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**THESIS**

**COMBATTING PREJUDICE: UNDERSTANDING  
MEDIA PREJUDICE TOWARD MUSLIMS AND  
ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS' EFFORTS TO  
COMBAT IT**

by

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December 2017

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**COMBATING PREJUDICE: UNDERSTANDING MEDIA PREJUDICE  
TOWARD MUSLIMS AND ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS' EFFORTS TO  
COMBAT IT**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Prejudice toward Muslim and Sikh Americans, at times violent, continues in America despite advocacy organizations' efforts to combat it. Some scholars have suggested that this violence is due to a gap in firsthand interactions between Muslim and non-Muslim Americans, a critical void often filled by a prejudicial media. This thesis investigates underlying causes of media prejudice toward Muslim Americans and how well advocacy organizations are addressing this issue. Specifically, the thesis examines the reasons behind American media's promotion of prejudice in civil society, focusing on civil society groups that may be responsible for promoting stereotypes. The thesis suggests that Orientalism and efforts by fringe organizations contribute to media prejudice. Three main recommendations can be drawn from the thesis. First, advocacy organizations need to reach wider audiences to effect change based on intergroup contact theory, which promotes interaction among different groups. Second, advocacy organizations need to address fringe organizations directly. Third, advocacy organizations need to work with media advertisers to promote change and introduce new programs specifically to help normalize relationships between Muslim Americans, Sikhs, and other Americans.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| 9/11   | September 11, 2001                              |
| ACLU   | American Civil Liberties Union                  |
| ADC    | American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee     |
| BJP    | Bharatiya Janata Party                          |
| CAAM   | Comcast and the Center for Asian American Media |
| CAIR   | Council on American-Islamic Relations           |
| CVE    | countering violent extremism                    |
| DHS    | Department of Homeland Security                 |
| DOD    | Department of Defense                           |
| DOJ    | Department of Justice                           |
| FBI    | Federal Bureau of Investigation                 |
| ICT    | intergroup contact theory                       |
| ISIL   | Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant            |
| ISIS   | Islamic State in Iraq and Syria                 |
| NGO    | nongovernment organization                      |
| NYT    | <i>New York Times</i>                           |
| PSA    | public service announcement                     |
| SALDEF | Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund  |
| SPLC   | Southern Poverty Law Center                     |
| WSJ    | <i>Wall Street Journal</i>                      |

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Prejudice toward Muslim and Sikh Americans continues in America despite advocacy organizations' efforts to combat it. In fact, the Pew Research Center compiled Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) data that show a 67 percent increase in anti-Muslim hate crime from 2014 to 2015.<sup>1</sup> This violence also spills over to groups, such as Sikh-Americans, who are deemed to be similar. Some scholars suggest that the prejudice is due to a gap in firsthand interactions between Muslim and non-Muslim Americans, a critical void often filled by a prejudicial media. This thesis investigated underlying causes of media prejudice toward Muslim Americans and how well advocacy organizations utilize intergroup contact theory to fill the gap in firsthand interactions to help reduce prejudice.

This thesis first investigated evidence of media prejudice through an analysis of the media's portrayal of religious institutions and garments. The analysis included newspaper articles, TV shows, and other academic research to better understand how and why media exacerbates negative stereotypes, further promoting prejudice. Next, the thesis introduced intergroup contact theory, which explains how to build social capital among groups to reduce prejudice.<sup>2</sup> Five advocacy organizations' efforts were analyzed using a new framework built on intergroup contact theory to determine how well their efforts incorporate its criteria. The research into advocacy organizations also considered how the organizations work with or against the media to prevent and draw attention to media prejudice.

Regarding media prejudice, the research found clear evidence that the media is prejudiced in its depiction of Muslims and Islam. While many of the false depictions and recycled stereotypes were not intentional, they fit the framework of an historically

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<sup>1</sup> Kishi Katayoun, "Anti-Muslim Assaults Reach 9/11-Era Levels, FBI Data Show," Pew Research Center, November 21, 2016, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/21/anti-muslim-assaults-reach-911-era-levels-fbi-data-show/>.

<sup>2</sup> David E. Campbell and Robert D. Putnam, "America's Grace: How a Tolerant Nation Bridges Its Religious Divides," *Political Science Quarterly* 126, no. 4 (December 1, 2011): 620, <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1538-165X.2011.tb00714.x>.

prejudicial Orientalist view of Muslims. There were some examples of intentional prejudice, specifically from FOX News, which willingly served as a legitimate forum for fringe organizations to spread their false narratives.

