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Turks and Other Muslims in the US: An Analysis of Perceptions

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Abstract

Surveys show that, in the United States, Americans have a less favorable view of Muslims due to various reasons as opposed to American Muslims who conversely favor the American state and population. In line with this fact, this study tries to understand whether the Turkish community living in the US has different views about Americans than American Muslims do. This study makes a comparison because not all ethnic groups in the American Muslim community have the same views about Americans. While analyzing the Turkish community's perceptions, this study also analyzes the views Americans and Muslim Americans have towards each other. The study compares previous surveys with the survey conducted among Turks living in the US and concludes that Muslims generally have the same perceptions regarding Americans. It also reveals that aside from the basic reasons which result in a negative view towards Muslims, being a small community and fragmented are two significant factors that damage the image of Muslims. In addition, it reveals that a lack of knowledge about each other increases negative perceptions.

Keywords: American Muslims, American Turks, Migration, Perceptions, Xenophobia

Introduction

The United States of America attracts foreigners from different ethnic and religious groups including Muslims since it is the most developed country with better living conditions and its political system. The US is a migrant nation and the American nation-state is still in the making. Yet, it is no secret that newcomers are less welcome, particularly by white supremacists, who believe that there is an American nation, and immigration threatens their young nation and culture. Perhaps, this is why the number of attacks perpetrated by right-wing extremists has increased in recent decades.[1] One group of victims is Muslims. Aside from being subject to xenophobic behavior from white supremacists, the September 11 attacks made Muslims living in America targets of extremist groups and changed perceptions of Americans against them. Thus, as per surveys, favorability of Muslims fell to the lowest levels in the post-9/11 period. However, it should be noted that some individuals and NGOs sponsored by certain groups inflamed Muslim hatred and eventually led to the rise of Islamophobia as well. Yet, despite exclusionary attitudes of marginal groups, the diverse American Muslim community tries to endure and adapt to Islamophobic behavior and uphold their love and loyalty to the US.

This study analyzes surveys conducted to measure views of American and migrant Muslims about non-Muslim Americans (hereafter Americans), and *vice versa*. Complementarily, it compares its survey carried out among Turks living in the US with general surveys conducted by research centers and Muslim NGOs. (1) Views of the Turkish community towards Americans, and (2) those of American Muslim community towards Americans are equally weighed. In this way, the bigger community and the smaller community are analyzed together to reveal important findings in terms of perceptions. In this regard, how much Americans favor the whole Muslim community is also examined.

By elucidating surveys, the goal of this study is to analyze the following hypotheses. First, Americans see Muslims, including conservative Turks (hereafter Turks interchangeably), as the other. Yet, although the majority of Americans have negative views about Muslims, the majority of the latter, including conservative Turks, favor America (ns). Second, this study argues that Muslims and Turks are disfavored by Americans because they are small in number and there is no unity among Muslims. Another reason for prejudices against Muslims and Turks is continuous smear campaigns of hate groups and negative media coverage. In other words, Americans are likely to favor American Muslims and Turks but the dissemination of Muslim hatred impedes it. Third, based on the analysis laid down below,

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[1] New America (2020), "Part IV. What is the Threat to the United States Today?" retrieved 10th October, 2020, https://www.newamerica.org/in-depth/terrorism-in-america/what-threat-united-states-today/.

this study argues that the more communities come into contact with each other, the more they like each other. Finally, the self-made survey shows that views of other Muslims and conservative Turks in America about the US are the same. This article aims to enrich the literature about Muslims in America with new and overlooked reasoning behind perceptions such as deep divisions among Muslim migrants and the difficulty of promoting a positive image due to being a small community in the US. The article also argues that despite disunity among Muslim Americans, there seems to be unity in their perceptions towards Americans and the American state.

Method

Methodologically, reports and surveys conducted by Pew Research Center, Gallup, American Muslim Institution (AMI), the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU), and The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) were examined and used for comparison with this study's survey. Regarding the self-conducted survey, a 25-question poll was prepared with multiple-choice, short, and long answers. The poll was sent to 1100 Turks living in the US via the internet and answers were gathered over a four month period. People with friends in the US also assisted in finding respondents. Questions asked were similar to those of prominent research institutions. Respondents were either Turkish origin American citizens or Turks temporarily residing in the US. Answers to the poll's questions reveal that participants were mostly conservative with 78% of them defining themselves as such. Therefore, the results may not represent the general view of all Turkish migrants. As a result, this study calls respondents as conservative Turks.

