

Understanding Muslim Political Life in America: Contested Citizenship in the Twenty-First Century. Edited by

Brian R. Calfano and Nazita Lajevardi. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2019. 248p. \$109.50 cloth, \$34.95 paper.

doi:10.1017/S153759272000211X

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This volume serves as a much-needed platform for a series of important topics that speak to the social and political realities of American Muslims in the twenty-first century. Its collection of studies places it squarely at the intersection of the race, ethnicity, and politics (REP) and the religion and politics literatures. Both subfields have developed innovative ways to explore puzzles related to identity politics, social discrimination, government profiling, community/police relations, and methodology. But few, if any, existing books provide the breadth of coverage and inter-subfield perspectives fostered by this collaborative effort produced by a diverse set of scholars.

In the introductory chapter, editors Brian Calfano and Nazita Lajevardi provide a comprehensive overview of social science research on Muslim Americans, drawing attention to a number of important insights that can be gleaned from existing studies. While cognizant of the myriad challenges that scholars have encountered in attempting to answer some of the most urgent questions about the democratic inclusion and exclusion of Muslims, Calfano and Lajevardi highlight at least two central problems that the book aims to address: much of what researchers report about Muslim Americans and their intersection with political life may be limited by the nature of the data collected and the sensitivity of the topics broached. On the first of these points, they make a clear pitch for the need to incorporate randomized experiments in opinion and behavior studies of and about Muslims.

The second point is related, in that self-reported levels of political engagement and even expressed views about policy and identity may be the product of various social desirability manifestations. Perhaps more crucially, heightened anxiety stemming from a post-9/11 era ripe with Islamophobic political rhetoric and actions may discourage some Muslims from taking part in scholarly research, particularly if trust between members of the Muslim community and researchers is lacking. Calfano and Lajevardi do not offer a solution for these challenges, but they do encourage scholars to think more deeply about innovative research designs and data collection efforts that could further enhance scholarly research on a very diverse Muslim American population.

The rest of the volume draws on input from contributors with a variety of perspectives to depict the realities of Muslim life in the United States. Matt Barreto and Karam Dana (chapter 2) provide a historical overview of Muslims in the United States with a focus on salient topics such as

discrimination, misinformation, diversity, and cohesion, whereas Anwar Mhajne joins Calfano (chapter 3) to broach some of the complex themes regarding Islam and gender in both the US and comparative contexts. Both chapters go beyond “contexts and contentions,” as well as the limitations of existing studies, offering some promising avenues for future research.

Given the extent to which controversies surrounding Muslims and Islam have clear ethnic and national origin dimensions, Lajevardi, Melissa Michelson, and Marianne Yacoubian (chapter 4) consider the effects of racialization among Middle Eastern Americans. What is particularly fascinating about this study is the face-to-face survey data collection efforts at two Islamic community centers in Southern California. This effort is to be commended, especially when some individuals, because of their fear of being unfairly targeted by government agencies, may shy away from sharing their opinions with researchers not vetted by community leaders. On this front, students of public opinion research on hard-to-reach populations may benefit from a more detailed discussion of the steps that Lajevardi, Michelson, and Yacoubian took to foster trust and gain credibility.

Although the volume does well to avoid dating itself by focusing on President Trump’s controversial immigration and law enforcement policies, Ahmet Tekelioglu (chapter 5) takes a step back and examines the nature of the relationship between law enforcement and the Muslim community against the backdrop of surveillance programs like the one established in New York City after the attacks on September 11, 2001. By conducting fieldwork in three major cities, Tekelioglu illuminates the ways in which questions of radicalization have shaped how government agencies tend to view Muslim Americans. This analysis is followed by Rachel Gillum’s (chapter 6) survey experiment examining how Muslims anticipate that their religious identities will affect interactions with law enforcement.

The volume then pivots in chapter 7 with Kerem Kalkan’s study of how controversies over the so-called 9/11 Mosque framed and set cultural conflicts over Islam and Muslims (as perceived by non-Muslims). The focus on non-Muslims moves into an experimental realm in chapter 8: Calfano joins Oguzhan Dincer, Danielle McLaughlin, and Yusuf Sarfati in reporting results from a randomized identity framing experiment to understand how casting collective identities from a superordinate perspective can boost reported trust from non-Muslims toward American Muslims. The experimental emphasis on identity effects continues in chapter 9, where Calfano teams with Valerie Martinez-Ebers, Tony Carey, and Alejandro Beutel to test the impact of commonly used identity measures on national surveys of Muslims, which asked respondents to designate themselves as “Muslim” or “American” or both. The authors show that the effects of

these survey response labels are to depress self-reported political activity, calling into question the extent to which previously reported findings from observational data about Muslims have been affected by response bias.