In the review of advocacy organizations, the thesis found that no clear evidence exists that advocacy organizations are basing efforts on scientifically validated methods to increase positive intergroup contact. The research also suggests that no discernable difference exists between direct engagement by advocacy organizations and indirect methods, such as televised public service announcements. The thesis uncovered several similarities among efforts, such as the use of social media to magnify their respective messages, as well as many differences. Ultimately, the research revealed that organizations' efforts are not extensive enough to fill the lack of firsthand contact, which is then filled by prejudicial media stereotypes.

The thesis offers three recommendations. First, advocacy organizations need to reach wider audiences to effect change. To do so, organizations should look to social media to help spread their messages. Organizations also need to define their target audiences better to focus their limited resources. The second recommendation is for advocacy organizations to address and combat fringe organizations directly. These organizations and individuals are a root cause of prejudice in civil society that must be addressed. The final recommendation is for advocacy organizations to work with media advertisers to promote change and introduce new programming to help normalize their depiction of Muslim and Sikh Americans. A more realistic and normal view of Muslim Americans can help to reverse stereotypes and prevent future prejudice in civil society.

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

After the September 11, 2001 (9/11) attack in New York City, Americans largely came together as a nation to condemn the attackers in the immediate aftermath, but at the same time some Americans became outcasts and the objects of hatred and misunderstanding. An immediate suspicion developed against those who looked like and practiced the same religion as the perpetrators of the attack, leading to several incidents of violence across the country. In the six years that followed 9/11, the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Civil Rights Division investigated 800 incidents involving violence, threats, vandalism, and arson against such minority communities.<sup>1</sup> One would think that years after 9/11, impulsive blame toward minorities would ebb resulting in a reduction in the number of incidents. However, with the perceived rise in homegrown violent extremism and anti-immigrant rhetoric in the United States and Europe, minority community groups are in reality experiencing an increase in threats and violence against their communities.<sup>2</sup> The Pew Research Center compiled Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) data that shows a 67% increase in anti-Muslim hate crime from 2014 to 2015.<sup>3</sup> In addition, an ongoing Pew survey, last conducted in January 2017, reported that Americans continue to express the least favorable sentiment toward Muslims compared to all other religious groups.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Justice, *Confronting Discrimination in the Post-9/11 Era: Challenges and Opportunities Ten Years Later: A Report on the Civil Rights Division's Post-9/11 Civil Rights Summit Hosted by George Washington University Law School, October 19, 2011* (Washington, DC: Department of Justice, 2011), 2, [https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/crt/legacy/2012/04/16/post911summit\\_report\\_2012-04.pdf](https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/crt/legacy/2012/04/16/post911summit_report_2012-04.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>3</sup> Kishi Katayoun, "Anti-Muslim Assaults Reach 9/11-Era Levels, FBI Data Show," Pew Research Center, November 21, 2016, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/21/anti-muslim-assaults-reach-911-era-levels-fbi-data-show/>.

<sup>4</sup> "Americans Express Increasingly Warm Feelings toward Religious Groups," Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project, February 15, 2017, <http://www.pewforum.org/2017/02/15/americans-express-increasingly-warm-feelings-toward-religious-groups/>.

According to some advocacy groups, the ill sentiment and continued incidents of hatred toward Muslims result from the media's depiction of Muslims.<sup>5</sup> Often in the media, they argue, Muslims are shown as terrorists or radicals.<sup>6</sup> The recent Fox channel's 24 is an example of this ongoing trend.<sup>7</sup> Such portrayal of Muslims as terrorists may continue to exacerbate Americans' negative prejudice toward them and other minorities associated or seen in a similar community. Yet, free media is an important civil institution of democracy, checking the power of the state. Free speech is a protected category under the Constitution, making it difficult to pass laws to control its output.

While it is difficult to limit media output, the government, nongovernment organizations (NGOs), and advocacy groups are making efforts toward solving this problem. Organizations, such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), release public service announcements to combat negative media portrayals by promoting positive examples of Muslim Americans.<sup>8</sup> The Ford Foundation, for instance, promotes and organizes events, such as interfaith meetings and cultural exchange programs.<sup>9</sup> Some advocacy organizations and government agencies also respond to acts of bigotry and attempt to combat prejudice through meetings with local law enforcement and community roundtable events.<sup>10</sup>

Whether the media portrayals of Muslims and other minorities are intentional or not, a body of significant theoretical work explains how contact influences a person's beliefs and personal biases. Therefore, this research problem looks at a combination of media and social contact theories. Understanding these theories in relation to media

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<sup>5</sup> Melena Ryzik, "Can Television Be Fair to Muslims?," *New York Times*, November 30, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/30/arts/television/can-television-be-fair-to-muslims.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> James Poniewozik, "'24: Legacy,' A One-Hour Super Bowl Ad for Islamophobia," *New York Times*, February 6, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/06/arts/television/muslim-terrorists-24-trump.html>.