Muslims and Turks in America

The first Muslims to arrive in America were slaves from Africa, particularly from today's Mali. There are various estimations about the size of the community but all research shows that there numbers ranged between 10% and 30% of the total slave population.[2] While some of them continued to practice Islam secretly, they could not maintain and pass it to their grandchildren. Thus, their faith, culture, and language waned throughout the course of time. From the late 19th century onwards, a second wave of migration arrived in the US, which included some Muslims along with Christian citizens of the Ottoman Empire who immigrated due to labor opportunities. However, due to interfaith marriages and a lack of Islam[3] compliant conditions many lost their religious identity. With the end of the Second World War, thanks to developments in communication and transportation, more Muslims began to immigrate to the US for academic and labor purposes. In addition, the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 led to more Muslims moving to America. Simultaneously, a revival of Islam among Afro-Americans, causing more black people to convert to Islam, was witnessed from the 1960s onwards.[4] Today, African-Americans constitute 28% of the American Muslim population while whites make up 38%, Asians 28%, Latinos 4% and others 3%[5] of the religion's followers.

As for the Turkish community, Karpat says the first Turks immigrated to America from 1860 onwards.[6] They emigrated together with other ethnic and religious groups from different parts of the Ottoman Empire. The basic reason for Turkish immigration was the poor economic condition of the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, Christian subjects left their hometowns after military service became compulsory to them.[7] It is estimated that more than 300.000 Ottoman citizens, 5% of whom were Turks, immigrated to America between 1820 and 1930.[8] The majority of them were men and illiterate. However, 85% of Turkish migrants returned between 1899 and 1924 due to being homesick and feeling alone in the US[9] due to living single. In the following decades, while 1.065 Turks immigrated to the US

[2] Craig Considine (2018), *Muslims in America: Examining the Facts*, Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, p. 1.
[3] Ali Akbar Alikhani and Ali Asghar Gharedaghi (2017), "Muslims in America: Identity Dilemma and the Islamic Fundamentals of Coexistence," *Journal of Islamic Studies and Culture*, Vol. 5, No. 2, p. 14.
[4] Interfaith Alliance (2017), "American Muslims in the United States," retrieved 12th November, 2020, https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/publications/what-is-the-truth-about-american-muslims/american-muslims-in-the-united.
[5] Pew Forum (2014a), "How the U.S. general public views Muslims and Islam," retrieved 15th November, 2020, https://www.pewforum.org/2017/07/26/how-the-u-s-general-public-views-muslims-and-islam/.
[6] Kemal Karpat (1985), "The Ottoman Emigration to America, 1860-1914," *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* Vol.17, No. 2.
[7] Veysi Akın (2004), "Amerika'da İlk Türk Lobisi: Türk Teavün Cemiyeti/Turkish Welfare Association," *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi,* Vol. 20, No. 59, p. 465.
[8] *Ibid*., p. 467.
[9] Talat S. Halman (1997), "Amerika Türkleri," *Yeni Türkiye*, Vol. 12, No.16, p. 2133.

between 1931 and 1940, only 798 migrants headed to America between 1941 and 1950.[10] Thus, there were very few Turkish people for a long time in the US. Turks were rarely seen in US streets even when the two countries became allies after the Second World War. We begin to see highly qualified Turks, numbering around 3.000, move to America after the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 was passed. Turks were generally reluctant to immigrate to the US with the main reasons being distance and the high cost of transportation. Secondly, there were no friends to help newcomers with finding a job or communal life to help adapt to culture shock. In other words, they did not want to go to a country that was culturally different from Turkey. In fact, there was mass immigration from Turkey to Europe in the second half of the 20th century. Many people went to European countries as workers on the invitation of destination countries. Turkish people were again unfamiliar with the Judeo-Christian European culture but they could adapt Europe as there were hundreds of thousands of expatriates. Travel to Europe was easier and cheaper due to multiple forms of transportation like a bus, train or plane, which was not possible for America except for a few richer Turks. Therefore, Turks had to wait for cheaper and direct transportation and an income to afford to go to America to study or work there.

On the other hand, how many Turks live in America is still an unclear issue. According to the US Census Bureau, there are between 136.000 and 182.000 Turks as per the survey, which was made with those saying that they are Turkish in origin. Yet, Turkish NGOs located in the US claim that the Turkish population is approximately 500.000.[11] On the other hand, we know that 90.000 Turks were eligible to vote for Turkey's elections held in 2015. Supposing that some of this electorate have children, the number should be at least 200.000 as of 2020. On the other hand, the Turkish Foreign Ministry says that 300.000 Turks live in the US, which is a more rational number. Such uncertainty surrounds the number of the total Muslim population in America as well. According to Pew Research Center, there were 2.35 million Muslims in 2007, 2.75 million in 2011, and 3.45 million or 1% of the American population in 2017.[12] As per Pew's estimation, the American Muslim population is projected to be 8.1 million in 2050, exceeding the Jewish population and making Islam the second-most popular religion in the US. Yet, Afridi says in his article dated 2001 that between 5 to 8 million Muslims live in the US.[13] Indeed, the numbers found via surveys do not seem realistic. As mentioned above, if there are 300.000 Turks in the US, which is double of US Census Bureau's number, then the total Muslim population must be higher, for example, as much as 10 million. However, since the total number is just a little matter of discussion in this study, Pew's data will be a reference.

