THE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT OF MUSLIM AMERICANS
Mosque Involvement and Group Consciousness

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Although studies on civic and political engagement highlight the importance of religious institutions in the political mobilization of Americans, few studies have examined the role of religious institutions in ethnic or minority communities. Furthermore, little is known about the causal mechanisms that link minorities in religious institutions to broader forms of political participation. Through an examination of patterns of Muslim American political behavior and their levels of mosque participation, the author argues that the mosque, similar to other religious institutions in the United States, takes on the multifaceted role of mobilization vehicle and school of civic participation. The author also discovers that mosques promote and foster a sense of group consciousness among Arab and Black Muslims.

Scholars have long paid significant attention to the role of religious institutions in the political mobilization of citizens (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995; Calhoun-Brown, 1996; Jones-Correa & Leal, 2001; Tate, 1993; Wuthnow, 1999). Studies capturing the dynamics of church involvement have highlighted the importance of the institution for the variety of ways it mobilizes congregants. Verba et al. (1995) find that churchgoers are more likely to be engaged in political activities. Churches have the potential to increase individual

levels of civic skills, political efficacy, and political knowledge: "The acquisition of such civic skills is not a function of SES [socioeconomic status] but depends on the frequency of church attendance and denomination of the church one attends" (Verba et al., 1995, p. 82). This overflow from the religious to the political sphere has been documented in several studies analyzing the role of churches in political life (Greenberg, 2000; Peterson, 1992; Smidt, 1999). Other studies, however, posit that religious institutions can play a more direct role in mobilization; instead of merely increasing levels of civic involvement, they can also serve as conduits for direct political mobilization. As Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) point out, "involvement in organizations . . . promotes political participation by making people susceptible to mobilization. Politically, organizations stand between national and local political leaders and ordinary citizens" (p. 87). In fact, new studies have found that church-gained civic skills do not only indirectly influence levels of political participation. Rather, churches influence political participation by directly recruiting congregants into political processes (Djupe & Grant, 2001).

Beyond the actual institutional effects of participation, other scholars argue that the church—especially Black churches—bring together individuals with similar experiences and, thereby, instill a group consciousness that empowers political participation. Harris (1994), for instance, argues that Black churches play multifaceted roles in mobilizing congregants; most importantly, these churches galvanize group identity and group consciousness, and they also promote religious interpretations conducive to political participation (Harris, 1994). Calhoun-Brown's (1996) work examines the mechanisms structuring group identity and political participation. Although general church membership and group identity on their own have little effect on patterns of political engagement, she finds that politicized Black churches encourage group consciousness in ways favorable to political participation. In effect, and building on Miller, Gurin, Gurin, and Malanchuk's (1981) argument, she finds that politicized Black churches foster a sense of group consciousness by collectivizing the interests of the subgroup in an effort to counter prejudice and discrimination from mainstream society.

In this plethora of scholarly work on politicized Black churches, however, few studies have examined the role of religious institutions

in the mobilization of other minority groups (Jones-Correa & Leal, 2001; Verba et al., 1995). In fact, most studies treat religious institutions as sites for the acquisition of individual civic skills and similar vehicles that channel member concerns. Some studies have looked at the mechanisms by which ethnic religious institutions incorporate minority groups in the political process. Beyond basic associational dynamics, little is known about how minority membership in religious institutions structures political engagement.

The new studies that have begun to look at the role of religious institutions in ethnic minority communities have returned mixed results. Although some studies find that ethnic religious associations enhance mobilization, there is little consensus as to the specific processes or mechanisms that link members of ethnic religious institutions to political activity. Some studies argue that ethnic associations serve as direct mobilizers, whereas others highlight the acquisition of skills in these religious sites and their effects on political mobilization (Jones-Correa & Leal, 2001; Lien, Collet, Wong, & Ramakrishnan, 2001; Verba et al., 1995). Whether ethnic religious institutions promote psychological effects, similar to group consciousness, is an issue of debate in the literature on ethnic patterns of political participation. Although Stokes (2003) discovers that levels of group consciousness encourage political activity, she also finds that group consciousness varies among subgroups of Latinos (Stokes, 2003). Leighley (1996) and Leighley and Vedlitz (1999) find that models of group consciousness do not foster patterns of political activity systematically among Anglos, African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Asian Americans. In fact, some scholars have argued that the effect of group consciousness models in explaining patterns of Black participation have waned (Bobo & Gilliam, 1990; Tate, 1993).