<sup>8</sup> "About the ACLU," American Civil Liberties Union, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.aclu.org/about-aclu>.

<sup>9</sup> Eric Ward, "How Can We Fight Islamophobia in America?," Ford Foundation, March 7, 2016, <https://www.fordfoundation.org/ideas/equal-change-blog/posts/how-can-we-fight-islamophobia-in-america/>.

<sup>10</sup> "Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties," Department of Homeland Security, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.dhs.gov/office-civil-rights-and-civil-liberties>.

portrayals and advocacy efforts may not only make it possible to understand better the dynamics at play, but also enable insight into what can work to combat prejudice and why.

## **B. RESEARCH QUESTION**

This thesis addresses the question of how and why the American media plays a role in promoting prejudice, what are various organizations doing about it, and how are organizations using intergroup contact theory to combat prejudice?

This question is important to answer for several reasons. The first is the homeland security and stability aspect. The media's negative depiction of Muslims creates an instability that can ultimately lead to conflict. The August 5, 2012, Oak Creek Sikh Temple shooting in Wisconsin left six Sikh Americans dead and a grieving community is just one example of the senseless violence spawned by prejudice.<sup>11</sup> While these types of violence cannot be directly connected to a specific message in the media, continued media portrayal of Muslims and other minorities as dangerous and problematic may have led to a xenophobic backlash. Second, this research contributes to the theoretical understanding on what causes clashes among communities and institutional and organizational theories that work to reduce prejudice. The thesis provides a framework for evaluating advocacy organizations' efforts based on intergroup contact theory. Lastly, this thesis has global implications, as prejudice against Muslims is a growing issue across the world as Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) reaches a global audience using social media and other sources.<sup>12</sup> The media's portrayal of Muslims is not a new topic of discussion as seen in the following literature review, but this thesis goes beyond pure discussion to analyze the problem and offer solutions.

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<sup>11</sup> Deepa Iyer, "Oak Creek Community Marks Two Years since Sikh Temple Shooting," NBC News, August 5, 2014, <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/oak-creek-community-marks-two-years-sikh-temple-shooting-n171981>.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Lipka, "Muslims and Islam: Key Findings in the U.S. and around the World," Pew Research Center, February 27, 2017, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/02/27/muslims-and-islam-key-findings-in-the-u-s-and-around-the-world/>.

## C. LITERATURE REVIEW

The media plays an important role in shaping society, and specific to this thesis, the role of promoting or combating prejudice within a society. This literature review examines literature that provides the framework for understanding inter-religious conflict in civil society to answer the continued problem of hatred and violence toward Muslim Americans and other minorities that are associated or seen in a similar community. The first section examines how the media influences and molds democracy in the United States. The following section examines theories on what causes conflict in civil society and how to avoid and end conflict between communities. Lastly, the final section reviews literature from civil institutions and specific organizations on the solutions to ending conflict. This thesis contributes to the literature by addressing gaps and providing new insight.

### 1. Media and Society

The examination of how the media shapes society is not new. What has changed over time is how new media platforms shaped society. Yet, an examination of the literature reveals that the way the media forwards content is the driving factor and not necessarily the platform in and of itself. The literature covered in this thesis tends to focus on news media, but also looks at what *Media and Democracy* refers to as “soft news,” which is news that is closer to entertainment or incorporated within a fictional TV show.<sup>13</sup> This focus is necessary, as the Pew Center reveals that a growing percentage of the population is shifting away from traditional news sources.<sup>14</sup> This thesis focuses specifically on how and why the media shapes prejudice toward Muslim Americans. To conduct the research, it is necessary to understand the foundational literature on how the media shapes overall society.

The literature provides several key findings on the relationship between the media and democracy. First, the media plays an important role in American society as a

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<sup>13</sup> James Curran, *Media and Democracy. (Communication and Society)* (Oxford; New York: Routledge, 2011), 47–48.

<sup>14</sup> Amy Mitchell et al., “The Modern News Consumer,” Pew Research Center, July 7, 2016, <http://www.journalism.org/2016/07/07/pathways-to-news/>.

communicator between different segments of civil society that are the foundation of U.S. democracy. In the 1830s, Alexis de Tocqueville uncovered the power of the media in communicating public opinion between groups and political leaders dispersed throughout America.<sup>15</sup> Doris Garber captures Tocqueville's concept and expands on it to dispel myths and stereotypes on the role of the media in democracy.

