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Does Islam play a role in anti-immigrant sentiment? An experimental approach

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ABSTRACT

Are Muslim immigrants subjected to targeted opposition (i.e., Islamophobia) on their pathway to US citizenship? Using a list experiment and a representative sample of the US population, we compare explicit and implicit opposition to Muslim and Christian immigrants. We find that Muslim immigrants, relative to Christian immigrants, experience greater explicit resistance. However, when social desirability bias is taken into account via the list experiment, we find that opposition to Christian and Muslim immigrants is the same. The explanation is that respondents conceal a significant amount of opposition to Christian immigrants. Muslim immigrants, on the other hand, are afforded no such protection. We find that religiosity or denomination do not play a significant role in determining implicit or explicit opposition. We conclude that Islamophobia, which is only explicitly expressed, is best understood as reflective of social desirability bias from which Muslim immigrants do not benefit.

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1. Introduction

In recent years, Islam has emerged as a particularly contentious immigrant identity in the US public and political arenas. Underlining a need for greater understanding, this contentious attitude toward Muslims, especially Muslim immigrants, is visible in debates about President Obama's alleged Muslim background, the preemptive prohibition of Sharia law, and the opposition to mosque expansion projects. Such a focus on Muslim immigrants is distinct from public perception of undocumented immigrants, as it targets a specific religious identity independent of any legal justification for exclusion. But are Muslims really perceived much differently than other religious immigrant groups? Or is opposition reflective of more generalized prejudice toward outgroups in the US context? This paper addresses these questions by exploring the theoretical and empirical evidence that legal Muslim immigrants are the recipients of targeted opposition.¹

Using an experimental design and a representative sample of the US population, we seek to account for the role of normative influences and social desirability bias in the expression of opposition to the legal incorporation of Christian and Muslim immigrants. Drawing on a representative sample of US Christian natives as the ingroup of interest, we directly test

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whether legal Christian immigrants (ingroup) receive a greater degree of acceptance than their Muslim (outgroup) counterparts. Our application of the list experiment allows us to measure with a high level of certainty the relative explicit and implicit opposition to citizenship for Christian and Muslim immigrants. Our goal is to untangle the pattern attributable to group identity from that due to social desirability pressure to appear tolerant.

Our experimental design will allow us to directly test multiple hypotheses. First, we look at whether Christian “natives” are explicitly more accepting of citizenship for legal Christian immigrants than for legal Muslim immigrants. If we find that opposition to the acquisition of citizenship significantly varies by the religious background of the immigrant, this supports theoretical frames that predict targeted opposition against the outgroup. If we find equal levels of resistance to Christian and Muslim immigrants, then a more generalized conception of opposition offers a more compelling explanation. This explanation posits a more universal opposition toward *all* immigrant outgroups – independent of religious identification. Our task here is not to adjudicate between plausible theories in an absolute sense. Rather, we seek to assess the extent to which these theoretical frames are able to explain the explicit and implicit expression, the latter derived from an experimental design, of opposition to certain immigrants groups based on their religious affiliation.

We find that explicit opposition to citizenship significantly targets legal Muslim immigrants. Muslim immigrants are a definable outgroup subject to distinct intolerance, and at face value, this corroborates the predictions of targeted opposition. However, when social desirability bias is taken into account, we find little evidence that Muslim immigrants alone constitute the outgroup, indicating that Muslim immigrants are not *uniquely* targeted, but instead are perceived similarly to Christian immigrants in terms of opposition. Indeed, implicitly measured opposition to Christian immigrants is not significantly different than that faced by Muslim immigrants. We, however, do not suggest that openly expressed anti-immigrant sentiment is irrelevant. Given that immigrants, Muslim or otherwise, live in the public sphere, it is perhaps the *explicit* expression of opposition to citizenship, and not the *implicit* expression of it, that is of greater concern.

2. Generalized and targeted opposition

Some frames for understanding group-level affinities suggest that outgroup members constitute a generalized other. Rooted in notions of ethnocentrism,² this conception constitutes a readiness to act in favor of ingroups and in opposition to outgroups (Sumner, 1906; Levinson, 1949; Adorno et al., 1950).³ Because ethnocentrism offers a general group delineation that divides people into “us” and “them” (Kinder and Kam, 2009; Kalkan et al., 2009; LeVine and Campbell, 1972; Sumner, 1906), it offers a theoretical frame in which there exists a generalized preference for ingroups and a disposition to see *all* groups that are not ingroup members as outsiders.

Rooted in the work of Sherif and Sherif (1979), more targeted explanations of outgroup bias (e.g., termed realistic group conflict theory⁴), suggests that opposition to outgroups emerges from actual group-level conflicts and competition over goals and resources (Jackson, 1993).⁵ Tension could be derived from competition between immigrants and non-immigrants (Burns and Gimpel, 2000; Mayda, 2006; Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2010). Economic conceptions of this conflict involve around employment (Malchow-Møller et al., 2008) or transfers from a limited welfare state (Facchini and Mayda, 2009).⁶

Perhaps most relevant for this work, conflict can also emerge from symbolic or cultural concerns (Bauer et al., 2000; Burns and Gimpel, 2000; Chandler and Tsai, 2001; Citrin et al., 1997; Dustmann and Preston, 2007; Espenshade and Hempstead, 1996; Fetzer, 2000; McLaren, 2003; Meuleman et al., 2009). This is sometimes referred to as intergroup conflict or competition (Esses et al., 1998, 2001). Cultural differences marked by visual and aural cues may elicit negative reactions from the non-immigrant population (Brader et al., 2008; Sides and Citrin, 2007; Sniderman and Hagendoorn, 2007; Putnam and Campbell, 2010). The focus of this work is on the role of the religious affiliation of the immigrant group, which has a clear link to a targeted pattern in which one expects greater opposition to more culturally distinct outgroups (i.e., Muslim immigrants) relative to other immigrant groups that share a religious background with the majority of the non-immigrant US population (i.e., Christians).

An additional theoretical frame that considers the emergence of targeted opposition is social identity theory, which allows for ingroup favoritism to emerge even in the absence of any serious threat or conflict with the outgroup – economic or otherwise (Tajfel, 1970; Tajfel et al., 1971; Tajfel and Turner, 1986). Current work in social identity theory points out that identity or selfhood, in Brewer’s account (2007), is more about placement within the ingroup than disassociation from the outgroup. In addition, a person can maintain multiple group identities (Turner, 1990) and, by extension, a group may be defined as an outgroup on one dimension, but as an ingroup on another. Thus, one identity generates a positive bias that

² Following the work of Kinder and Kam (2009), we distinguish ethnocentrism, which includes outgroup hostility and ingroup loyalty, from nativism, which overlays explicit political ideology (Higham, 1981) and/or national identity such as the “American way of life” (Knoll, 2013a,b).

³ In the words of Kinder and Kam (2009, pg 8) “ethnocentrism is a mental habit. It is a predisposition to divide the human world into ingroups and outgroups. It is a readiness to reduce society into “us” and “them”. . . [And] this orientation has consequences.

⁴ As with ethnocentrism, realistic group conflict theory shares some characteristics with nativism. As pointed out by Knoll (2013a, 8), “nativism can be defined as the opinion that a distinct and uniquely American way of life needs to be protected against foreigners or foreign influence.”