This quartet of experiments is rounded off by Youssef Chouhoud's insightful list experiment (chapter 10), which focuses on what, among all the negative experiences that Muslims have encountered, influences their levels of political tolerance. Challenging both academic and popular discourse about the supposed connection between Islam and indiscriminate intolerance toward non-Muslims, Chouhoud convincingly illustrates that "intolerance is targeted rather than invariable" (p. 197). This suggests that any political intolerance that Muslim Americans may hold is distinctly directed at Islamophobic groups rather than at groups that generally oppose religion.

The volume then concludes with two wide shots offering perspectives from Barreto and Dana (chapter 11) on the challenges, opportunities, and productive approaches to surveying Muslim Americans. In the concluding chapter, Calfano and Lajevardi walk the reader through a series of ideas about how scholars can build on various insights from the earlier chapters in moving the research agenda on American Muslims forward.

This is an ambitious book that has certainly succeeded in achieving many of its intended objectives. If there is one area for improvement worth highlighting, it is that of a minor disconnect between Calfano and Lajevardi's valid critiques of existing research designs and data collection methods and a lack of detailed attention paid to these same issues by some of the studies in the volume. Overall, however, by giving voice to a diverse and impressive group of social scientists, the book excels both at shedding light on some of the most pressing questions of Muslim political life in the United States, and in charting a new frontier for future scholarship. In addition to its theoretical, practical, and methodological contributions, this book also serves as a model of successful collaboration.

Pork Barrel Politics: How Government Spending Determines Elections in a Polarized Era. By

Andrew H. Sidman. New York: Columbia University Press, 2019. 216p. \$105.00 cloth, \$35.00 paper.
doi:10.1017/S1537592720002108

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There is a significant disconnect between the common wisdom surrounding pork barrel spending and what the evidence shows. The conventional wisdom among journalists and politicians is that pork barrel spending—money that members of Congress (and other politicians) divert to their districts for local spending projects—helps all Congress members win reelection. This belief also

shows up in academic treatments of the subject: the classic distributive spending model is rooted in the twin assumptions that pork helps all members get reelected, which leads all members to pursue spending for their districts equally. However, the conventional wisdom is at odds with the evidence coming out of decades of studies that examine how pork barrel spending influences members' reelection prospects. When studies examine Democratic and Republican Congress members separately, they universally find that pork helps Democratic members win reelection, but does not help Republicans (e.g., Bruce Cain, John Ferejohn, and Morris Fiorina, *The Personal Vote: Constituency Service and Electoral Independence*, 1987; Patrick Sellers, "Fiscal Consistency and Federal District Spending in Congressional Elections," *American Journal of Political Science* 41, 1997; Jeffrey Lazarus and Shauna Reilly, "The Electoral Benefits of Distributive Spending," *Political Research Quarterly* 63, 2010). Andrew Sidman's recent book on pork barrel spending offers the fullest exploration of this partisan asymmetry to date.

Following these earlier studies, Sidman argues that the pork barrel is inherently ideological. Liberal voters are typically proponents of government spending in general and support the government's role as an equalizing agent across society. Thus most liberals are inclined to rate their members of Congress more highly if they bring federal spending back to the district. In contrast, conservative voters tend to support fewer specific government programs and prefer lower levels of government spending overall. These voters are less likely to see government spending on local projects as a good thing, and on the whole, they do not reward members for procuring such projects.

Yet conservative voters do favor one form of government spending: the contingent liability (Kenneth N. Bickers and Robert M. Stein, "The Congressional Pork Barrel in a Republican Era," *Journal of Politics* 62, 2000). Contingent liabilities are government guarantees of risk, typically in the form of guaranteeing a bank loan or backing an insurance policy. For example, the government guarantees certain small business loans, which makes them less risky for banks and results in more small businesses being supported by these loans. This type of spending program is more in line with the conservative political outlook than traditional distributive spending on two counts. First, the business taking out the loan still succeeds or fails on its own merits (echoing conservative calls for "equality of opportunity," rather than "equality of outcome"). Second, contingent liabilities square with conservative preferences for lower spending, because the government only spends money for loans that default. Thus public outlays on these programs are limited. As a result, contingent liabilities are sometimes called "Republican pork."

The heart of Sidman's argument is that these ideological distinctions have significant partisan effects. Liberal voters