Garber highlights the continued myth that if politicians are able to control the media, then they will be able to control society.<sup>16</sup> Dispelling the myth, Garber looks to the work of Mughan Gunther, who compared several political and ideological media sources and came to the conclusion that rival political groups, as well as cultural factions within a democracy, would make it nearly impossible for only one media message to be heard.<sup>17</sup> Garber also pointedly notes how totalitarian leaders during World War II were only successful in manipulating the media to obfuscate reality to the point at which it was obvious to the people that the media was not representing the reality on the ground.<sup>18</sup> Since this thesis examines a set of anti-Muslim messages, the question that emerges is what are the sources of this message and how can they be addressed?

Similar to Garber, Shanto Iyengar offers a major framework for examining the relationship between the media and what is important in society.<sup>19</sup> This agenda-setting hypothesis argues that the public's perception of a problem is shaped by the way television news focuses on it.<sup>20</sup> For instance, if a news channel dedicates considerably more time to a topic, such as foodborne illness, and less time to failing infrastructure, then the public will perceive that foodborne illness is a greater problem in society.

Furthering the idea of the media influencing societal notions of what is important, Iyengar examines the media's ability to frame the news and assign blame to specific

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<sup>15</sup> Doris Graber, "The Media and Democracy: Beyond Myths and Stereotypes," *Annual Review of Political Science* 6 (January 8, 2003): 140, doi: 10.1146/annurev.polisci.6.121901.085707.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>19</sup> Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder, *News That Matters: Television and American Opinion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 33.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

individuals or groups, while at the same time, offering it as objective news.<sup>21</sup> Together, the ability to influence what is important in society and who is responsible illustrates the great power the media can have on a democracy.

The United States' democracy places great value on having a free market society; as a result, the United States has a commercialized media model as opposed to a public media model popular in countries, such as the United Kingdom.<sup>22</sup> In fact, prior to 1990, when satellites became available for commercial activity, most countries in the world had a state-led media sector.<sup>23</sup> It is worth noting that the United States does have some publicly funded media, but private entities own the vast majority of it. In *Media and Democracy*, James Curran explores how commercialized media can be problematic in a democracy. The main problem is that the goal of profit making can be directly at odds with the media's expected central purpose to provide socially responsible journalism to promote a well-informed public.<sup>24</sup> Yet, entertainment becomes the center of media business rather than news, which at times can be dry information. Due to business interests over journalistic interests, the media has shifted to an environment where soft news is overwhelming hard news. According to the literature, the effect of this shift is that Americans are less informed about important information than they are of news that can entertain.<sup>25</sup> This thesis examines how entertainment and soft news offers prejudicial messages that civil society takes as fact.

A commercialized media, combined with the media's ability to influence what is important in society and who is responsible, *can* be a dangerous combination. Curran concludes that this influence has led to an uneducated American populace unaware of the major problems within its society and that societies' view are shaped by commercialized entertainment instead of fact-based news.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Iyengar and Kinder, *News That Matters: Television and American Opinion*, 33.

<sup>22</sup> Curran, *Media and Democracy*, 51–52.

<sup>23</sup> Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Terhi Rantanen, *The Globalization of News* (London; Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1998), 207.

<sup>24</sup> Curran, *Media and Democracy*, 49.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 51–52.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

The idea of profit driving media content rather than social need is believable; however, a gap exists in the research of how people now receive news given that an increasing number of media forums, especially digital, are competing for profits. First, society now has the ability to access any news outlet, anywhere, at any time, whereas, before the digital revolution, people were limited to the news outlets in their geographic area. Second, social media has the ability to both spread and dispel false narratives. This thesis considers these two possibilities through research into the media that is prejudiced toward Muslim Americans and how advocacy organizations are fighting prejudice in the digital age.

This thesis also looks at the profound change that American media and society is experiencing with the recognition of false reports and propaganda delivered as if they are real news. While the literature on the media and society does not directly address fake news, it is important to examine this aspect since media theory does examine how the media has the power to set an agenda and influence popular opinion. In relation to this thesis, the media's portrayal of Muslim Americans may not fall completely into fake news, but an element of repeating false stereotypes and misleading narratives over positive aspects of Muslim-American life is worth examining. Civil society relies upon the media to report on and reflect what is occurring in that society. The next section reviews literature on conflict in civil society with an eye toward the media's role as an institution.

## **2. Conflict in Civil Society**

A copious amount of information is available on why conflict in society is occurring, as researchers have analyzed this problem by looking at various cases. This review examines literature specific to civil society and inter-community conflict. What causes this conflict and does the media play a role in this conflict is essential for this thesis?