As for some statistics about Muslims in America, according to Pew Forum, 65% of them are men while 35% are women. 64% are immigrants, 17% are second generation, and 18% are the third generation. 34% earn less than $30.000, 17% earn between $30.000 and $49.999, 29% earn between $50.000 and $99.999, and 20% earn $100.000 or more.[14] On the other hand, 36% of Muslims have a high school or less education, 25% finished some college, 23% are college graduate and 17% hold a post-graduate degree. While 1% are atheists and 3% are confused about believing in God, 96% certainly believe in God. In addition, 64% say religion is important in their lives and 24% say it is somewhat important. The rest do not mind religion. Regarding party affiliations, 17% lean Republicans, 62% lean Democrats, and 21% say they do not lean on any party. Finally, 22% define themselves as conservative, 39% moderate, 33% liberal and 6% have no political ideology.

Regarding Turks, according to a survey conducted by Sakarya University, 48% of Turks living in America are white-collar employees.[15] The survey argues that there are 552.299 Turks but this number contradicts the data of the Turkish Foreign Ministry. In addition, the study found out that 70% of the Turkish population are men, 50% are university graduates and 4% hold a postgraduate degree. Finally, 45% plan to return to Turkey, 39% want to stay in the US and 16% are undecided about their future plans for residence. As another fact concerning all Muslims, there more than 2100 mosques, up from

[10] Milliyet (2014), "Eğitimli, Zengin Ve Yalnız Jenerasyon," retrieved 7th December, 2020, https://www.milliyet.com.tr/gundem/egitimli-zengin-ve-yalniz-jenerasyon-1849651.

[11] Can Kamiloğlu (2016), "Amerika'da Kaç Türk Var?" *Amerika'nın Sesi*, retrieved 15th December 2020, https://www.amerikaninsesi.com/a/amerika-da-kac-turk-var/3165175.html.

[12] Pew Research Center (2018), "New Estimates Show U.S. Muslim Population Continues to Grow," retrieved 3rd November, 2020. Available at: https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/01/03/new-estimates-show-u-s-muslim-population-continues-to-grow/.

[13] Sam Afridi (2001), *Muslims in America: Identity, Diversity, and the Challenge of Understanding*, New York: Carnegie Corp, p. 1.

[14] Pew Forum (2014b), "Muslims," retrieved 13th October, 2020, https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/religious-tradition/muslim/.

[15] Sesam (2019), "Sesam, Amerika'daki Türk İşçileri Araştırdı," retrieved 15th December, 2020, http://sesam.sakarya.edu.tr/tr/duyuru/goster/87950/sesam-amerika-daki-turk-iscileri-arastirdi.

962 in 1994.[16] A 115 of these mosques were attacked in 2017, up from 11 in 2009 due to the rising white supremacism.

American Muslims, American Conservative Turks and Americans: How Much Do They Favor Each Other?

Research centers regularly conduct surveys to measure the pulse of people against each other. Such works are important because they guide policymakers on how to ensure social solidarity, unity, and order. Surveys are especially significant for the US since it was founded by migrants, and thus multiculturalism is at the center of American society. Among all small groups, Muslims are one of the communities that suffer the most from xenophobia due to their faith being associated with terrorist attacks against the American state and people incurred from the 1990s onward. While Al-Qaeda was attacking US bases abroad until 2001, on September 11, 2001, it hit Americans on their own soil, killing more than 3.000 people. The US administration managed to take revenge against Al-Qaeda but the traumatic memories of the 9/11 attacks still exist among Americans today. The media coverage and narratives created around terrorist attacks have resulted in a negative shift in the way Americans' perceive Muslim Americans as Islam and Muslims have consciously and subconsciously become linked to the word terrorism. In addition to the negative perception created by these attacks, Muslims have paid a tangible price as well. Right after September 11, 2001, the FBI reported a 1700% increase in hate crimes against Muslim Americans within the first year.[17] The increase in attacks was not a one-off phenomenon either as they have sustained higher numbers since then. For example, more than 500 attacks on Muslims were identified by Islamophobia watchdogs in the first five months of 2019.[18]

