up?

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural

Which of the following best describes the area where you currently live?

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural

Page Break

How important is being American to you?

- Not at all important
- Not too important
- Somewhat important
- Very important
- Extremely important

How well does the term *American* describe you?

- Not at all well
- Not too well
- Somewhat well
- Very well
- Extremely well

To what extent do you see yourself as a typical American?

- Not at all
- Not too much
- Somewhat
- A great deal

When talking about Americans, how often do you say “we” instead of “they”?

- Never
- Not too often
- Sometimes
- Most of the time
- Always

In which U.S. state or territory do you currently reside? [DROP-DOWN MENU]

Page Break

Which statement below best describes the **racial/ethnic** diversity of your neighborhood?

- My neighborhood is very diverse; almost everyone is of a different race or ethnic group.
- My neighborhood is somewhat diverse; some people are of a different race or ethnic group.
- My neighborhood is not very diverse; almost everyone is of the same race or ethnic group.

Which statement below best describes the religious diversity of your neighborhood?

- My neighborhood is very diverse; almost everyone is of a different religious group.
- My neighborhood is somewhat diverse; some people are of a different religious group.
- My neighborhood is not very diverse; almost everyone is of the same religious group.

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How many people live in your household (including yourself)? _____

Which of these descriptions applies to what you have been doing for the last 7 days? Please select all that apply.

- Employed full-time
- Employed part-time
- Unemployed and actively looking for work
- Unemployed, wanting a job but not actively looking for work
- Retired
- Student
- Permanently sick or disabled
- In community or military service
- Doing housework, looking after children or other persons
- Other (please specify): _____

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In which of these groups did your total household income fall in 2019?

- Less than \$10,000
- \$10,000 - \$19,999
- \$20,000 - \$29,999
- \$30,000 - \$39,999
- \$40,000 - \$49,999
- \$50,000 - \$59,999
- \$60,000 - \$69,999
- \$70,000 - \$79,999
- \$80,000 - \$89,999
- \$90,000 - \$99,999
- \$100,000 - \$149,999
- More than \$150,000
- Prefer not to answer

Page Break

How liberal or conservative would you say you are?

- Extremely liberal
- Liberal
- Slightly liberal
- Moderate
- Slightly conservative
- Conservative
- Extremely conservative

Would you be interested in a follow-up study of approximately 1-2 hours in which you would meet with members of the Muslim community?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

Page Break

Which device did you use to complete the survey?

- Laptop or desktop computer
- Smart phone or tablet

Page Break

What do you think was the purpose of this study?

End of Block: Concepts: Willingness to engage in future contact

Start of Block: Random ID

Here is your completion code: `#{e://Field/Random%20ID}`

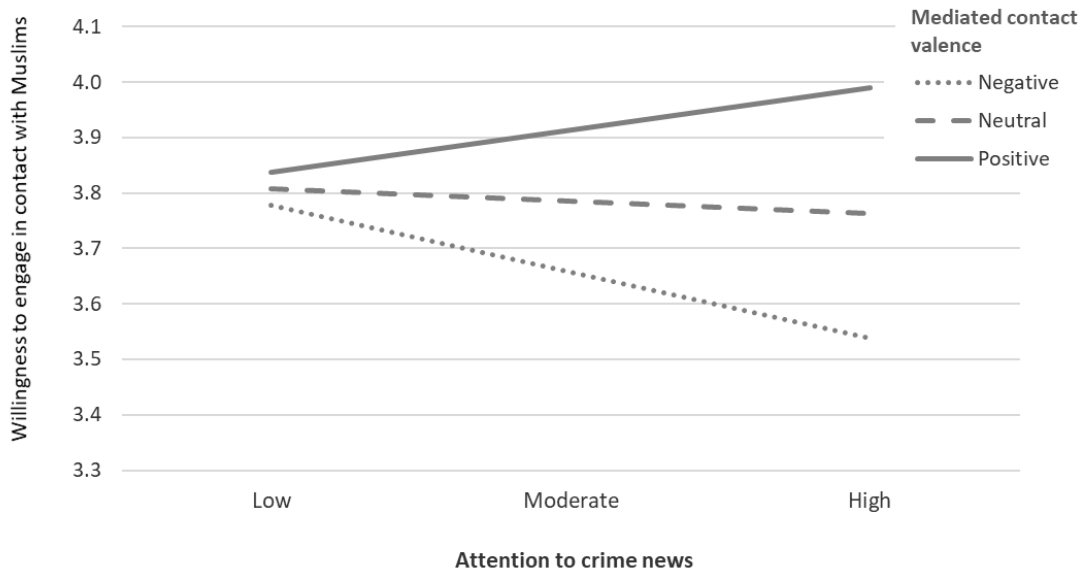
Copy this value to paste into MTurk.

When you have copied this ID, please click the next button to submit your survey.

End of Block: Random ID

APPENDIX D: ADDITIONAL ANALYSES

Figure D.1. Contact Willingness as a Function of Contact Valence and Attention to Crime News



With regard to news attention, only crime-focused news yielded significant main and interaction effects on one's willingness to interact with Muslims. Specifically, those who said they follow news about crime more closely tend to be less willing to interact with Muslims ($B = -0.31$, $SE = 0.13$, $p < .05$), and this effect is strongest for those participants exposed to the negatively framed intergroup encounter ($B = 0.14$, $SE = 0.06$, $p < .05$) (see the dotted line in Figure D.1). Moreover, regardless of the valence of the intergroup encounter individuals observed, those who rarely follow crime news were equally likely to say they would engage in actual contact with Muslims (see the left-hand side of the interaction graph in Figure D.1). However, individuals who follow this type of news more closely and see positively framed intergroup encounters in the news are most likely to say they would interact with Muslims (see the solid line in Figure 3).

Paying attention to crime news thus has a positive effect for those who see positive intergroup encounters in the news but has a negative effect for those who see negative intergroup encounters in the news. This finding is in line with cultivation research, specifically the concept of the mean-world syndrome (Gerbner et al., 1980). People with heavy exposure to violence-related content on mass media tend to perceive the world to be more dangerous than it actually is and, as a result, may be less willing to seek contact with those outgroup members who are negatively portrayed in the news. Seeing a negative intergroup encounter in the media thus reinforces the negative views those people hold (i.e., it resonates with their preexisting cognitive biases) while seeing a positive intergroup encounter can serve as a corrective and a remedy to decrease fear and threat perceptions.