Significant numbers of scholars agree that explaining why conflicts occur in some societies but not others can appear perplexing. However, analyzing particular aspects of various societies reveals some commonalities that can help understand conflict across

societies.<sup>27</sup> The review pulls major themes from known research and identifies the theoretical basis for why conflict occurs. The two main approaches the literature uses in conducting research are through an analysis of historical instances of violence in civil society and through surveys that attempt to measure trust in society.

First, what is civil society? Ashutosh Varshney defines civil society as any formal or informal association between individuals or groups of many different religious, racial, linguistic, and sectarian backgrounds.<sup>28</sup> In a democracy, civil society is very important, as all the demands for governance occur at this level. People make their interests apparent and the government selected by them then executes them. However, why is it that conflict breaks out in society in some cases? To understand this conflict, it is also necessary to understand why a significant number of people do get along.

Francis Fukuyama defines social capital as “a norm that promotes cooperation between two or more individuals.”<sup>29</sup> The literature looks at this concept of social capital to explain why individuals form relationships built on trust and what norms (or lack of norms) are at play when relationships fall into conflict. In addition to analyzing why conflict occurs, Fukuyama’s work looks at how to build social capital within a society to prevent or end conflict. The literature that goes beyond identifying why conflict results starts to look at 1) particular norms that use social identity theory to understand the in-group/out-group relationships, and 2) analyzing the structure of civil society.

Varshney’s work on “Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society” primarily analyzed civil society by looking at relationships between inter-ethnic networks within cities and villages in India. Varshney found that cities and villages with formal civic institutions that promoted building bridges between different ethnic groups were less likely to engage in ethnic violence.<sup>30</sup> In essence, civic networks allowed for in-groups and out-groups to build social capital between each other.

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<sup>27</sup> Ashutosh Varshney, “Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society: India and Beyond,” *World Politics* 53, no. 3 (2001): 362.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 365.

<sup>29</sup> Francis Fukuyama, “Social Capital, Civil Society and Development,” *Third World Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (2001): 7.

<sup>30</sup> Varshney, “Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society,” 375.

While both Varshney's and Fukuyama's work looks at building social capital through formal institutions, Robert Putnam looked at building trust in more informal situations not necessarily reliant upon formal institutions to bring people together. Putnam's work, related to religious tolerance, expands upon 1950s social psychologist Gordon Allport's development of intergroup contact theory.<sup>31</sup> On the surface, intergroup contact theory seems somewhat obvious, in that increased social interaction between groups will reduce prejudice, but the framework created by Allport and further tested by Putnam and researchers Thomas Pettigrew and Linda Tropp delves much deeper into helping answer why some group interactions reduce prejudice, while others do not.

Pettigrew's and Tropp's meta-analysis study found that "intergroup contact can promote reductions in intergroup prejudice," as reflected in 94% of the samples showing an inverse relationship between contact and prejudice.<sup>32</sup> While they did find that Allport's original four conditions were still viable, they found that they were not all essential to reducing prejudice as researchers previously thought and that additional markers positively correlate to reduced prejudice.<sup>33</sup>

Edward Schiappa's most recent literature further elaborates on intergroup contact theory by looking at how parasocial contact through TV and film also influences a person's predisposition to the depicted minority group.<sup>34</sup> Schiappa ascertains that, "If we can learn from televised characters representing distinct social groups, then it is possible that parasocial contact could influence attitudes about such groups in a manner consistent with the influence of direct intergroup contact."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> David E. Campbell and Robert D. Putnam, "America's Grace: How a Tolerant Nation Bridges Its Religious Divides," *Political Science Quarterly* 126, no. 4 (December 1, 2011): 620, <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1538-165X.2011.tb00714.x>.

<sup>32</sup> Thomas F. Pettigrew and Linda R. Tropp, "A Meta-Analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 90, no. 5 (2006): 766, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.90.5.751>.

<sup>33</sup> Campbell and Putnam, "America's Grace: How a Tolerant Nation Bridges Its Religious Divides," 622.

<sup>34</sup> Edward Schiappa, Peter Gregg, and Dean Hewes, "The Parasocial Contact Hypothesis," *Communication Monographs* 72, no. 1 (February 17, 2007): 92–115, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0363775052000342544>.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

While academia has researched conflict in civil society from the perspectives of social capital, societal structure, and social interaction, this thesis uses the literature to understand further the media's role in building social capital as an institution, which serves as a proxy for intergroup contact, as well as how its objectives can also lead to conflict.

Snyder presents a variation of this argument that a corrupt yet powerful institution, such as a media, may push a nationalist agenda, which may cause a problem.<sup>36</sup> This argument again is becoming more relevant as society grapples with deciphering fake news from trustworthy news. Snyder reminds readers that while the populist message can be from the government, it can also be from voluntary organizations that are themselves part of civil society, such as the Jacobin clubs of the French Revolution and or political parties, such as Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in India.<sup>37</sup> This thesis' research into prejudice toward Muslim Americans examines if prejudiced messaging stems from what were once fringe organizations that used the 9/11 attacks as an opportunity to set their own political agenda.