Surveys give us a glimpse into how Americans perceive Muslims. According to a poll carried out by Gallup in 2011, 40% of Americans said Muslims are respected while 52% said the opposite.[19] The same survey shows that Europeans do not agree with Americans as only 28% of Italians, 30% of the French, 34% of Germans, and 38% of the British said Muslims are not respected. It can be inferred from Gallup's survey that Americans are more concerned about the well-being of Muslims than Europeans. It is an interesting finding because the mentioned countries have a larger ratio of Muslims. Gallup also asked Muslims in different countries whether they are discriminated against in a survey held in 2010. According to results, 48% of Muslims said they experienced religious discrimination, followed by Mormons (31%), those with no religion (25%), Jews (21%), Catholics (20%), and Protestants (18%). While it is interesting to see that almost all religious groups face discrimination, the percentage of Muslims is quite high. Another survey conducted by Pew Research Center indicates that the number of Muslims declaring that they were discriminated against rose to 57% in 2019.[20] Jews complaining about discrimination also rose to 24%. Conversely, Evangelical Christians' complaints about discrimination are approximately 20% in almost all surveys. Logically, those with less discrimination can be accepted as discriminators, thus it can be contended that white supremacists and close ideologies like Evangelism have negative views of Muslims. Indeed, White Evangelicals are on the top of the Islamophobia list with 35%, followed by Protestants (29%), Catholics (27%), Jews (18%), and Muslims (14%).[21] Therefore, data suggests that Jews are the religious group that are least likely to discriminate against Muslims. What is strange is that some 14% of Muslims are Islamophobic as well. It is possible that this percentage consists of secular Muslims as they generally distance themselves from Islam. Political affiliation also seems to play a role in the shaping of views towards Muslims, Pew's survey reveals that only 34% of Republicans accept that there might be discrimination against Muslims. 30% of the same group also believe that it is Evangelical Christians that are discriminated against. While 75% of Democrats think that Muslims incur discrimination (Pew Research Center, 2019a). Another survey

[16] Leila Fadel (2018), "How Muslims, Often Misunderstood, Are Thriving in America," *National Geographic*, retrieved 16th October, 2020, https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2018/05/being-muslim-in-america/.
[17] Musarrat Khan and Kathryn Ecklund (2012), "Attitudes toward Muslim Americans Post-9/11," *Journal of Muslim Mental Health*, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 1.
[18] Kelly Weill (2019), "More Than 500 Attacks on Muslims in America This Year," *The Daily Beast*, retrieved 17th December, https://www.thedailybeast.com/more-than-500-attacks-on-muslims-in-america-this-year.
[19] Gallup (2011), "Islamophobia: Understanding Anti-Muslim Sentiment in the West," retrieved 23rd November, 2020, https://news.gallup.com/poll/157082/islamophobia-understanding-anti-muslim-sentiment-west.aspx.
[20] Pew Research Center (2019a), "In the U.S. and Western Europe, people say they accept Muslims, but opinions are divided on Islam," retrieved 12th December, 2020, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/10/08/in-the-u-s-and-western-europe-people-say-they-accept-muslims-but-opinions-are-divided-on-islam/.
[21] ISPU (2019), "American Muslim Poll 2019," retrieved 17th November, 2020, https://www.ispu.org/public-policy/american-muslim-poll/.

conducted by the American Muslim Institution also confirms that 71% of Americans believe that there is a lot of discrimination against Muslim Americans.[22]

Regarding this study's survey analyzing Turks' views about Americans, 72.7% of respondents said they feel discriminated against. This result is very close to the results of the above mentioned large scale surveys. The survey also asked Turkish respondents, who identify as conservative, to explain what kind of discrimination they face. A few of them said they experience communal and legal discrimination but did not answer in detail. Some others said all foreigners are treated unequally in the US while the majority of respondents said Americans generally fear Muslims. One participant said "People that meet you for the first time will always approach with suspicion and keep a distance once they hear my name and realize it is a Muslim name. I will be judged to a different standard." Another added that "When people hear your name their behaviors automatically change. It was awkward to take a break to fulfill prayer obligations, it was particularly not possible to pray at school. Thus, I delayed my prayers and did them at home in the evening." In addition, a respondent said "People were observing whether I was fasting during Ramadan." A final example can be from a Turk who said "The people I grew up around outside of the Muslim community were not fond of Muslims at all." Overall, all polls show that American Muslims, including Turks, complain about discrimination.