⁵ It should be noted that social identity theory allows for ingroup favoritism to emerge even in the absence of any serious threat or conflict with the outgroup – economic or otherwise (Tajfel, 1970; Tajfel et al., 1971; Tajfel and Turner, 1986).

⁶ For a recent review of the determinants of anti-immigrant sentiment see Ceobanu and Escandell (2010) and Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014). For a review of Labor Market Competition Theory, which encapsulates most theoretical conceptions of economic conflict, see Malhotra et al. (2013), Hainmueller et al. (2011) and Hainmueller and Hiscox (2010).

can cancel the negative bias from another identity (Riek et al., 2010). In fact, in Brewer's formulation there is no reason why people can't have strong ingroup attachments while simultaneously holding positive, or neutral opinions of the outgroup. In other words, outgroup conflict is neither required nor implied by ingroup preferences.

3. The role of religion in shaping attitudes toward immigrants

Work that focuses on immigrants and religion, largely conducted in Europe, has often supported socio-cultural notions of realistic group conflict. For example, research in the Netherlands finds the perceived Islamic threat to be the dominant determinant of specifically anti-Muslim sentiment (Savelkoul et al., 2010), suggesting that bias may indeed be shaped by the religious identity of the immigrant group. In addition, work on symbolic boundaries in Europe finds that religion delineates immigrants from non-immigrants (Bail, 2008). Consistent with these findings, traditional and conservative cultural and religious values predict negative attitudes toward immigrants (Davidov et al., 2008; Sides and Citrin, 2007). Comparative work in Europe finds that prejudice toward Muslims, regardless of immigrant status, is more widespread than prejudice toward immigrants (Strabac and Listhaug, 2008). Of relevance, the role of religiosity, measured by church attendance, is contextually specific, even within Europe, and significantly predicts anti-Muslim attitudes only in Eastern Europe (Strabac and Listhaug, 2008), suggesting that the generalizability of conclusions is limited.

Others conclude that Muslims are not targets for their religious belief. Work in Switzerland focuses on the distinction between xenophobia and Islamophobia, finding the distinction to be of limited value due to a shared underlying mechanism (Helbling, 2010). In addition, religiosity has no significant association with xenophobia or Islamophobia in Switzerland (Helbling, 2010).⁷ Other work that compares a number of European contexts finds that being religious is not significantly associated with opposition to the headscarf, but it does significantly predict opposition to Muslims in general (Helbling, 2014). One potential interpretation of a limited statistical link between religiosity and anti-Muslim sentiment in Europe is that European Christians are obligated by their faith to be tolerant of others (Helbling, 2010) and distinguish the practice of Islam from a general tendency toward xenophobia (Helbling, 2014). Related work in France, which focuses on generosity among members of a convenience sample of non-Muslim French, Muslim Senegalese and Christian Senegalese immigrants, finds that prejudice increases among the non-Muslim French when group composition includes more Muslims (Adida et al., 2014).

In contrast to this European context, little research has been done on religion and immigration in the United States. Some research suggests that religion is a relevant identity in creating ingroup bias (Rowatt et al., 2005), but this research neither draws on a representative population sample nor focuses on immigrants. Eric McDaniel et al. (2011) find that increased religiosity, defined as "Christian nationalism," is associated with greater hostility toward immigrants and immigration. This corroborates work that finds a link between religiosity and general prejudice (Hunsberger and Jackson, 2005; Jackson and Hunsberger, 1999; Rowatt et al., 2005). In contrast, Knoll (2009) shows that overall attitudes toward immigration may be more tolerant among those that attend religious services more frequently, and among religious minorities. This work offers clear evidence that "native" religious identity can shape attitudes toward immigrants, but it offers little insight into how these attitudes are shaped by the religious identity of the immigrant.

Although efforts to understand denominational variation in sentiment toward immigrants in the US are limited, a number of studies suggest significant differences do exist in attitudes toward other religious groups. Recently, White Evangelicals report the most explicit negative attitudes of any Christian group toward Islam, including Mainline Protestants and Catholics. Only Atheists are perceived more negatively (Pew, 2014). Evangelicals also show low levels of "respect" for Islam and, unlike Mainline Protestants, Catholics and Jews, more contact with Muslims hardens rather than ameliorates this negative perception (Jung, 2012). Other work on anti-immigration sentiment, independent of the religious affiliation of the immigrants, finds that Evangelicals harbor significantly more negative attitudes relative to "secular" and unaffiliated Christians (Brint and Abrutyn, 2010). However, when socioeconomic status and, moreover, moral traditionalism⁸ are taken into account, Evangelicals no longer significantly differ.

4. Muslim Immigrants in the US context

Recent research exposes the widespread and substantial misunderstandings that exist about Muslims and Islam in the United States (Panagopoulos, 2006), offering a mechanism by which the perception of the outgroup is shaped. September 11th and its aftermath have exacerbated these misunderstandings (Esses et al., 2002). Mainstream American knowledge of Islam is often based on the portrayals of the popular media—where Muslims are, more often than not, linked to threatening images, like terrorists (Shaheen, 2003; Suleiman, 1982; Mandel, 2001; Gerges, 2003). This concern has grown recently as 53% of Muslims believe it is much more difficult to be a Muslim in the US after the events of 9–11 (Pew, 2007), which has clear implications for the ability of Muslim immigrants to incorporate into the US social fabric. When asked to identify the

⁷ Extrapolation of these findings to the U.S. context is limited as Helbling (2010) argues that Christian denominations have no substantive meaning in the Swiss context having been replaced by a secularized vs. non-secularized Christian cleavage.

⁸ Moral traditionalism refers to respondents who agree that (1) morality should not adapt to a changing world, (2) newer lifestyles contribute to societal breakdown and (3) society should not tolerate different moral orientations.

most important problem facing US Muslims, 60% of responses among Muslims center on issues pertaining to discrimination, misunderstandings, and stereotyping (Pew Research Center, 2007).

Misperceptions and negative stereotypes are more likely when intergroup contact is rare (Hurwitz and Peffley, 2010; Kinder and Mendelberg, 1995),⁹ although not all intergroup contact is positive (Koopmans and Veit, 2014). Indeed, most Americans do not have much chance to know Muslims because Muslims make up only about 0.8% of U.S. residents (Pew, 2011).¹⁰ Given the limited presence of Muslim immigrants in American society, Islam and Muslims are seen through the lens of negative media portrayals (Shaheen, 2003). According to a survey in 2005, 36% of the American population believes Islam encourages violence; another 36% reports unfavorable opinions about Islam, while 25% say they had no opinion about the religion at all (Pew Research Center, 2005). Indicative of a targeted bias, 83% of the US population support restrictions on immigrants from Arab countries and 76% supports restrictions on Muslim immigrants (Panagopoulos (2006)).¹¹ Those that did exhibit more knowledge about Islam (e.g., being able to identify Allah or the Quran) were more likely to have favorable opinions about Islam and Muslims. The implication is that the less informed Americans are about Islam, the more hostile they are toward Muslims and the religion itself (Pew, 2005; Panagopoulos, 2006).