Within the realm of the structure of civil society, the literature does primarily agree that formal institutions are necessary to reduce conflict, but Fukuyama presents a stipulation that too much involvement of the government may lead to an overreliance of institutions and not enough trust of each other.<sup>38</sup> This concept is important to understand because it implies the importance of advocacy groups or other civil society institutions. This thesis explores the connection between conflict in civil society and what types of organizations and actions are helping to reduce conflict by addressing media prejudice.

### **3. Institutional Solutions to Combat Prejudice**

In the United States, the government has a constitutional responsibility to protect its people from prejudice and discrimination; however, advocacy organizations and

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<sup>36</sup> Jack Snyder and Karen Ballentine, "Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas," *International Security* 21, no. 2 (1996): 8, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539069>.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 18.

academic institutions also play a major role, as they are significant parts of what make up the civil society. These institutions provide a wealth of literature on the subject in the form of annual reports, newsletters, and regular stakeholder updates. The literature falls into two categories, 1) descriptive efforts by the group to combat prejudice, and 2) critical analyses that address government policies and programs that may be prejudicial or discriminatory themselves and accompanying recommendations.

In 2016, the DOJ issued a report on *Combating Religious Discrimination Today* that falls mostly within the first category of describing current government efforts. The report acknowledges problems facing religious minority communities and provides a synopsis of what the government is doing to combat religious discrimination in education, employment, hate crimes, and religious land use.<sup>39</sup> This type of literature is pertinent to this thesis as a basis for understanding what efforts are currently being done and analyzing if they address and have any impact on reducing media prejudice.

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights' 2014 report on *Federal Civil Rights Engagement with Arab and Muslim American Communities* provides a critical review of government policies and programs. Within the report, both the government and advocacy organization experts critically look at government initiatives and rate the level of trust of different government organizations.<sup>40</sup> The report follows a similar pattern to the literature on conflict in society, as it unknowingly discusses how to build social capital between groups and institutions by looking at trust.

The literature for advocacy organizations, such as the Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF), is seen through continual newsletters and updates on ongoing activities. The key difference of advocacy organization literature is that it does not try to be from a balanced perspective. Advocacy groups are trying to push a certain agenda, which they clearly reflect through opinions in their literature. SALDEF literature focuses on building relationships with other groups and institutions and

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<sup>39</sup> Department of Justice, *Combating Religious Discrimination Today: Final Report* (Washington, DC: Department of Justice, 2016), 12, <https://www.justice.gov/crt/file/877936/download>.

<sup>40</sup> U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Federal Civil Rights Engagement with Arab and Muslim American Communities* (Washington, DC: U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2014), 22, [http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/ARAB\\_MUSLIM\\_9-30-14.pdf](http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/ARAB_MUSLIM_9-30-14.pdf).

particularly law enforcement organizations.<sup>41</sup> While not directly saying so, the literature from advocacy organizations is essentially saying that building relationships with other groups and people will educate others through awareness and that relationships with formal institutions can help assist and protect the community when an incident of hatred occurs. This thesis benefits from this literature and expands on how the advocacy groups' efforts impact media prejudice.

Literature from academic institutions, such as the Brookings Institute and the Brennan Center for Justice, are more fact-based as opposed to anecdotally based. These organizations tend to use in-house or PEW Research data to analyze incidents of prejudice. The literature again focuses on combatting prejudice through educating others on cultural diversity and building coalitions, but also looks at issues of public perception as a problem to combatting prejudice. For instance, the Brookings Institute published a report titled, *Fear, Inc., The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America* that looked to uncover institutions within civil society promoting hatred and exacerbating myths and stereotypes.<sup>42</sup>

Almost all the literature from government agencies, advocacy organizations, and academic institutions agrees that building relationships is central to combatting prejudice. The same experts continually attend each other's forums and roundtable events throughout the United States, which may leave a gap in fresh ideas. A commonality in the literature emphasizes solving the problem of hatred through youth education. This thesis does look at advocacy organizations' youth outreach and education efforts.

Overall, the literature on the media and society, conflict in civil society, and institutional solutions to combating prejudice address similar questions from different perspectives. The literature looks at the role of government, the media, and other institutions as it relates to building or depleting social capital in civil society. Unfortunately, even with all the literature, conflict still happens in society. This thesis

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<sup>41</sup> Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund, "SALDEF Trainings Continue across America," SALDEF, October 18, 2016, <http://saldef.org/spotlight/lepp-oct-2016/#.WPS0LVKZORs>.