Surveys also show that the majority of white Anglo-Saxon Christians who support the Republican Party and have a lower level of education have negative views towards Muslims. Most of them think that Muslims are not loyal to the US. According to Pew Research Center, 41% of all US adults believe that Islam encourages violence more than other faiths. This ratio is 63% for Republicans as well as white evangelicals, and 26% for Democrats. On the other hand, only 20% of White Evangelicals favor Muslims in another survey. In addition, AMI's survey reveals that "71% of self-described Republicans agreed they do not believe Islam is compatible with American values, compared to an average of 42%."[23] Moreover, a Gallup survey conducted in 2011 shows that 61% of Americans believe that Muslims are not loyal to the US.[24] There were similar answers to this study's survey, too. For example, 60% of respondents said they had more loyalty to their home county rather than the US. However, Turks' loyalty seems to stem from their immigrant status as many plan to return to Turkey sooner or later. When they were asked whether they are planning to return to Turkey, 40% said Yes, 50% said Maybe and 10% said No (Those saying they want to return is 45% in Sesam's survey). Thus, it can be contended that Turks live in America temporarily until they earn enough money or get old. How many respondents were the second or the third generation is not clear but young people would probably say they will stay in America permanently. On the other hand, Turks surveyed are not hostile to the US as per the answer to a question. When asked about their views of the US, 70% said they favor America while the rest confessed their dislike for the country. The self-made survey also asked how respondents identified those who attacked Muslims. There were two answers; white supremacists with 72,7% and Jews with 27,3%. This result is also compatible with the results of other surveys, which found that more than 60% of white supremacists do not favor Muslims (see above). On the other hand, the percentage of Americans that do not favor Muslims is the same as that of Muslims that favor America (ns), which is 70%.

Regarding who favors Muslims and why, politically, survey results suggest there is visibly more tolerance from Democrats towards Muslims as this party is more accepting of multiculturalism and its electorate consists of various groups, some of which complaining report discrimination. On the other hand, Republicans are generally suspicious of Muslims as American nationalists, particularly white supremacists, and extremist religious groups generally identify with this party. Regarding religious groups, Jews are the most favorable group towards Muslims. ISPU reported that 53% of American Jews favor Muslims, followed by 39% of Catholics.[25] On the other hand, Jews' favorability among Muslims is 45%. In addition, ethnically, Hispanic Americans are less Islamophobic than other groups. They are also the most favorable ethnic group with a 51% ratio. These results show that discriminated communities show solidarity with each other as they encounter the same apartheid behaviors. Our survey also asked similar questions to learn views of conservative Turks against other ethnic and

[22] AMI (2018), "What Americans Really Think," retrieved 18th November 2020, https://www.americanmusliminstitution.org/what-americans-really-think/.
[23] *Ibid*.
[24] Gallup, "Islamophobia: Understanding Anti-Muslim Sentiment in the West."
[25] ISPU, "American Muslim Poll 2019."

religious groups. For example, 55% of respondents said that they favor Jews, while 25% had neutral views and 20% had a negative opinion of them. However, when their views about Israel were questioned, only 18% said they had positive feelings while 73% declared that they do not like Israel. The survey reveals that Turkish conservatives differentiate between Jews and Israel. In addition, participants said that white supremacists (73%) insult Muslims more than any other religious, ethnic or ideological group while 27% said Jews insult them more. The survey also asked for whom they voted in the 2016 elections. 62.5% of respondents said they voted for Trump, an interesting result since Trump is close to white supremacists. However, one factor might be that both Obama and his successor candidate Clinton supported the Kurdish YPG group, which Turkey accepts as a terrorist group, in Syria, thus Turkish people probably got affected by Democrats' foreign policy. Therefore, it can be contended that if an American leader or party develops policies that harm the interests of migrants' home country, the latter forget about their leanings and act in favor of their home country's interests. This seems to be the case for conservative Turks in the 2016 US elections.

Factors Triggering Prejudices

The US is praised for being a free country and respecting basic human rights. Indeed, it is a free country according to many surveys such as that of Freedom House, which gave the US a score of 86 out of 100 points. In addition, it is attractive to immigrants even today. After stepping on US lands, a newcomer can be a citizen five years later, a congressman seven years later and a senator nine years later. An immigrant can easily find a job and achieve better standards than his/her home country. This is why immigrants rarely complain about the economic conditions of the US. One group of people heading to the US for a better life is Muslims. Since most Muslim countries are poor and ruled by authoritarian regimes, disadvantaged people escape from both oppression and poverty, and travel to developed countries, including the US. In addition, Muslim youth prefer to study in America as it has better universities than any other country. Certainly, those studying in the US can find a better job when they are back home. Therefore, the US and many other countries will continue to lure Muslims with opportunities and soft power.