5. Social desirability bias

Research consistently shows the tendency of respondents to answer questions in a way that will be viewed favorably by others (Presser and Stinson, 1998; Arnold and Feldman, 1981; Kuklinski et al., 1997a; Davis and Silver, 2003; Kuran and McCaffery, 2008). In works on affirmative action (Kuklinski et al., 1997b), same-sex marriage (Janus, 2010), closing the US border (Janus, 2010), immigration policy preferences (Knoll, 2013b), nativism (Knoll, 2013a) and race attitudes (Kuklinski et al., 1997a), social desirability bias leads to significant under-reporting of opposition. Pertinent to the issue at hand, social desirability bias can result in a large underestimation of actual level of anti-immigrant sentiment (Janus, 2010) and support for a given immigration policy (Knoll, 2013a and Knoll, 2013b). In fact, recent work finds that the increase in opposition to immigration after the 2008 economic crisis in the US reflects a reduction in social desirability bias rather than a change in underlying, implicitly measured opposition (Creighton et al., 2014).

Public expression of prejudice can be negatively correlated with social approval of its expression (Crandell et al., 2002). Studies of American public opinion on race find that a norm of equality regulates the overt expression of negative racial predispositions such as racial stereotypes and fears. However, cues activate those negative attitudes even when they are subtle (Valentino et al., 2002; Mendelberg, 2001). Recent work that measures implicit (concealed) intolerance finds that characteristics of the individual, particularly education, determine the extent to which intolerance (or any controversial attitude) is masked (Kuppens and Spears, 2014). If religion is the reference group, US citizens could be relatively less likely to express open hostility toward their religious ingroup – Christian immigrants – than toward a religious outgroup – Muslim immigrants. By deploying an experimental design, this work offers a unique way forward, which allows explicit (expressed) estimates to be directly compared to implicit (concealed) estimates to ascertain underlying levels of opposition and the extent to which it is masked from open expression.

6. Hypotheses

Although we present four hypotheses, our work remains focused on a general question throughout – Does the strength of Christian identity differentially shape attitudes toward immigrants who are Muslim and Christian? Our first set of specific hypotheses derives from the straightforward prediction that membership in a religious ingroup offers protection from the explicit expression of intolerance. Because legal Christian immigrants share a religion with Christian, non-immigrant respondents, we expect them to be relatively protected from explicit opposition. In contrast, Muslim immigrants have no such protection. However, when opposition can be masked (i.e., implicit opposition), we expect that both Muslim and Christian immigrants will be subject to greater levels of opposition. This could mean that the difference between groups in terms of opposition is still significant, but less, which would reflect an underlying in-group preference and targeted out-group bias. Alternatively, if in-group bias reflects normative pressure alone, no difference should remain once social desirability pressure is taken into account. In the latter case, what remains is generalized opposition to immigrants, regardless of religious identity. Our specific hypothesis reflects an expectation that in-group bias is present in both an explicit and implicit opposition, which reflects the most straightforward application of SIT to the question at hand.

H1a. Explicit opposition to citizenship for legal Muslim immigrants is greater than explicit opposition to citizenship for legal Christian immigrants.

⁹ A notable exception is the work by Jung (2012) that finds White Evangelical Christian negative perception of Islam, in contrast to other denominations/religious affiliations, does not decrease with greater contact.

¹⁰ In 2011, 88,000 out of 938,000 new permanent residents in 2011 were Muslim. The Muslim population is growing but remains small (Pew, 2011).

¹¹ The percentages are from a Wirthin Worldwide (WW) and a Harris International (HI) poll conducted in 9/2001 and 6/2002 and compiled by Panagopoulos (2006).

H1b. Implicit opposition to citizenship for legal Muslim immigrants is greater than implicit opposition to citizenship for legal Christian immigrants.

The second set of specific hypotheses addresses the way in which social desirability bias might shape the explicit expression of support or opposition to citizenship for immigrants. Social desirability bias should result in the explicit expression of less opposition toward co-religionists despite an underlying implicit sentiment that is more generally anti-immigrant in nature. When social desirability bias is taken into account, the implicit expression of tolerance to other “ingroup” members (Christian immigrants) is no longer moderated by social pressure. Thus, implicit opposition to Christian immigrants should be *greater* than the explicit opposition. Further, opposition to Muslim immigrants, who are seen as outsiders from the onset, should be less sensitive to social desirability bias and, thus, we expect that the implicit and levels of opposition to be similar.

H2a. Implicit opposition is greater than explicit opposition to citizenship for legal Christian immigrants.

H2b. Explicit opposition is no greater than implicit opposition to citizenship for legal Muslim immigrants.

Our third set of specific hypotheses assesses the variation in the attitudes toward immigrants, by focusing on the strength of Christian group identity among non-immigrants. The operationalization of these hypotheses requires the consideration of additional proxy measures of group identity. Here we use denomination and religiosity. As mentioned, there is evidence of a positive link between religiosity and susceptibility to hold prejudice toward outgroups (Hunsberger and Jackson, 2005; Jackson and Hunsberger, 1999; Rowatt et al., 2005). Specifically, Christians are significantly more likely to hold Islam in low regard with Evangelicals, relative to unaffiliated, showing the strongest negative perception (Jung, 2012). Furthermore, higher overall enmity toward immigrants has been observed among Evangelical Christians, relative to mainline Protestants and Catholics (McDaniel et al., 2011).¹² If conceptions of the outgroup are structured by strength of members’ religious group identity, we expect Evangelical Christians and Christians who practice more frequently to express greater explicit opposition to Muslim immigrants. For the same reason, we expect Christian immigrants to benefit from ingroup membership and/or social desirability pressure, which would be reflected in less opposition. This is the test of Christian identity as a marker of explicit, targeted opposition to Muslim immigrants and targeted tolerance toward Christian immigrants.

H3a. Explicit Opposition to citizenship for legal Muslim immigrants is greater among Christians who more frequently attend services and Evangelical Christians, relative to mainline Protestants.

H3b. Explicit Opposition to citizenship for legal Christian immigrants is lower among Christians who more frequently attend services and Evangelical Christians, relative to mainline Protestants.

The fourth specific hypothesis focuses on implicit measures of opposition for the Christian ingroup. Social desirability bias is potentially of greater concern for Evangelical and more frequently practicing Christians. Work has shown that frequency of attendance is often over-reported in the US, which has been attributed to its role as a marker of identity (Brenner, 2012, 2011; Hadaway et al., 1998, 1993). The implication is that those that find a Christian identity to be more relevant are those that (over)report more frequent attendance. It follows that higher levels of religiosity reflect stronger ingroup identity and would be subject to greater social pressure to appear tolerant toward immigrant members of their religious ingroup (McDaniel et al., 2011). Thus, after accounting for social desirability bias (i.e., when opposition is measured implicitly), we predict opposition to citizenship for legal Christian immigrants increases among those who have a stronger Christian identity, whether measured by frequency of church attendance or evangelical affiliation.

H4. Implicit Opposition to citizenship for Christian immigrants is not lower among Christians who more frequently attend services and Evangelical Christians, relative to mainstream Protestants.

7. Methods

To account for bias attributable to social desirability, we employ the list experiment,¹³ which allows respondents to permanently and unconditionally mask their individual responses from researchers.¹⁴ The advantage of this approach is that individual-level responses are not only concealed from the interviewer, but they cannot be known, which creates a condition of permanent anonymity. Respondents are divided between a control group and, in this case, two treatment groups. The control group is asked a single question about the following list of items. The question reads:

¹² We follow the work of Brint and Abrutyn (2010), Marsden (2005) and Warner (1979) in considering Evangelical Christianity to be individualistic in orientation and literal in terms of biblical interpretation. This is distinct from the more group-oriented and subjective biblical interpretation found among Mainline Protestants. In all analyses presented here, Evangelical respondents self identify.