MOSQUES AND
POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Building on this existing scholarship, my study examines the role that American mosques play in trajectories of political mobilization. In the literature of religion and politics, American mosques have received practically no attention.[1] We know very little about the politi-

cal roles of mosques in the United States. Even less clear are the roles that mosques actually play in the mobilization of Muslim Americans. Are mosques linked to greater levels of political involvement for Muslim Americans? Are they conduits channeling engaged citizen concerns? Do processes of civic education and enhancement of civic skills (which thereby increase levels of civic involvement) accompany mosque participation? And do mosques foster levels of group consciousness that are useful for political activity in a manner similar to that of the politicized Black churches that Calhoun-Brown (1996) studies?

This article proceeds as follows: First, I present evidence illustrating that mosque participation is in fact associated with higher levels of various dimensions of political activity among all the Muslims in the sample. Once these data are disaggregated along ethnic lines, however, mosque participation seems significant only for Arab Muslim patterns of political activity and not significant for African American or South Asian Muslim political participation. Second, I ask whether an increase in civic skills and group consciousness accompanies mosque participation among these groups. The answer to this question will offer important insights as to whether (a) Arab Muslim political participation is related to direct mobilization and an increase in civic skills and group consciousness and (b) whether mosque participation among South Asian and African American Muslims is generating higher levels of civic skills and group consciousness.

Finally, I show that although mosque participation is associated with higher levels of civic involvement for both Arab and South Asian Muslims, this does not appear to be the case for African American Muslims. Furthermore, mosque participation is directly linked to higher levels of group consciousness among Arab and African American Muslims but not for South Asians. The differences that emerge among various Muslim ethnic populations, I argue, are a direct result of each group's ethnic experience in the United States. Arab Americans have had a stronger tradition of political participation in the United States. They have a long history of political activity aimed at both improving their own standing in the United States and influencing U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. South Asian Muslims have played an active role in religious and civic life, yet until more recently, their spiritual and ethnic activities have not spilled over into the politi-

cal sphere. African American Muslims, most of whom converted to Islam, remain more distant from the political sphere altogether. Their levels of mosque participation are associated with neither increases in levels of political activity nor civic involvement. Similar to Black churches, a notable effect of mosque participation is a higher awareness of the discrimination that affects other Muslims in the United States. Unlike Black churchgoers, however, the mosque does not necessarily serve as a vehicle of political incorporation among this subpopulation.

This article is based on an analysis of a survey administered to 335 Muslim Americans in the New York area by Zogby International in April 2002. Three-hundred interviews were conducted via phone, where respondents were randomly selected from telephone lists using Muslim surnames. An additional 35 interviews were conducted face to face with African American Muslims living in proximity to mosque locales, increasing this subpopulation's representation in the study.

MUSLIM AMERICANS
AND MOSQUE PARTICIPATION

Estimated at between 5 and 7 million, the Muslim American population is one of the fastest growing religious minorities in the country.[2] Today, American mosques number close to 1,200, a 62% increase since the 1980s. Within a 4-year period, New York City itself witnessed a two-fold increase in the number of mosques (Dodds, 2002).[3] More than 20% of U.S. mosques have Islamic schools associated with them, and mosque attendance has increased 75% in the past 5 years, with approximately 1,625 Muslims linked to each mosque (Bagby, Perl, & Froehle, 2001). The Muslim American community comprises both first-generation immigrants, primarily from the Middle East and South East Asia, as well as second-, third-, and fourth-generation Americans.[4] U.S. mosques gather Muslims from all sects and generations, creating expansive spaces for community and worship. Approximately 90% of contemporary U.S. mosques assemble members with mixed ethnic backgrounds. However, it is fair to say that specific ethnic groups—primarily African Americans, Arab Americans, and South Asians—dominate most mosques.

Newly emergent mosques serve as key sites for political activity and mobilization.[5] National Muslim advocacy groups, such as the Council for American Islamic Relations (CAIR), carry out voter registration drives, encourage mosque members to vote, and appeal to a wider constituency through mosque outreach campaigns.[6] The coalition-building efforts of these Muslim organizations across mosques and Arab American groups were so effective that the unified Muslim bloc vote in 2000 is thought to have been significant in many states.[7] By and large, Muslim Americans threw their support behind George W. Bush. This was a departure from their previous two-to-one support for Bill Clinton in 1996. Muslim Americans see the American political system as a place where they can actively express their opinions and concerns. In a poll administered by the Muslims and Public Sphere project at Georgetown University, 93% of Muslims reported that Muslims should participate in the U.S. political system, and 77% reported that they were involved with organizations to help the poor, the sick and homeless, or the elderly.[8] More than two thirds reported involvement with a school or youth program, and more than half (51%) stated that they have either petitioned or written the media or a politician on a given issue.[9] Patterns of civic engagement among mosque participants illustrate that this group of Muslims is actively engaged in American civic life through their local mosques.