However, not all Americans are happy with seeing more Muslims in their country. Prejudice against migrants is a global issue, and Americans, while generally more tolerant, do have xenophobic tendencies. Surveys show that 34% percent of Americans see migrants as a burden in the US, which has a 44.5 million foreign-born population.[26] Multiple surveys show that this viewpoint ranges between 30% and 40% since 2001. What is concerning is the fact that despite Americans being more tolerant of migrants, there has been an increase in violent attacks. On the other hand, since Muslims are not a constituent but mainly a migrant group, they are generally viewed as foreigners versus other migrant groups, who have adapted and assimilated. Americans oppose migration because, due to globalization, the income of US citizens is lessening though the unemployment rate is stable. According to Umbrasas, who based his claim on some statistics, a non-college American worker loses $1.800 annually due to global trade.[27] This suggests that Muslim immigrants, including Turks, tend to generate income at a cost to Americans with lower education, thereby this general problem causes a rise in Muslim disfavor.

Second, adhering to Islam might be the basic specific factor for the estrangement of Muslims. Native Americans are Christians with various denominations. Among all Christian groups, Evangelical Christians are very close to Jews and support Israel, as Israel plays a significant role in their religious belief that Armageddon will allegedly take place and Jesus Christ will be resurrected. On the contrary, Israel is seen as an occupier in Palestine by majority of Muslims (and as per UN resolutions), thus Evangelists are mostly hostile to Muslim migrants' faith. Since conservative Turks side with Palestinians against Israel, they will naturally not be a community to be favored by Evangelical Christians, either. As our survey shows, more than 70% of conservative Turks have negative views about Israel and Evangelical Christians. Therefore, negative opinions are reciprocated. Our survey asked the participants to explain their opinions about Evangelists. One of them said "They shape the US government's policies against Muslims." Another one added that "I do not view Evangelists as a significant threat to Muslims. My main concern with Evangelists is their Israel policies." Another participant also said;

[26] Pew Research Center (2019b), "Around the World, More Say Immigrants are a Strength than a Burden," retrieved 23th December, 2020, https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/03/14/around-the-world-more-say-immigrants-are-a-strength-than-a-burden/.
[27] Karl Umbrasas (2017), "Psychopolitics of the Current Nationalism," *Journal of Strategic Security,* Vol. 10, No. 4, p. 35.

> They are pro-Israel because their beliefs are linked to the beliefs of Zionists. Their religious worldviews are complementary in the sense that one wants Jesus to return and the other wants to rebuild Solomon's temple and Jesus cannot return until the temple is built. So they have got to help each other to make sure they get on Jesus' good side when he decides who he takes to heaven with him. And that is why they are destroying the world to protect Israel and rebuild the temple and bring back Jesus and the end of the world. They are real religious fanatics. Unfortunately, that is reality.

Many others complained about their support to Israel, too.

In addition, Al-Qaeda, once a proxy of the US, split with the US army and began to attack US soldiers, bases, and diplomatic missions from 1992 onwards and crowned its terrorism on September 11, 2001. The more Al-Qaeda attacked, the more views of Americans deteriorated against Muslims. When the US invaded Afghanistan and Iraq as a response to Al-Qaeda's attacks, hundreds of thousands of civilians were killed, terrorism surged, and the invaded states failed. Not only Afghans and Iraqis but the majority of Muslims across the world called America an enemy of Muslims. Besides invasions, US support to authoritarian regimes in the Muslim world increased anti-American sentiment. In other words, the US involvement in some Muslim countries' politics to further Washington's foreign interests was not welcomed by local people.[28]

Being sensitive about US interventions, the majority of Turks, particularly conservative ones, also expressed a negative opinion towards US foreign policies. However, both Muslim migrants and conservative Turkish migrants differentiate between the US government and Americans. As mentioned above, more than 70% of conservative Turks favor the US. It should be noted that only 20% of Turks living in Turkey favor the US.[29] Regarding American Muslims in general, 97% of them say they are proud to be Muslim and 92% say they are proud to be American.[30] Thus, they like American state though Americans have the least warm feelings toward Muslims.[31]

A third reason, which we have learned from surveys, is that not knowing any Muslims makes Americans colder to the former. Only 46% of Americans say they know a Muslim, a ratio lower than many European countries.[32] Among them, 76% of Jews say they know a Muslim, while only 35% of White Evangelicals declared that they do.[33] Knowing each other is important because ISPU's research indicates that those with a close Muslim friend score far lower on the Islamophobia Index and their favorability of Muslims doubles. As a proverb says, man is the enemy of what he does not know. This is the case for Americans who have less Muslim friends as well. Whereas, knowing a Muslim enables Americans to learn what Muslims think, their views about America, politics, foreigners, etc. Since this is not the case for more than half of Americans, they accept what others say and how the media depicts Muslims. However, it should be noted that it is hardly possible to know Muslims in America, where they constitute only 1% of the population. This study argues that being a small community is perhaps one of the biggest handicaps for Muslims in America. If you are small in number, you will be small in power, promotion, defending your rights, and so on. In addition, the likelihood of an American to meet a Muslim in the street, at work, or on TV is quite low. Therefore, it can be contended that one reason for the cold views of Americans stems from the number of Muslims.