¹³ We do not suggest that the list experiment is the only way to assess implicit attitudes, although it does have a tradition in the literature (Janus, 2010; Knoll, 2013b). Other approaches using implicit association tests have also been used effectively (Kuppens and Spears, 2014; Knoll, 2013a).

¹⁴ A more detailed description of the list experiment, its extensive use, recent innovations and its methodological origin has been recently published by Imai (2011) and Blair and Imai (2012).

Below you will read three things that sometimes people oppose or are against. After you read all three, just tell us *HOW MANY* of them you *OPPOSE*. We don't want to know which ones, just *HOW MANY*.

- (1) The federal government increasing assistance to the poor.
- (2) Professional athletes making millions of dollars per year.
- (3) Large corporations polluting the environment.

Two independently sampled treatment groups are asked an identical question, but of a list that includes the original three items above and a fourth item that queries opposition to Muslim and Christian immigrants respectively.

- (4) Granting citizenship to a legal immigrant who is Muslim.
- (4) Granting citizenship to a legal immigrant who is Christian.

In its most basic incarnation, the comparison of the mean of the responses to the control list with the mean of the responses to each of the treatments offers an estimate of the proportion opposed to the additional list item. To assess the degree to which this proportion differs from that obtained via direct questioning, the response is compared to two direct questions about opposition to legal Muslim and Christian immigrants asked only of the control group. This difference is interpretable as the proportion of opposition masked under direct questioning (i.e., social desirability bias). For many purposes this direct comparison of the treatment to the control is sufficient as randomization precludes the need to account for additional observed and unobserved characteristics of the respondent.

However, when the intention is to directly assess the relative magnitude of the association between group-level characteristics (e.g., evangelicals vs. main-line Protestants) and the indirectly estimated opposition to citizenship, a multivariate framework offers some advantages. Recent work using a maximum-likelihood estimator has extended the difference in means approach to allow for the formal testing of differences in the outcome, opposition in this case, by individual-level characteristics, such as religiosity. A multivariate framework (Imai, 2011) is possible by modeling the joint distribution of the responses as:

$$g(x, \delta) = \Pr(Z_{ij+1}^* = 1 | X_i = x), \quad \text{and} \quad h_z(y; x, \psi_z) = \Pr(Y_i(0) = y | Z_{ij+1}^* = z | X_i = x) \quad (1)$$

where for individual i , J is equal to the number of list items and (Z_{ij+1}^*) represents the truthful answer to the sensitive item. The functions $(g(x, \delta))$ and $(h_z(y; x, \psi_z))$ represent the conditional expectation for the control and sensitive items given the covariates X . The term y is equal to the number of items $(0, \dots, J)$ and z is an indicator that can take a value of 0 or 1. This approach has the advantage over the traditional difference in means and an alternative non-linear least squares approach in that it uses all of the information of the joint distribution of $(Y_i(0) = y | Z_{ij+1}^*)$ (Imai, 2011).

When estimating the overall proportion opposed (i.e., a model without covariates), the maximum-likelihood approach offers little advantage over the simple difference in means, but to maintain consistency we elected to use the same estimator for all reported results. In addition, when testing for differences in implicit opposition to Muslim and Christian immigrants, Eq. (1) allows for an interpretation net of additional variables related to denomination and religiosity and anti-immigrant sentiment, which are described in greater detail below. A list experiment assumes that the addition of the controversial question (4) does not change the response pattern of the three non-controversial questions (1, 2 and 3), which are asked of both the treatment and control. For the assumption of no design effect to hold, the addition of the sensitive item to the control list makes the response variable of the treatment group larger than the control response but at most by one item. If the difference in the response patterns to the treatment and control list are negative and large, it suggests that the null hypothesis of no design effect is false. Using a test recently proposed by Blair and Imai (2012), we cannot reject the null hypothesis of no design effect for the list experiment to test opposition to citizenship for Muslim ($p \geq 0.42$) or Christian ($p \geq 0.18$) immigrants and there is no evidence that the addition of the controversial question (4) in the treatment group resulted in a design effect. Eq. (1) is estimated using the R package *list*.¹⁵

Two direct questions to assess explicit opposition was asked only of the control group and reads as follows:

- (5) Do you support or oppose granting citizenship to a legal immigrant who is Muslim?
- (6) Do you support or oppose granting citizenship to a legal immigrant who is Christian?

The predicted proportion explicitly opposed and the coefficients for explicit opposition in the multivariate models are estimated with a logistic regression using *glm* in R.¹⁶ An appealing aspect of the model of implicit opposition described by Eq. (1) is that it can be compared to estimates derived from the direct question (5). Although estimated indirectly by Eq. (1), the resulting coefficients are interpretable similar to those of a logistic regression in that they reflect an expected change in

¹⁵ *list* is a free, open-source software developed by Blair and Imai (2010) and available through the Comprehensive R Archive Network (CRAN; <http://cran.r-project.org/package=list>).

¹⁶ Originally, respondents could respond: "strongly support", "somewhat support", "neither support nor oppose", "somewhat oppose" or "strongly oppose". We combine responses "somewhat oppose" and "strongly oppose" to be a single response category analogous to those who report "opposed" in the control group.

the log-odds of opposition. This aspect of the model allows significant differences in a given coefficient to be compared in direction and magnitude to an estimate derived from an outcome measuring opposition directly.

8. Data and sample

The data used were collected in June of 2010 as part of Time-Sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences (TESS), a multi-investigator data collection fielded by the Indiana University Center for Survey Research and the National Science Foundation. TESS utilizes the KnowledgePanel, which is a probability-based online panel. Sampled individuals are provided laptops and access to the Internet. The sampling frame is representative of 97% of the US population (Knowledge Networks, 2011). The sampling methodology is a mixture of random-digit dialing and addressed-based sampling.¹⁷

Previous work has considered explicit attitudes among Christians in general and Evangelicals in particular, comparing them to unaffiliated Christian and/or secular respondents. Results show that, overall, Evangelicals harbor more negative attitudes toward Islam (Jung, 2012; Pew, 2014), which does not diminish with contact (Jung, 2012). As our design could only test the perception of Muslim and Christian immigrants, we limited the analysis to Christian respondents to clearly delineate the ingroup and outgroup in the experiment. Respondents reporting no denomination are, by definition, unaffiliated and do not allow a clear religious ingroup and outgroup characterization.¹⁸ As a result, we excluded Mormon ($n = 39$),¹⁹ Jewish ($n = 57$), Hindu ($n = 8$), Buddhist ($n = 8$), Muslim ($n = 8$) respondents and those that reported no religion ($n = 343$). One respondent refused to answer the question about religion and was dropped. In total about a fifth of respondents do not identify as Christian, which matches independent, population-level estimates that place the non-Christian US population at 20% (Pew, 2011). The total combined sample includes 1828 individuals derived from three independent samples—the control ($n = 623$), the treatment for the list item about Muslim immigrants ($n = 620$), and the treatment for the list item about Christian immigrants ($n = 585$) (see Table 1).