New mosques across the United States have, in recent years, become more visibly Islamic; increasingly, architectural structures are adorned with domes and crescents. Some interpret the more purposeful visualization of Islamic symbols in public as an assertion of Muslim American affluence or a claim that Muslim Americans are part of the fabric of American communal and religious life (Dodds, 2002). The Muslim American community took great pride in Clinton's invitations to visit the White House to observe Eid al-Adha celebrations, and the Eid Stamp issued by the U.S. Postal Service marked growing Muslim acceptance in the United States. With the growing influence of mosques in American civic and political life, it is imperative to understand the degree to which mosques encourage political engagement and the causal mechanisms that link Muslim mosque-goers to more political activity.

TEST AND HYPOTHESIS

Clearly, mosques are becoming potential sites for political activity. It is not clear, however, whether mosques are linked to broader forms of political activity across Muslim subgroups. Is this political participation the result of direct mobilization efforts? And do mosques bolster civic participation and shore up psychological benefits arising from growing forms of group consciousness? To better understand the role of the mosque in Muslim political life, I examine the importance of mosque participation on patterns of nonvoting political activity. I estimate an ordinary least squares model to gauge the effect of mosque participation on political activity. I do not include the electoral vote because slightly more than 70% of my sample are foreign born and the survey instrument does not include questions on citizenship status. Furthermore, forms of political activity other than voting seem to demonstrate a more applied effort to influence politics.[10]

In this study, political activity is a dependent variable based on four questions. The first question asks the following: Have you ever called or written the media or a politician on a given issue, or have you signed a petition? The second question is as follows: Have you ever attended a rally in support of a politician or cause? The third question in the survey asks the following: Have you ever given a contribution or volunteered your time or services to a political candidate? Finally, the fourth question is as follows: Would you consider yourself to be an active member of a political party? Among Muslims in the sample, 38.85% reported that they had not participated in any of these political activities, 28.66% had participated in one, 14.65% had participated in two acts, 12.42% had participated in three, and 5.41% had participated in all four acts. Political activity is coded here as a 5-point Likert-type scale variable (see appendix for data coding and distributions).

Controlling for key demographic variables, levels of mosque participation are directly associated with higher levels of political activity, as illustrated in Table 1.[11] Other demographic variables include education, marital status, and birth nationality. Those more highly educated, single, and born in the United States are more likely to be politically active. As expected by numerous studies on minority political activity, education also structures the political participation of Muslim Americans. Once the data is disaggregated along ethnic lines,

TABLE 1
Mosque Participation and Political Activity

| | Political Activity | |
Independent Variable	B	SE
Mosque involvement	0.141**	.065
Education	0.176***	.068
Foreign born	−0.825***	.154
Gender	0.014	.145
Age	0.008	.006
Marital status	−0.285*	.160
Constant	1.57***	.534
N	296	
Adjusted R^2	.153	

NOTE: Coefficients are unstandardized ordinary least squares regression values.
*$p < .10$. **$p < .05$. ***$p < .001$.

however, the relationship between mosque participation and political activity becomes more complex (see Table 2). Although mosque participation relates to greater political activity for Arab Muslims, this relationship does not hold for South Asian or African American Muslims.[12] Among Arabs, those with higher education, who are single as opposed to married, who are women, and who are older are more likely to be politically active. As in socioeconomic status predictions, education remains significant for Arab political activity. Those who are single, older, and female might have more time on their hands to actively engage the political process.

For African Americans, the only significant variable is age; those who are older tend to be more politically involved. Mosque involvement and other demographic variables are also not pertinent for South Asian Muslim patterns of political activity. The only factor that is connected to their activity is whether respondents are U.S. born. Those born in the United States are more likely to be politically involved. Foreign-born South Asian Muslims are less likely to be active. Poor language skills and lack of political knowledge are plausible explanations for this finding.

That the mosque is associated with political activity for Arabs and not South Asians and African Americans is telling. One would expect that if the mosque were a vehicle of political mobilization, it would consistently be tied to political activity among all mosque affiliates;

TABLE 2
Mosque Participation and Political Activity Among Muslim Groups

	Political Activity					
	Arab Muslims		*African American Muslims*		*Asian Muslims*	
Independent Variable	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Mosque involvement	0.435**	0.137	0.096	0.200	–0.101	0.099
Education	0.234*	0.128	0.187	0.235	0.071	0.100
Foreign born	–0.275	0.310	–0.772	0.998	–0.629*	0.371
Gender	0.624*	0.297	0.108	0.417	–0.268	0.256
Age	0.024**	0.010	0.037*	0.018	–0.015	0.009
Marital status	–0.612**	0.275	–0.267	0.414	–0.068	0.291
Constant	–1.33	1.12	0.586	1.81	2.99***	1.01
N	67		46		123	
Adjusted R^2	.190		.027		.033	