In addition, as a fourth factor, Muslims are a disunited community, thereby they cannot act collectively to defend their rights. In terms of NGOs, there were very few associations bringing together Muslims until the 1960s except for those founded by indigenous Muslim groups like the Nation of Islam (NOI), established in the 1930s. According to Suleiman, the first non-indigenous NGO was the Muslim

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[28] Mustafa Atatorun (2020), "Uluslararası Etik Teorilerin Açmazları: Rasyonalite, Kimlik ve Evrenselleştirilebilirlik," *Alternatif Politika*, Vol. 12, No. 3, p. 491.

[29] BBC World Service (2017), "Sharp Drop in World Views of US, UK: Global Poll," retrieved 17th December, 2020, https://globescan.com/images/images/pressreleases/bbc2017_country_ratings/BBC2017_Country_Ratings_Poll.pdf.

[30] Pew Forum (2018), "Video: Being Muslim in the U.S.," retrieved 15th December, 2020, ttps://www.pewforum.org/2018/04/17/video-being-muslim-in-the-u-s/.

[31] Pew Forum (2017), "How the U.S. general public views Muslims and Islam," retrieved 19th November, 2020, https://www.pewforum.org/2017/07/26/how-the-u-s-general-public-views-muslims-and-islam/.

[32] Pew Research Center (2019a), "In the U.S. and Western Europe, people say they accept Muslims, but opinions are divided on Islam".

[33] ISPU, "American Muslim Poll 2019."

Students Association (MSA), founded in 1963.[34] The number of Muslim NGOs increased as more Muslims immigrated to the US. However, despite lots of NGOs, their effectiveness is questionable as Muslims often tend to stay away from each other. The first split begins with sects. Sunnis and Shias have separate mosques even in Muslim countries. In addition, there are various groups in the Sunni sect. For example, a Wahhabi Saudi will distance himself from a Turk, and vice versa. On the other hand, Turks, Pakistanis, Arabs, Malays, etc. have their own mosques and NGOs, and communication between them is rare. What is more, secular Muslims have their own NGOs and distance themselves from conservative ones. Disunity is indeed an undeniable fact for American Muslims. Respondents of our survey also revealed this fact when I asked them what is the biggest problem facing American Muslims. All of them said Muslims are disunited both in America and the world. Regarding respondents' views about the whole Muslim world, they gave reasons such as; nationalism; shortage of strong Muslim leaders; lack of a powerful centralized authority uniting Muslims; illiteracy; authoritarian regimes; not obeying the Qur'an; and corrupt politicians. Regarding Muslims in America, they pointed out sectarianism, too many Muslim communities, divided ideas about Islam, focusing on winning daily bread, and lack of Muslim media.

While the above four factors are organic, there are artificial reasons as well. One of them is hate groups that continuously insult Muslims and share only negative posts about the Islamic world. According to investigations, these individuals and NGOs are funded by certain groups with hundreds of millions of US dollars. The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) prepares reports about Islamophobia and publishes them at *islamophobia.org*. According to Islamophobia Report published at the website, 1096 organizations funded 39 hate groups in the Islamophobia network between 2014 and 2016 with a $1.5 billion donation.[35] Anti-Muslim individuals and groups have only one job; demonizing Islam and Muslims. This study randomly chose Pamela Geller, who earns $821.000 from hate posts annually, as an individual and MEMRI, which gets millions of US dollars from various donors, as an organization for investigation. When one goes through gellerreport.com, he/she can easily see anti-Muslim news with headlines such as; '*In Pakistan, Another Case Of An Unclean Kaffir*', '*Germany: Muslim Migrant Screaming "Allahu Akbar" Kicks 76-Year-Old Man To Death'*, '*Report: Detroit Muslim FGM-Doctor Mutilated Girls Far Worse Than She Admits*', '*Omar Funnels Another $300,000 Campaign Funds To Her Husband's Firm (—-> Herself)*', and '*Watch: Muslim Migrants riot, set fires, attack police on Greek Orthodox Holy Saturday*.'[36] There is no single neutral or pro-Muslim news in Geller's web portal. All news is negative, insulting, and hostile to Muslims. If a non-Muslim American reads them, he/she will probably hate Muslims. Regarding Memri, its website is no different than that of Pamela Geller. Such headlines are from Memri's website; '*British Jihadi, One Of EU's Most Wanted ISIS Fighters, Arrested In Spain This Week*', '*Jihad and Terrorism Threat Monitor (JTTM) Weekend Summary: Week Of April 18-25, 2020*', '*Abdel Bari Atwan: Coronavirus Will Bring the End of the U.S. Empire; Let China Rise'*, and '*Moroccan Writer: The Jewish Holocaust Is An Undisputable Fact.*'[37] These negative news and similar ones can be found at *memri.org*. The participants of our survey also complained about the hate spread by certain people and organizations.