9. Measures

To account for religious affiliation by denomination, four broad categories are assessed – Mainline Protestant, Evangelical Christian, Catholic, and Other Christian. These four groups are derived from a larger menu of denominations in the following way. Mainline Protestants are defined by respondents who self-identify as Protestant ($n = 519$), which include Methodists and Lutherans who were not distinguished in the original data collection. Evangelical Christians are composed of Baptists ($n = 395$) and Pentecostals ($n = 76$). Roman Catholic ($n = 395$) follows the original grouping. The Other Christian category includes respondents who identified as Christian, but listed no denomination, and Eastern Orthodox ($n = 7$).²⁰ We account for religiosity with a three-category measure of church attendance. We designate those who report attending church once a week or more as *frequent*, those who attend once a month to a few times a year as *occasional*, and those that attend once a year or less as *infrequent*. To interpret the estimated differences as being net of known compositional differences between distinct Christian denominations, we take a number of socioeconomic, demographic and political characteristics into account.

Two socioeconomic measures, *education* and *income*, are defined via the highest level of completed schooling and the income quintile derived from reported family income. Proportionally, migration to the US tends to include more unskilled labor, which can be interpreted as greater competition for those with less education and income. In fact, it has been empirically shown that those with less education and income are more likely to oppose immigration (Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010). Their inclusion follows convention in the literature on the economic determinants of anti-immigrant sentiment, and for our purposes, addresses a potential spurious relationship if socioeconomic status, particularly education, is related to denomination or religiosity. We're also concerned about the fact that those better-educated are more likely to conceal their true preferences (Heerwig and McCabe, 2009) particularly in the case of racial/ethnic intolerance (Kuppens and Spears, 2014). Thus, a closer examination of the relationship between socioeconomic status and concealed preferences is of independent interest.

¹⁷ Calculating a summary statistic analogous to a response rate in a standard cross-sectional survey is complicated for on-line panels because a given experiment only uses a fraction of the overall panel (see Callegaro and DiSogra, 2009). Knowledge Networks estimates that for the KnowledgePanel® the within survey response rate is approximately 65% (Knowledge Networks, 2011).

¹⁸ This decision does not imply that non-Christians are of no independent interest as work in Europe (Helbling, 2014) and the U.S. (Brint and Abrutyn, 2010) suggest that attitudes toward specific religious groups could reflect a broader anti-religious posture, but our design does not allow us to consider a non-religious migrant group.

¹⁹ Given the focus of our third and fourth hypothesis, we are primarily interested in comparing Evangelical Christians with mainline Protestants. We did not have a sample size to separately consider Mormons, which was also the case with our Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim respondents, and we did not want to deviate from the original response pattern to code them as "Other Christian".

²⁰ Grouping Orthodox Christians with Christians who do not report a denomination is not ideal nor does it reflect our initial preference. However, with only 7 Orthodox respondents, our sample size prevented us from considering Orthodox separately. Unlike Mormon respondents, we decided to include the Orthodox with other Christians, which could be considered inconsistent. However, dropping them from the analysis, aside from being theoretically difficult to justify, does not change any estimates in terms of significance, magnitude or interpretation. Moreover, our contrast of interest is between Evangelical Christians and mainline Protestants, neither of which is affected by our coding choice.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics.

	Control	Treatment	
		Muslim	Christian
Mainline protestant	24.15	21.92	21.70
Evangelical	22.19	19.74	19.57
Catholic	23.16	25.02	23.83
Other	30.49	33.31	34.89
Infrequently	28.57	32.10	26.67
Occasionally	26.97	28.71	29.74
Frequently	43.82	38.55	43.42
Less than high school	11.62	14.36	11.98
High school	32.77	27.18	31.03
Some college	29.37	29.49	27.56
Bachelors or more	26.24	28.97	29.43
1st income quintile	17.23	20.90	19.04
2nd	19.06	20.13	19.97
3rd	26.24	26.03	26.63
4th	18.02	12.56	16.11
5th	19.45	20.38	18.24
Liberal	23.89	27.18	26.76
Moderate	35.12	35.00	35.69
Conservative	40.99	37.82	37.55
White	73.37	73.97	74.03
Nonwhite	15.93	14.87	14.65
Hispanic	10.70	11.15	11.32
Female	54.18	52.95	53.79
Male	45.82	47.05	46.21
Northeast	20.50	19.74	17.84
Midwest	22.98	22.95	23.30
South	35.64	34.62	35.95
West	20.89	22.69	22.90
<i>n</i>	623	620	585

Source: TESS/Knowledge Networks 2010.

Previous work has found that liberals are more likely to exhibit patterns of social desirability bias because they can be relatively more subject to pressure to appear tolerant despite higher levels of implicitly expressed intolerance (Sniderman and Carmines, 1997). We define a three-part categorical variable distinguishing *liberals*, *moderates*, and *conservatives*. Liberals are respondents who consider themselves “extremely liberal,” “liberal,” and “somewhat liberal.” Similarly, conservatives are the combination of respondents who self-identify as “extremely conservative,” “conservative,” and “somewhat conservative.” Moderates are respondents who describe themselves as “moderate or middle of the road.” Controlling for political ideology allows for a somewhat clearer interpretation of the core concept of interest in the multivariate models – the role of group identity – denomination and religiosity – in shaping attitudes toward immigrants.

In the US context, Hispanics could sympathize more with immigrants, who could be perceived as ingroup members (Cain and Kiewiet, 1986; Espenshade and Hempstead, 1996; Espenshade and Calhoun, 1993; Sanchez, 2006). Respondents are grouped into three broad racial/ethnic groups—*nonwhite*, *white*, and *Hispanic*—based on their self-identification. The non-white category includes non-Hispanic respondents who identify as “black,” “other,” or as having more than one race/ethnicity. Similar to political ideology, ethnicity could also be a confounder as Hispanics are more likely to be Catholic than the general population—55% of the Hispanics in the sample, compared to 31% and 17% for whites and nonwhites, respectively. Similarly, nonwhites are more likely to identify as Evangelical—56%, compared to 15% and 21% for Hispanics and whites, respectively.

Finally, we control for two demographic characteristics of the individual. We account for *age* both as a linear and quadratic term. Although some research has shown that older respondents can be less welcoming of newcomers the association is not expected to be strong (Malchow-Møller et al., 2008). Gender is also included, but as with age, large differences are not expected between *male* and *female* respondents, although there are some studies that show that women tend to be more favorable toward immigrants (Malchow-Møller et al., 2009).

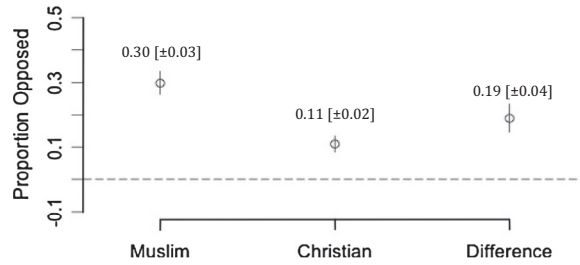
10. Analytic strategy

The results are presented in the following order. First, to test the first (H1) and second (H2) hypotheses, we offer a series of plots that report the trends in the level of opposition to citizenship for Muslim and Christian immigrants and the degree to

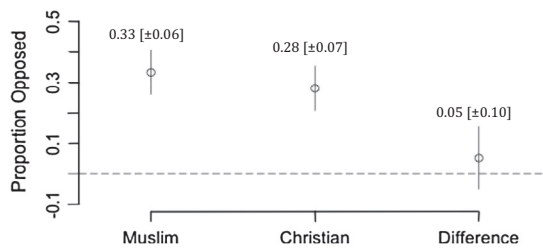
which social desirability bias prevents these opinions from being explicitly expressed. These plots formally test whether implicit and explicit opposition differ by the religious identity of the immigrant (H1a and H1b) and the extent to which these attitudes are subject to social desirability (H2a and H2b). Second, we use a multivariate framework to test the third (H3) and fourth hypotheses (H4), which assess the differences by denomination and religiosity, controlling for demographic characteristics, political orientations, and socioeconomic characteristics. In the discussion section, each hypothesis is considered in detail.