NOTE: Please note that each equation was run on the individual indicators of political activity and that significance levels and effects remained consistent across equations. Coefficients are unstandardized ordinary least squares regression values.
*$p < .10$. **$p < .05$. ***$p < .001$.

however, the evidence thus far suggests that this is not the case. Although more systematic data are needed to explain why mosque participation is salient for Arab Muslim political activity and not for South Asian or African American political behavior, there are other dimensions of civic engagement that can be further examined in the data. For instance, are mosques associated with higher levels of civic involvement among these subpopulations? For Arabs, this association between mosque participation and higher levels of civic participation would mean that mosque participation is linked to both civic skills and political activity. For African American and South Asian Muslims, this would suggest that higher levels of mosque involvement can generate some form of civic capital but not necessarily be linked to political participation. Furthermore, what relationship does mosque participation have on experiences with discrimination and perceptions of intolerance and disrespect by mainstream society (measures of unfair treatment important for group consciousness)? Are mosque members more likely to be victims of discrimination and perceive mainstream society as biased against Muslims? Understanding the role of mosques and whether they attract hostility from main-

stream society could further enhance our understanding as to whether mosques generate levels of group consciousness that may be useful for political involvement.

HYPOTHESIS 1: MOSQUES AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

The first set of hypotheses examines the institutional role of the mosque in creating more civic involvement among its members. This hypothesis is primarily derived from "The Civic Voluntarism Model," advanced by Verba et al. (1995) in *Voice and Inequality*. Organizational participation, they argue, enhances civic skills, and those skills are more likely to spill over to other realms of civic participation. Putnam (2000) echoes these findings. In *Bowling Alone*, Putnam argues that "religious institutions directly support a wide range of social activities well beyond conventional worship. . . . Churches provide an important incubator for civic skills, civic norms, community interests, and civic recruitment" (Putnam, 2000, p. 35). Clearly, religious institutions in the United States have played a key role in inculcating civic participation.

To understand whether mosques are simply vehicles of mobilization for Arab Muslims or whether they indirectly inculcate values and skills important for civic participation, it is imperative to decipher whether mosque participation relates to other forms of civic involvement. If mosques do not enhance other dimensions of civic engagement among Arab Muslims, such as participation in civic groups and associations, then it is fair to assume that the direct effect of mosque involvement on Arab political activity is a result of top-down mobilization strategies in which mosque congregants are merely implementing elite preferences within mosques. If, on the other hand, Arab mosque participation is also associated with an increase of civic engagement, then one can make the inference that mosques serve not only as direct avenues of mobilization but also as forums where participation enhances certain qualities important for civic activity among this subpopulation.

Furthermore, this line of inquiry also probes the extent to which mosques enhance levels of civic participation among African American and South Asian Muslims. Are their levels of civic participation increasing with mosque participation? Is the mosque generating civic

TABLE 3
Mosque Participation and Civic Participation Among Muslim Groups

| | Civic Activity | | | | | |
| | Arab Muslims | | African American Muslims | | Asian Muslims | |
Independent Variable	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Mosque involvement	0.272**	0.098	−0.021	.094	0.156***	.058
Education	−0.230	.091	0.081	.113	0.187***	.057
Foreign born	−0.106	.222	−0.620*	.347	−0.107	.225
Gender	−0.113	.213	0.037	.197	0.101	.151
Age	0.006	.007	0.007	.008	−0.005	.005
Marital status	−0.262	.192	0.251	.199	0.170	.173
Constant	0.874	.806	1.48**	.709	0.167	.593
N	70		46		130	
Adjusted R^2	.075		.008		.110	

NOTE: Please note that each equation was run on the individual indicators of political activity and that significance levels and effects remained consistent across equations. Coefficients are unstandardized ordinary least squares regression values.
*$p < .10$. **$p < .05$. ***$p < .001$.

but not political capital? To better assess these effects, I use two questions to construct the dependent variable on civic participation. The first asks whether the respondent is "involved in any organization to help the poor, sick, elderly, or homeless," and the second question asks about participation in "any neighborhood, civic or community group."

The findings in Table 3 indicate that mosque participation among Arabs and South Asians is highly associated with involvement in civic groups; however, mosque participation has no effect on African American Muslim levels of civic involvement. The only variable significant for this subgroup is being born in the United States as opposed to abroad. Education is important for levels of South Asian civic involvement and not for Arabs. In fact, the only significant variable for Arabs' civic participation is mosque involvement.