<sup>42</sup> Wajahat Ali et al., *Fear, Inc., The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America* (Washington, DC: Center for American Progress, 2011), <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=685242>.

explores a gap by looking at how and why the media is prejudicial and what organizations should be doing to combat it.

#### **D. RESEARCH DESIGN**

This thesis analyzes the American media's portrayal of Muslim Americans and other minorities that the public presumes to be Muslim, such as other South Asians and Middle Easterners. The thesis focuses on data over the past decade, but also looks at some data prior to 9/11 to provide a comparative analysis of how the media's portrayal of Muslim Americans may have changed. The author reviews and analyzes examples of media prejudice and advocacy groups' efforts to combat prejudice. As part of this review, he emphasizes media messages and advocacy efforts immediately following terrorist attacks to see if a change in messaging and approach has occurred. He looks to see if a recurring pattern of media prejudice emerges and if certain characteristics of advocacy groups' efforts successfully counter media prejudice.

The author specifically conducts content analysis on the media's portrayal of religious garments and head coverings, and the portrayal of places of worship to define and limit the study. He analyzes this narrowed view of Muslim Americans, as these two areas are key attributes that are regularly a focus of American media attention. Religious garments and head coverings are an important topic of conversation in several European countries, particularly in France that has largely banned religious garments in public.<sup>43</sup> American media and society have also started this conversation. He also analyzes places of worship, as a fraught relationship definitely exists between many local communities and Muslim groups that plan to build mosques in those communities.<sup>44</sup>

This focused approach provides detailed analysis on an important piece of a broad subject. The author also reviews works from scholarly journals and other articles that similarly tie together the media's role in civil society and prejudice toward Muslims. The

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<sup>43</sup> Joseph V. Micallef, "Is France Right to Ban the Burkini?," *Huffington Post*, September 3, 2016, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/joseph-v-micallef/is-france-right-to-ban-th\\_b\\_11845732.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/joseph-v-micallef/is-france-right-to-ban-th_b_11845732.html).

<sup>44</sup> Department of Justice, *Combating Religious Discrimination Today: Final Report*, 23.

review of media prejudice recognizes the extent of the problem, and more importantly, reveals underlying reasons that the media continues to engage in prejudice.

For this thesis, the media includes news outlets, TV shows, and social media. A plethora of media sources is available to review, and as such, this thesis reviews select sources from each media category. Within each media category, the author documents and categorizes the portrayal of religious garments and religious institutions as positive, negative, or neutral. He also documents a negative portrayal based on an association between the topic and terrorism or false stereotypes. Neutral portrayals are those not associated with terrorism or false stereotypes. Positive portrayals are those that highlight religious freedom or dispel false stereotypes.

## 1. Media Prejudice

- **News Outlets**—The author focuses on online content to provide a comparable analysis of different news sources. He looks at one left leaning and one right-leaning publication to balance political ideology.
  - *New York Times*—This newspaper was selected because it is a national publication with broad readership. The newspaper is left leaning in its political ideology.
  - *Wall Street Journal*—This news outlet was selected for its national coverage and right-leaning ideology.
- **TV Shows**—He focuses on fictional programming that is both popular and widely distributed across the United States.
  - *24*—This show was selected for its popularity and duration of 10 seasons that started in 2001, which coincides with the anti-Muslim backlash after 9/11. The show is publicly broadcast on the FOX network.
  - *Homeland*—This show was also selected for its popularity. The audience of *Homeland* is a slightly different group, as it is aired on Showtime, a paid cable network owned by CBS.

## 2. Advocacy Groups' Efforts to Combat Prejudice through the Media

The author reviews specific examples of advocacy groups' efforts to combat prejudice in two areas, 1) how groups directly challenge the media to stop prejudiced news, and 2) how advocacy organizations promote increased exposure to minority groups to reduce prejudice. He looks at national level advocacy groups and grassroots organizations to analyze a mix of organizations' reach and resources. He did not conduct a comprehensive survey to capture changes in prejudice. Instead, he evaluates the advocacy groups' efforts against an intergroup contact theory framework to see if the efforts meet the necessary conditions to affect prejudice. The framework includes eight conditions of social interaction that must be met: have equal status, share common goals, have intergroup cooperation, have the support of authorities, law, or custom, have social likability; increase knowledge sharing; reduce anxiety, and have empathy and perspective taking.<sup>45</sup> This analysis furthers 1) a better understanding of why advocacy groups' efforts have not prompted an end to media prejudice, and 2) recommendations on what elements of successful efforts should be integrated in future efforts.