11. Overall trends

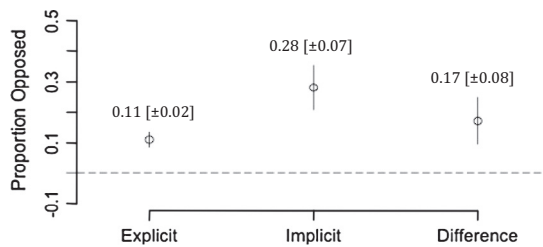
Plot 1 shows the proportion and 95% confidence interval of the US Christian population explicitly opposed to citizenship for Christian and Muslim immigrants. As described in the methods section, the estimated proportion is derived from a



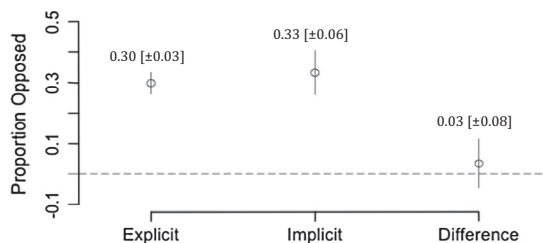
Plot 1. Explicit opposition to citizenship. Source: TESS/Knowledge Networks 2010.



Plot 2. Implicit opposition to citizenship. Source: TESS/Knowledge Networks 2010.



Plot 3. Social desirability bias – Christian immigrants. Source: TESS/Knowledge Networks 2010.



Plot 4. Social desirability bias – Muslim Immigrants. Source: TESS/Knowledge Networks 2010.

bivariate logit model. When asked directly, 30% ($\pm 3\%$) of respondents express explicit opposition to Muslim immigrants compared to only 11% ($\pm 2\%$) opposed to citizenship for Christian immigrants. The difference between the two estimates is 19% ($\pm 4\%$). Muslim immigrants are the recipients of significant targeted, explicit opposition.

Plot 2 shows the implicit opposition to citizenship for legal Muslim and Christian immigrants derived from the list experiment, which is estimated using Eq. (1). Unlike explicit opposition, implicit estimates show near parity in the level of opposition to either immigrant group. Legal Christian immigrants confront opposition from 28% ($\pm 7\%$) of the population, which is notably similar to the percentage opposed to citizenship for Muslim immigrants: 33% ($\pm 6\%$). Indeed the difference between the two estimates is not significant ($5\% \pm 10\%$). These differences in relative opposition when measured explicitly and implicitly reveal two key findings. First, as our first hypothesis predicts, explicit opposition disproportionately targets Muslim immigrants. Second, implicit opposition does not clearly target either group. The latter result suggests that the relative level of implicit opposition, observed when social desirability pressure is taken into account, does not offer Christian immigrants the protection that the overt measures imply.²¹ Third, there is little difference between the implicit and explicit expression of opposition to legal Muslim immigrants. 30% ($\pm 3\%$) of respondents express explicit opposition to Muslim immigrants compared to 33% ($\pm 6\%$) of opposed in the list. That is, Muslim immigrants do not benefit from social desirability pressures to appear tolerant. In contrast, the difference between implicit and explicit opposition to citizenship for legal Christian immigrants is quite large (11% vs. 28%).

Plots 3 and 4 report the difference in the estimated explicit and implicit opposition to Christian and Muslim immigrants respectively. This difference reflects that amount underreported when opposition is only measured explicitly and is interpretable as the degree of social desirability bias. The key finding is twofold. First, 19% ($\pm 8\%$) of the U.S. Christian population mask their opposition to Christian immigrants when opposition is explicitly expressed. This difference is significant. The observed targeting of Christian immigrants with explicit opposition is about a fifth of the underlying opposition hidden due to social desirability pressure. In contrast, Plot 4 shows that Muslim immigrants are offered no such protection. The concealed and revealed levels of opposition toward Muslim immigrants are practically identical. Muslim immigrants enjoy no protection from social desirability bias whatsoever, with an estimated difference between explicit and implicit opposition of zero 3% ($\pm 8\%$).

12. Multivariate analysis: determinants of opposition to citizenship for Muslim and Christian immigrants

Table 2 reports the estimated coefficients and test statistics for four regression models of opposition to citizenship for Muslim and Christian immigrants to the United States. Implicit (concealed) estimates are derived using Eq. (1), which estimates the association between a given covariate and opposition to citizenship derived from the list experiment. Explicit opposition is directly modeled using a standard logit. For both outcomes, implicit and explicit opposition, the resulting coefficients are interpreted as the expected change in the log-odds of reporting opposition and are directly comparable in terms of magnitude and significance.

Given our third and fourth hypotheses, which explore the importance of religiosity and denomination, our primary focus is on the relative magnitude of the association between religiosity/denomination and the implicit and explicit opposition to citizenship for both immigrant groups. The results for Column 1 and Column 2 report the explicit and implicit estimates for opposition to citizenship for Muslim immigrants. In addition to our explanatory variables: denomination and religiosity, the models control for socioeconomic status (education and income) and political ideology.

Evangelicals are not significantly different from mainline Protestants before (Column 1) and after (Column 2) social desirability bias is taken into account. For the implicit model (Column 2), *occasional* church attendance is positively and significantly associated with implicit opposition to citizenship for Muslim immigrants, which is not the case in the explicit estimates (Column 1). In addition, the marginally significant negative association with *frequent* church attendance is not found in the implicit model (Column 2), suggesting that in the absence of social desirability pressure, frequent attenders are less constrained by social desirability bias when it comes to expressing their opposition to Muslim immigrants. Overall, the results show little support for the role of denomination and religiosity in targeting opposition toward Muslim immigrants. As has been found in other studies education is positively associated with less opposition in both the explicit and implicit estimates.²²

The coefficients and relevant test statistics for the multivariate models of the determinants of opposition to citizenship for Christian immigrants are reported in Columns 3 and 4 of Table 2. Column 3 reports the explicit estimates, while Column 4 reports the implicit estimates derived from the list experiment. The key finding here is that neither denomination nor religiosity significantly predict opposition to citizenship for Christian immigrants. In other words, neither Evangelicals nor

²¹ As described in the section on methods, explicit measures of opposition are derived by combining the response categories “somewhat oppose” or “strongly oppose”. Please note however, that the neutral category, “neither support or oppose”, was available as a response category only when opposition is explicitly measured. The list experiment requires a dichotomous response option, which does not allow the flexibility of a neutral category. If neutral respondents are considered to be opposed, the difference in the proportion opposed to Christian vs. Muslims is significantly and substantively unchanged at 21% (± 0.04), with more people explicitly opposing Muslim immigration. In other words, explicit opposition to citizenship for Muslim immigrants is significantly greater than for Christian immigrants regardless of any assumption about neutral respondents.