That South Asian and Arab mosque participation is directly linked to increases in civic involvement is significant for two different reasons. For Arabs, there appears to be a direct link between religious activity, civic involvement, and political activity. In South Asian Muslim communities, on the other hand, the link between mosque and political participation is nonexistent. South Asian mosques appear to

be tied to civic engagement and not political engagement. This finding
is noteworthy; in fact, it contradicts what one knows of the current
state of pan-Muslim political activity in the United States. Several of
the Muslim leaders heading pan-Muslim organizations in the United
States are headed by leaders of South Asian descent. Muslim organi-
zations advocate active engagement in the political process.[13] These
findings may imply that pan-Muslim groups have yet to effectively
mobilize local constituencies at the mosque level.

HYPOTHESIS 2: GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS, DISCRIMINATION, AND MOSQUE PARTICIPATION

Mosques serve as sites for the direct political mobilization of Arab
Muslims. Furthermore, mosques enhance civic involvement of both
South Asian and Arab Muslims. These findings contribute to our
understanding of the role mosques play in the United States. Thus
far, these findings show that mosques, similar to Black and Latino
churches, serve as important sites for increased political and civic
activity for various Muslim subpopulations.

Yet current scholarship has also argued that the underlying causal
mechanisms that give ethnic religious institutions their mobilization
strength and significance are psychological. Ethnic religious institu-
tions generate psychological effects that reinforce a sense of group
consciousness, mobilizing individuals around salient group issues.
Underlying this concept of group consciousness is an understanding
that the particular group is in a relatively disadvantaged position vis-à-
vis mainstream institutions. It does not suffice for individuals to iden-
tify with a particular group. Rather, group consciousness entails a
sense of relative group deprivation (Miller et al., 1981). To test
whether mosques, similar to politicized Black churches, instill group
consciousness that potentially motivates or stifles political activity, I
examine two proxy measures of group consciousness that gather
information both about Muslim attitudes regarding their relative
standing in the United States and about specific acts of discrimina-
tion against members of the Muslim community. The first question
gauges Muslims' sentiments about the ways in which mainstream
society treats their community: Please tell me which statement best re-
flects Americans' attitudes toward Muslims since the September 11

attacks.[14] The second question gathers more specific information about actual acts of discrimination against members of the Muslim community. It asks whether "any individuals, businesses, or religious organizations in your community experienced anti-Muslim discrimination since September 11?" I estimate two logit models to gauge whether mosque participation is related to experiences with real discrimination and a sense of unfair treatment that foster collective solidarity and group consciousness.[15] This hypothesis is primarily derived from Miller et al's (1981) argument that group consciousness

> involves the acceptance of the belief that fundamental differences exist between the interests of one's own group and those of the dominant group. Relations between the groups are thereby perceived as antagonistic and social barriers as illegitimate, resulting in a sense of relative deprivation and discontent with one's position in society. (p. 495; Operario & Fiske, 2001)

For Muslim Americans, especially after the backlash of September 11, it is logical to believe that group consciousness is predicated on real acts of discrimination and beliefs about unfair treatment. In other words, if mosques are indeed a mediating effect on group consciousness, then one would expect those who are more involved in the mosque to be more aware about unfriendly interactions with the mainstream society. Does consciousness about Muslim-targeted discrimination increase in mosques? And how might the relationship between mosque participation and collective identity differ among different Muslim groups?

As the findings in Tables 4a and 4b demonstrate, mosque participation is directly linked to acts of discrimination for Arab and African American Muslims, though not for South Asian Muslims. Arab and African American Muslims who attend the mosque more frequently are more likely to know of others who have been discriminated against since September 11. Furthermore, mosque attendance among Arab and African American Muslims is directly associated with perceptions that mainstream society is both disrespectful and intolerant of Muslims. This finding does not hold for South Asian Muslims. In fact, South Asian Muslims who frequent the mosque are more likely to believe that mainstream society is respectful and tolerant of Muslims.

TABLE 4A
Mosque Participation and Discrimination Among Muslim Groups

| | Discrimination | | | | | |
| | Arab Muslims | | African American Muslims | | Asian Muslims | |
Independent Variable	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Mosque involvement	0.460*[a]	0.0297	0.864**	0.394	0.226	0.198
Education	0.080	0.297	0.345	0.433	0.033	0.191
Foreign born	–0.675	0.715	–1.93	1.50	–0.696	0.783
Gender	0.206	0.666	0.025	0.791	–0.210	0.499
Age	0.006	0.007	0.041	0.032	–0.044**	0.021
Marital status	–0.527	0.628	–0.473	0.795	–0.453	0.562
Constant	1.39	2.51	–2.28	2.86	2.99	2.00
N	65		44		124	

NOTE: Please note that each equation was run on the individual indicators of political activity and that significance levels and effects remained consistent across equations. Logit models are used.
a. Please note significant at .110 level. If the subpopulation is only foreign-born Arabs, significance level rises to .09.
*$p < .10$. **$p < .05$.