In addition, surveys, including ours, complain about the media's biased posts against Muslims. All surveys checked for this study show that news coverage of Muslims in the US is far more negative than other groups. For example, Media Portrayals of Minorities Project analyzed US newspapers in 2018 and saw that the majority of news regarding Muslims is negative. Besides American Muslims, they also published negative news about Muslims in other locations.[38] In addition, according to Media Tenor, 80% of Muslim coverage of US media between 2007 and 2013 was negative.[39] Also, Washington Post collected 800.000 articles published between 1996 and 2016 and saw that 78% of them have negative

[34] Michael W. Suleiman (1999), "Islam, Muslims, and Arabs in America: The Other of the Other of the Other…," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 19, No. 1, p. 42.
[35] Islamophobia (2020), "Islamophobia Report 2019," retrieved 19th December, 2020, http://www.islamophobia.org/images/IslamophobiaReport2019/CAIR_Islamophobia_Report_2019_Final_Web.pdf.
[36] Geller Report (2020), "Main Page," retrieved 20th December, 2020, https://gellerreport.com.
[37] Memri (2020), "Main Page," retrieved 20th December, 2020, https://www.memri.org/.
[38] Media Portrayals of Minorities Project (2019). Report on Media Portrayals: 2018 Newspaper Coverage of African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, Jews, and Muslims, retrieved 19th December, 2020, https://www.mediaandminorities.org/assets/media-contributions/AnnualReport2018.pdf.
[39] Media Tenor (2013), "US TV Primetime News Prefer Stereotypes: Muslims Framed Mostly as Criminals," retrieved 25th December, 2020, http://us.mediatenor.com/en/library/speeches/259/us-tv-primetimenews-prefer-stereotypes.

content about Muslims[40] (Washington Post, 2018). More research was analyzed for this study but there is no need to cite all of them as percentages are the same. In other words, US media has a tendency to publish negative articles about Muslims, which negatively affect perceptions of Americans. This suggests that media plays an important role in shaping anti-Muslim views instead of repairing fractures. Regarding our survey, I asked people to comment on how the media changed the American public's opinion against Muslims. A few comments are as follow; "Media designate Muslims as enemies of American people"; "The media does not understand Islam and are afraid of it. There is constant fear-mongering in the US media and negative bias towards Muslims, trying to equate the religion to terrorism"; "Media is owned by anti-Muslim small groups"; "Right-wing media such as Fox TV is toxic towards Muslims"; "They demonize Muslims"; "Media controls what people know about Muslims in America and because Muslims are not organized enough, they cannot effectively influence the way media portrays Muslims and Islam"; "They diminish the achievements of Muslims." Based on surveys, it can be concluded that US media's biased coverage demonizes Muslims and influences the perception of Americans in a negative manner. If the media balanced its coverage, favorability of Muslims would probably be higher.

Conclusion

This article has analyzed views of Turks living in the US about American society. It also examined how American Muslims and Americans generally view each other by analyzing previous survey data. It conducted a survey among Turks living in America and compared it with other surveys measuring the views of American Muslims towards Americans, and *vice versa*. Since respondents in the self-made survey were conservative as per their answers, this research named participants as conservative Turks. The study aimed to understand whether a small Muslim group like Turks has different views than the main group. The comparison has shown that conservative Turks in America generally think the same as other Muslim groups about Americans. In addition, our research has concluded that while there are factors like media and hate groups that increase anti-Muslim sentiment, there are also reasons like Muslims being a small community, disunited, and having low income. Moreover, the study has revealed that unlike the Turks from Turkey, the Turks of America favor the US. This difference exists between Muslims living in Muslim countries and American Muslims, too. Based on this fact, this study argues that close relations between two communities decrease negative sentiment.

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