²² See for example: (Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2010). For a review of the literature on education and attitudes toward immigrants/immigration see Ceobanu and Escandell (2010) and Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014).

Table 2
Regressions of opposition to citizenship for legal Muslim and Christian immigrants.

	(1) Muslim		(2)		(3) Christian		(4)	
	Explicit		Implicit		Explicit		Implicit	
	<i>b</i>	S.E.						
Mainline Protestant (ref.)	–		–		–		–	
Evangelical	0.06	0.27	0.97	0.65	0.01	0.38	0.41	0.53
Catholic	–0.01	0.25	0.47	0.52	–0.28	0.39	–0.12	0.56
Other Christian	–0.14	0.32	0.49	0.68	–0.17	0.46	–0.21	0.87
Infrequently (ref.)	–		–		–		–	
Occasional	–0.20	0.24	1.41***	0.52	0.37	0.34	0.82	0.60
Frequently	–0.39*	0.23	0.37	0.50	–0.18	0.34	–0.08	0.53
High school (ref.)	–		–		–		–	
Less than high school	0.06	0.29	0.58	0.70	0.33	0.39	–0.67	0.76
Some college	–0.35	0.23	–0.25	0.52	–0.35	0.34	–0.70	0.55
Bachelors or more	–1.22***	0.30	–1.01*	0.60	–0.90*	0.46	–0.99*	0.62
1st Income quintile (ref.)	–		–		–		–	
2nd	–0.40	0.30	0.21	0.74	–0.48	0.40	–0.24	0.84
3rd	–0.31	0.27	0.19	0.56	–0.65*	0.37	0.75	0.79
4th	–0.06	0.34	0.73	0.72	–0.93*	0.52	0.25	0.81
5th	–0.19	0.34	0.74	0.71	–0.58	0.49	0.45	0.98
Moderate (ref.)	–		–		–		–	
Liberal	–0.49*	0.30	–0.83	0.61	–0.58	0.42	–0.35	0.67
Conservative	0.43*	0.21	0.17	0.44	–0.41	0.30	0.07	0.48
White (ref.)	–		–		–		–	
Nonwhite	–0.23	0.29	–0.23	0.62	0.19	0.37	–1.42*	0.76
Hispanic	–0.54	0.35	–0.17	0.63	–1.17*	0.64	0.50	0.84
Age	0.01	0.03	0.09	0.01	0.01	0.05	–0.10	0.02
Age squared	–0.00	0.00	–0.00	0.00	–0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Male	–0.03	0.19	0.45	0.45	0.19	0.28	0.10	0.43
Midwest (ref.)	–		–		–		–	
South	–0.03	0.24	0.11	0.54	0.27	0.37	0.00	0.53
West	0.01	0.28	0.64	0.60	0.66	0.41	–0.14	0.67
Northeast	–0.26	0.29	0.05	0.66	–0.27	0.48	0.32	0.65
Intercept	–0.28	0.83	–4.58***	1.18	–1.29	1.19	1.98	1.33
<i>n</i> (control)	623		623		623		623	
<i>n</i> (treatment)			620				585	
<i>n</i> (total)	623		1243		623		120*	

* $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; Source: TESS/Knowledge Networks 2010.

frequent church attenders distinguish themselves in terms of opposition (explicit an implicit) to citizenship for Christian immigrants.²³ They are neither more opposed nor more tolerant. Thus, strength of ingroup identity does not matter for explicit or implicit support of other “ingroup” members nor does social desirability bias seem to be uniquely resulting in expressed tolerance among Evangelical Christians relative to mainline Protestants.

We do not suggest that other factors do not play role, although denomination and religiosity seem to be at best minimally predictive. As with opposition to Muslim immigrants, having a bachelor’s degree significantly decreases opposition to citizenship relative to high school graduates. The role of education, as expected, is consistent in both the explicit (Column 3) and implicit (Column 4) estimates. The explicit estimates (Column 3) also offer some support for the idea that higher incomes predict greater tolerance. Relative to the 1st quintile, the 3rd and 4th quintiles are more likely to oppose citizenship for Christian immigrants. However, this pattern is only observed for explicit opposition (Column 3), suggesting that social desirability bias plays a role among the higher income groups who tend to conceal their opposition to citizenship for Christian immigrants. In fact, the estimated coefficients for higher incomes in the list model (Column 4) are positive and not significant.²⁴

²³ We estimated models in which denomination and religiosity were included separately to assess the implications of a model in which both were included. For explicit opposition, the estimates for denomination and religiosity are largely consistent in terms of magnitude and significance. The only exception is the coefficient for frequent attenders, which decreases from –0.33 to –0.39 when denomination is included and becomes marginally significant ($p < 0.05$). We do not suggest that there is no correlation between denomination and religiosity. As seen the cross-tab, Evangelicals are slightly more than twice as likely to be frequent attenders than occasional or infrequent. That said, the simultaneous inclusion of both measures does not substantively change the estimated coefficient for either denomination or religiosity.

²⁴ Ethnicity plays a role, although the estimates are hard to interpret. In direct models, nonwhites are less likely than whites to be opposed and Hispanics are not significantly associated. In the list estimates, the relationship reverses, with Hispanics reporting a significantly lower opposition relative to whites and nonwhites having no significant association.

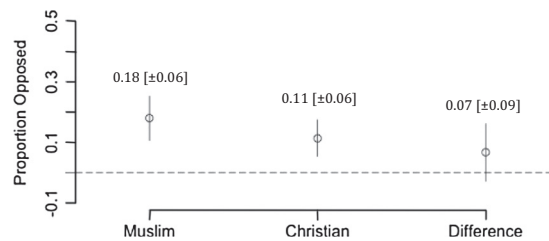
Table 3

Regressions of opposition to citizenship for legal Muslim and Christian immigrants – nonreligious only.

	(1) Muslim		(2)		(3) Christian		(4)	
	Explicit		Implicit		Explicit		Implicit	
	<i>b</i>	S.E.						
Mainline Protestant (ref.)	–		–	–	–		–	
Evangelical	–0.01	0.26	0.82	0.56	–0.01	0.37	0.20	0.53
Catholic	–0.01	0.25	0.53	0.49	–0.26	0.38	–0.27	0.53
Other Christian	–0.18	0.32	0.50	0.64	–0.21	0.46	–0.30	0.71
Nonreligious	–0.44	0.33	0.12	0.64	–0.03	0.43	0.50	0.56
Intercept	–0.78	0.76	–2.66***	1.02	–1.46	1.10	–0.34	1.08
<i>n</i> (control)	729		729		729		729	
<i>n</i> (treatment)			736				708	
<i>n</i> (total)	729		1465		729		1437	

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$, **** $p < 0.001$; Source: TESS/Knowledge Networks 2010.

Note: Similar to Table 2, all models control for education, income, political ideology, race/ethnicity, age, age squared and region. Religiosity is omitted because the nonreligious all, by definition, do not attend.