TABLE 4B
Mosque Participation and Perceptions About Fair Treatment
Among Muslim Groups

| | Perceptions About Fair Treatment | | | | | |
| | Arab Muslims | | African American Muslims | | Asian Muslims | |
Independent Variable	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Mosque involvement	0.509*	0.351	0.815**	0.433	–0.377*	0.058
Education	0.038	0.301	–0.812*	0.452	0.351	0.263
Foreign born	–1.00	0.728	–0.137	1.33	0.214	0.802
Gender	–0.379	0.753	1.49*	0.862	0.666	0.559
Age	–0.027	0.338	–0.030	0.036	–0.001	0.022
Marital status	0.338	0.662	0.825	0.883	–0.565	0.655
Constant	2.82	2.76	2.31	2.78	–4.18**	2.27
N	68		46		125	

NOTE: Please note that each equation was run on the individual indicators of political activity and that significance levels and effects remained consistent across equations. Logit models were used.
*$p < .10$. **$p < .05$.

There are different stories to be told here. For Arabs, the mosque is highly associated with greater political activity, civic involvement, and group consciousness. The mosque serves as a multifunctional site. For African Americans, mosque involvement is not directly linked to either political participation or civic involvement, although there is a stronger sense of collective consciousness linked to mosque participation among this group. For Asian Muslims, mosque attendance is not directly linked to political activity. However, mosque activity is associated with higher levels of civic participation. Unlike the Arab and African American experience, Asians who frequent the mosque are not more likely to know someone who has been discriminated against and are more likely to believe that American society is respectful and tolerant. The mosque, therefore, is connected to levels of group consciousness among Arabs and African Americans but not among South Asians.

Why does such variation exist among the various mosque Muslim subpopulations in the United States? Direct ethnic group experiences in the United States play an important role in shaping the ways the mosque enhances political involvement. Institutions, such as mosques, become sites that reproduce an ethnic group's familiarity with mainstream society. Most Arab immigrants have come to the United States from countries that were and continue to be politically repressive and do not allow for the type of civic involvement that is available in the United States. On immigration, and especially after the events of the 1979 Iranian revolution, Arabs in the United States have actively participated in politics to address two overarching concerns. First, politically motivated Arabs seek to improve their popular image in the United States, which often portrays them as terrorists. As Suleiman (2000) says, "quite often the media announce the Arab or Islamic origin or affiliation of anyone accused of a terrorist act—even before they know whether the perpetrator is Arab or Muslim" (p. 16; Cainkar, 2003; Howell & Shryock, 2003; Samhan, 2000; Terry, 2000). Second, Arab Americans continue to attempt to influence U.S. foreign policy toward the Middle East, especially American policy on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Arab ethnic history, which can be traced from homeland politics in the Arab world to Arab experiences in the United States, has bolstered the importance of political activity for this group. Based on this Arab historical legacy and the process of eth-

nic construction of Arab American, the mosque has become a site that encourages and shapes active political and civic engagement.

The history of African American Muslims is quite different. Although mosqued African Americans have experienced discrimination, these same mosqued individuals are not as civically or politically active as their Arab or South Asian counterparts. Their mosque participation is not channeled to political ends. It appears that the discrimination they face has stifled political participation or served to marginalize African American Muslims from mainstream political activity. In fact, African American Muslims, by and large, have often remained skeptical of the political process in this country. As Leonard (2003) says, "they [African Americans] often hold ambivalent or antagonistic views toward the US government. . . . Because Islam is seen as a defense against racism many African American Muslims argue that *asabiyya* (group solidarity and experience) must be given priority" (p. 8; Allen, 1998; Dannin, 2002; McCloud, 1995). Bagby (2004; Bagby et al., 2001), in both of his novel studies on mosques in the United States, has found that African American Muslims were least supportive of political participation among the various Muslim groups.[16] However, he also found that African American Muslims strongly supported outreach activities that do not have immediate political agendas. Although the mosque is linked to greater political and civic engagement for Arab Muslims, this is not true for African American Muslims. The mosque, however, does relate to higher levels of group consciousness deemed important for collective identity among African American Muslims. These levels of group consciousness, however, do not appear to translate into political activity. Where politicized Black churches are important sites of African American political activity, mosques do not serve the same function for African American Muslims.

For South Asian Muslims, civic participation, but not political activity, is directly linked to mosque participation. Several factors might explain this finding. First, the South Asian Muslim ethnic experience in the United States has not been tied to foreign policy issues, and until September 11, discrimination was not a major issue confronting this community. South Asian Muslims, mostly foreign born in this sample, tend to be more concerned with their own internal community issues than larger mainstream political matters. Second, when

comparing South Asian patterns of political participation to Arab trends, one might plausibly argue that homeland political experience plays a key role in the levels of political activity in the United States. Although most Arabs come from oppressive regimes, where political participation is not possible, South Asian Muslims come from countries where they have a greater voice. Thus, political activity in the United States may not be as valued among South Asian Muslims as it is among Arab Muslims. Third, there is the possibility that these findings are only specific to this sample of South Asian Muslims in the New York area and not elsewhere in the United States. Further research is needed to further confirm or reject these possibilities.

CONCLUSION

Mosque participants are therefore situated in a unique and multi-functional locale that serves their inspirational, communal, and social needs. For Arab Muslims, mosques are directly linked to political activity, civic participation, and group consciousness. For African and Arab Americans, the mosque serves as a collectivizing forum that highlights Muslim common struggles in mainstream American society. Such common-fate attitudes and attachments unite these Muslim Americans. For South Asian Muslims, mosque participation enhances their civic participation but neither their levels of political engagement nor their levels of group consciousness.

APPENDIX

DATA CODING AND DISTRIBUTIONS

1. Political activity: index variable based on four questions:
   a. Have you ever called or written the media or politician on a given issue, or have you signed a petition?
   b. Have you ever attended a rally in support of a politician or cause?
   c. Would you consider yourself to be an active member of a political party?
   d. Have you ever given a contribution or volunteered your time or services to a political candidate?

Coding: 0 = *none*, 1 = *one activity*, 2 = *two activities*, 3 = *three activities*, and 4 = *four activities*.

Distribution

None	38.85%
One	28.66%
Two	14.65%
Three	12.42%
Four	5.14%
N	314

2. Education

Coding: 1 = *did not graduate from high school*, 2 = *high school graduate*, 3 = *some college*, and 4 = *college graduate*.

Distribution

Less than high school	7.46%
High school grad	22.09%
Some college	23.58%
College grad	46.87%
N	335

3. Gender

Coding: 1 = *male*, and 2 = *female*.

Distribution

Male	67.76%
Female	32.24%
N	335

4. Age: continuous variable
5. Marital status

Coding: 1 = *married*, 0 = *all else*.

Distribution

All else	32.84%
Married	67.16%
N	335

6. Mosque involvement: Excluding Salah (prayer) and Jumah prayer (Friday prayers), how involved are you in the activities at the mosque? Very involved, somewhat involved, somewhat not involved, or not involved at all.

Coding: 1 = *not involved at all*, 2 = *somewhat not involved*, 3 = *somewhat involved*, and 4 = *very involved*.

Distribution

Very involved	15.15%
Somewhat involved	25.76%
Somewhat not involved	27.58%
Not involved at all	31.52%
N	330

7. Discrimination: Have any individuals, businesses, or religious organizations in your community experienced anti-Muslim discrimination since September 11? A total of 49.2% responded in the affirmative.

Coding: 1 = *yes*, 0 = *no*.

8. Unfair treatment:

The response options are as follows: (a) In my experience, Americans have been tolerant and respectful of Muslims; (b) in my experience, Americans have been respectful and tolerant of Muslims, but American society overall is disrespectful and intolerant of Muslims; (c) in my experience, Americans have been disrespectful and intolerant of Muslims; and (d) in my experience, Americans have been disrespectful and intolerant of Muslims, but American society overall is respectful and tolerant of Muslims. To gauge the sense of relative standing Muslim Americans possess vis-à-vis mainstream society, I collapse the above categories along two dimensions. Responses that state, based on one's experience, that Americans have been respectful and tolerant receive a score of 0 (a and b above). And responses that state, based on one's experiences, that Americans have been disrespectful and intolerant of Muslims receive a score of 1 (c and d above).

Distribution

None	76.34%
One	23.66%
N	317

9. Civic activity: Index variable based on two questions

Are you involved in any organization to help the poor, sick, elderly, or homeless?
Are you involved in any neighborhood, civic, or community group?

Coding: 0 = *none*, 1 = *one organization*, and 2 = *two organizations*.