**Plot 5.** Explicit opposition to citizenship (nonreligious only). Source: TESS/Knowledge Networks 2010

13. Attitudes of the nonreligious

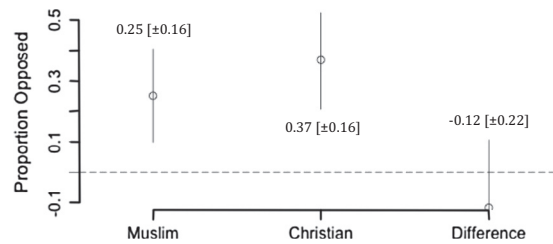
The focus of this work is a better understanding of the extent to which the US Christian population explicitly and implicitly express opposition to citizenship for ingroup (Christian immigrants) and outgroup (Muslim immigrants) members. One consideration is the nonreligious who comprise about 15% of the control ($n = 106$), Muslim treatment ($n = 116$) and Christian treatment ($n = 123$) samples. Table 3 reports the estimated coefficients from a model similar to that shown in Table 2, but with a sample that includes the nonreligious. The nonreligious, similar to Evangelicals and Catholics, do not significantly differ from mainline Protestants in their opposition to citizenship for Muslim and Christian immigrants.²⁵ Of note, the coefficient estimate for explicit opposition is -0.44 , which is larger than those estimated for Evangelical, Catholic and nondenominational Christians. Given the small sample of nonreligious respondents, relative to the other included denominational categories, this is indicative that the nonreligious could be somewhat distinct. To better assess the sentiment of nonreligious, explicit and implicit opposition are directly compared.

Plots 5 and 6 report the explicit and implicit opposition to Muslim and Christian immigrants for a sample of only the nonreligious ($n = 343$). If the nonreligious respondents mirror Christian identifying respondents in our sample, then we expect them to show higher levels of explicit opposition toward Muslims compared to Christians. However, if the nonreligious individuals show no difference in their explicit opposition toward Muslims and Christians, it would confirm our assumption that the non-religious don't identify with a religious group. As such, the non-religious don't share an ingroup identity with either group.

As seen in Plot 5, explicit opposition toward citizenship for Muslim immigrants, which is lower than that reported by Christian respondents (see Plot 1), is not significantly different from explicit opposition toward Christian immigrants. This is a distinct pattern from that seen for the sample of Christians who show significantly higher opposition to citizenship for Muslim immigrants. Implicit estimates are similar in that the difference between opposition to Muslim immigrants and Christian immigrants is not statistically significant.

We suggest caution in drawing conclusions about the nonreligious, as we cannot be sure of the religious orientations of those who report "none" for their religion. It would assume a lot to consider all of these respondents to be individuals who reject religion entirely. We feel that it is plausible that these respondents include religious respondents who found the denominational categorizations to be insufficient. The experiment used did not ask a question about nonreligious

²⁵ Of note, religiosity could not be included as frequency of attendance was only asked of those who reported a religion and/or denomination.



Plot 6. Implicit opposition to citizenship (nonreligious only). Source: TESS/Knowledge Networks 2010

immigrants nor generate a sample with a large number of nonreligious respondents. As a result, the estimates for the non-religious are indicative, but not definitive.

14. Discussion and conclusion

The primary goal of this work, encapsulated in our first set of hypotheses, is to establish the degree to which Muslim immigrants were subjected to targeted opposition as realistic group conflict theory predicts. We conclude that legal Muslim immigrants are indeed subject to targeted, explicit opposition, which H1a predicts. Islamophobia,²⁶ as opposed to a more generalized anti-immigrant sentiment, is a reasonable interpretation of the observed difference in explicit opposition. However, when social desirability bias is taken into account, opposition to Christian and Muslim immigrants is nearly identical, which is in-line with the more generalized notions of intolerance of immigrants. We conclude that the expression of relatively greater hostility explicitly toward Muslim immigrants reflects normative social pressure to appear more tolerant toward Christian “ingroups” rather than greater underlying opposition, which does not support the expectation of H1b. Indeed, we found implicit opposition to be practically identical.

Therefore, as we state in our second set of hypotheses, being a Christian can insulate immigrants from explicit anti-immigrant sentiment, which is a protection unavailable to Muslim immigrants. In this sense, explicitly expressed Islamophobia, reflected in higher relative opposition to Muslim immigrants, is better understood as a social desirability bias in favor of Christian immigrants.²⁷ That implicitly, both Christian and Muslim immigrants are subjected to similar levels of opposition calls into question the ability of social identity theory to explain implicit, underlying attachment toward an immigrant ingroup based on religious characteristics. Being a religious ingroup member is beneficial in mitigating explicit anti-immigrant sentiment, but it does not translate into greater levels of underlying acceptance. Rather, the implicitly measured underlying bias is generalized in nature.

Our third and fourth hypotheses assess the role of Christian identity, measured as denomination and religiosity, in determining explicit and implicit opposition to Muslim and Christian immigrants. We find little evidence that religious affiliation and frequency of attendance are related to both the implicit and explicit opposition directed toward Muslim immigrants or Christian immigrants in ways our hypotheses predict. For example, Evangelical Christians are not significantly more opposed to citizenship for Muslim immigrants than mainline Protestants. Religiosity shows some relationship with opposition to citizenship for Muslim immigrants as implicit measures suggest that occasional church attenders relative to those that do not attend services are significantly more opposed. Although research has consistently found that overreporting of religious attendance is linked to the desire to project a Christian identity in the U.S. (Brenner, 2012, 2011; Hadaway et al., 1998, 1993), there is little evidence that religiosity is a determinant of opposition. In fact, frequent attenders, who should demonstrate the greatest ingroup attachment, are not significantly different from those that do not attend.

We demonstrate that research focusing uncritically on explicit measures of anti-immigrant sentiment suffers from significant bias. We suggest that observed variation in anti-immigrant sentiment by religious affiliation of the immigrant, which has been attributed to a variety of determinants (McLaren, 2003; Meuleman et al., 2009; Manevska and Achterberg, 2013; Schneider, 2007; Schlueter et al., 2008; Quillian, 1995; Stephan et al., 1999), may be in part—or, in the case of the US, mostly—attributable to the public explicit expression of tolerance for immigrant members of a given religious ingroup. We conclude that more generalized explanations of anti-immigrant opinions offer a better explanation of implicit sentiment that is more consistent with the data.

This work has clear implications for the social integration of Muslim immigrants. Although opposition to citizenship is similar across the religious groups assessed (about 30% opposed), the fact that explicit opposition to Muslim immigrants is more freely expressed suggests that Muslim immigrants navigate a societal landscape that both disproportionately views them as outsiders and feels relatively entitled to express this belief. This treatment is distinct from Christian immigrants who navigate a more “explicitly” welcoming reception. Future work should better assess the ways in which explicit social

²⁶ We follow the work of Bleich (2011) who defines Islamophobia as “indiscriminant negative attitudes or emotions directed at Islam or Muslims.” In line with Kinder and Kam (2009), we acknowledge that xenophobia and the more restrictive Islamophobia only refer to outgroup intolerance whereas social identity theory encompasses ingroup preferences.

²⁷ It is possible that this favorable bias is extended to other immigrant groups rather than only Christian immigrants, but our data do not allow us to provide additional comparisons.

acceptance offers co-religious immigrants a more favorable context of reception and incorporation. Given extensive research on the role that reception plays in shaping distinct trajectories of immigrant incorporation (Portes and Zhou, 1993), untangling the different consequences of explicit and implicit forms of opposition offers a clear next step.

Acknowledgments

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