Distribution

None	23.33%
One	46.67%
Two	30.00%
N	330

10. Foreign born: Were you born in the United States?

Coding: 1 = yes, and 2 = *no* (29.85% were born in the United States, and 70.15% are foreign born)

NOTES

1. There are a few studies that have looked at mosques in America (Abraham, 2000; Bagby, 2004; Bagby, Perl, & Froekle, 2001; Jamal, in press).

2. There is much controversy over the exact number of the Muslim American population. The figure used in this article is the one that Muslim American groups use. These groups put their numbers at 5 to 7 million. Some argue that Muslim American groups bolster their numbers for electoral reasons. Because the census does not ask questions on religious identity, it is difficult to obtain a reliable estimate.

3. In 1980, the five boroughs contained only 8 or 9 mosques, a number that expanded, according to Marc Ferris, to about 37 in 1991. By 1994, there were more than 70 mosques; the number of mosques in New York City had doubled in 3 years (Dodds, 2002).

4. The African American community makes up 30% of the Muslim American population in the United States.

5. Although the mosque has not been historically organized congregationally like churches, it nevertheless relies on rather permanent memberships.

6. Qualitative data collected by the author and participant observation substantiate this finding.

7. Analysts of Arab and Muslim political mobilization in the United States have suggested that the Arab vote and the Muslim vote have historically cancelled one another. Election 2000 witnessed a more unified stance between the two groups.

The American Muslim Political Coordinating Council Political Action Committee included several national Muslim organizations, including CAIR, the former American Muslim Council, American Muslim Alliance, and Muslim Public Affairs Council. The American Muslim Political Coordinating Council endorsed President Bush (*American Muslim Pac Endorses George W. Bush*, 2004; Houston, 2001). Furthermore, a recent survey representative of the Detroit Arab American Community (DAAS) conducted by Wayne Baker, Ronald Stockton, Sally Howell, Amaney Jamal, Ann Chih Lin, Andrew Shryock, and Mark Tessler (DAAS) revealed that 74% of Arab Muslims voted for Bush in the Detroit metro area. The American Muslim Alliance reported that 72% of the Muslim American community voted for Bush in 2000 as well.

8. There is growing concern among the Muslim community, especially post–September 11, that American Muslims do not participate in U.S. politics because of the secular nature of the United States. The Muslim Fiqh Council issued an extensive Fatwah (Islamic legal edict) on the issue of participation in U.S. politics, basically stating that political participation in the United States was not only allowed but in fact a duty (*American Muslim Poll*, 2004; *Fatwa Bank*, 2004).

9. Please note that the Muslims in American Public Square survey is representative of Muslim communities that are in close proximity to established mosques. Although these findings may be representative of mosqued Muslim communities, it is difficult to assess their applicability to nonmosqued Muslim communities. Nonmosqued Muslim communities constitute anywhere between 65% and 70% of the total Muslim American population.

10. Other scholars have questioned the degree of information and knowledge required to simply vote (Dalton, 2000).

11. The question on mosque involvement is as follows: Excluding Salah (prayer) and Jumah prayer (Friday prayers), how involved are you in the activities at the mosque? Very involved, somewhat involved, somewhat not involved, or not involved at all?

12. The category *Asian Muslim* includes Afghanis, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, and Indians.

13. Organizations such as Islamic Society of North America, CAIR, American Muslim Alliance, and Islamic Circle of North America all have Asian Muslims in key leadership roles at both the national and local levels.

14. The response options are (a) in my experience, Americans have been tolerant and respectful of Muslim; (b) in my experience, Americans have been respectful and tolerant of Muslims, but American society overall is disrespectful and intolerant of Muslims; (c) in my experience, Americans have been disrespectful and intolerant of Muslims; and (d) in my experience, Americans have been disrespectful and intolerant of Muslims, but American society overall is respectful and tolerant of Muslims. To gauge the sense of relative standing Muslim Americans possess vis-à-vis mainstream society, I collapse the above categories along two dimensions. Responses that state, based on one's experience, that Americans have been respectful and tolerant receive a score of 0 (a and b above). And responses that state, based on one's experiences, that Americans have been disrespectful and intolerant of Muslims receive a score of 1 (c and d above).

15. Of those, 59.2% responded in the affirmative. Of those reporting yes, 40.21% reported verbal abuse, 13.76% reported physical assault, 3.70% reported destruction of property, 7.41% reported denial of employment, 3.70% reported the boycott of Arab or Muslim businesses, 10.58% reported racial profiling, 13.76% reported a combination of the above, and 6.88% reported "other."

16. Bagby (2004; Bagby et al., 2001) found that Arabs were the most politically active, which is also a finding supported by the data presented in this article.

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