- **Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC):** The SPLC provides a national forum to civil rights and civil liberties issues beyond only issues affecting Muslim Americans. The SPLC has a large national following and the resources to sustain several campaigns at once.
- **Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF):** The SALDEF is a national organization that focuses on “building dialogue, deepening understanding, promoting civic and political participation, and upholding social justice and religious freedom for all Americans.”<sup>46</sup> The SALDEF has created cultural awareness content for law enforcement and a national level public service announcement on Sikhism.

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<sup>45</sup> Thomas F. Pettigrew, “Intergroup Contact Theory,” *Annual Review of Psychology* 49, no. 1 (1998): 66, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.49.1.65>.

<sup>46</sup> “SALDEF Mission & Vision,” Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund, accessed November 10, 2017, [http://saldef.org/about-us/mission-values/#.WL2G\\_hiZORs](http://saldef.org/about-us/mission-values/#.WL2G_hiZORs).

- **American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC):** The ADC’s mission is to “help us combat discrimination, protect the civil and human rights of the Arab American community, promote mutual understanding, and preserve our rich cultural heritage.”<sup>47</sup>
- **Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR):** The CAIR is the largest Islamic grassroots organization in the United States and focuses on enhancing the understanding of Islam in the United States and empowering Muslim Americans.<sup>48</sup>
- **Ad Council:** The Ad Council is an organization that identifies public issues and promotes action to address those issues through the media.<sup>49</sup> The Ad Council specifically has an ongoing campaign to address diversity and inclusion that uses a combination of social media and televised public service announcements to promote its message.

This thesis contributes to the understanding of the media’s role in shaping prejudice toward Muslim Americans and offers recommendations to advocacy organizations on how to strengthen their efforts to reduce prejudice. Through the analysis of media prejudice and advocacy groups’ efforts to counter prejudice, the author identifies a previously undrawn circular connection between the two. He uses media and social contact theories to analyze media and advocacy group efforts and how they affect prejudice. He believes that the underlying problem is that prejudiced news on Muslim Americans is serving as a proxy for social contact between certain societies within the United States that have no contact with Muslim Americans. The media continues prejudiced narratives to push their own agenda and for financial gain. The study of advocacy groups’ efforts to combat prejudice reveals successful efforts in breaking the cycle.

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<sup>47</sup> “American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee,” American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, accessed November 10, 2017, <http://www.adc.org/>.

<sup>48</sup> “About Us,” Council on American-Islamic Relations, October 1, 2015, <https://www.cair.com/about-us.html>.

<sup>49</sup> “About Us,” AdCouncil, accessed November 10, 2017, <http://www.adcouncil.org/About-Us>.

## II. PREJUDICE IN THE MEDIA

The media's the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that's power. Because they control the minds of the masses.

~ Malcolm X<sup>50</sup>

To understand the media's broad influence on societal attitudes toward Muslims, this chapter takes an in-depth look at a range of media segments, including newspapers, television news, entertainment TV, and film, as most non-Muslim Americans do not actually come into contact with Muslims; rather their exposure to the community is through the media. As of 2014, American Muslims made up less than 1% of the country's population and only 38% of Americans knew someone who is Muslim.<sup>51</sup> This gap in firsthand interactions with Muslims creates a void, making the media's role in filling that void critical. The following analysis into the media's portrayal of Muslims reveals that a media prejudice, at times unintentional, against Muslim Americans does occur. This chapter examines the causes and patterns of prejudice. The research also reveals efforts of certain segments of society that promote the negative media narrative.

The review of media platforms includes a review of direct sources, as well as scholarly research that has independently analyzed the media's portrayal of Muslim Americans. The first section begins with newspapers.

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<sup>50</sup> Jalysa King, "5 Quotes from Civil Rights Activists We Can Still Learn from Today," Elite Daily, February 10, 2016, <http://elitedaily.com/life/quote-civil-rights-activists/1370706/>.

<sup>51</sup> Michael Lipka, "How Many People of Different Faiths Do You Know?," Pew Research Center, July 17, 2014, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/07/17/how-many-people-of-different-faiths-do-you-know/>.

## **A. NEWSPAPERS**

In America, newspaper readership is on the decline; yet, while online readership is experiencing a corresponding increase.<sup>52</sup> The research in this thesis focuses on online articles for the *New York Times* (*NYT*) and the *Wall Street Journal* (*WSJ*), both of which are widely read newspapers in the United States.<sup>53</sup> The Pew Research Center categorizes the *NYT* as an ideologically liberal newspaper and the *WSJ* as a slightly more conservative publication.<sup>54</sup> The selection of these two perspectives aims to capture not only articles that reach a wider audience, but also to determine if obvious differences are presented in the portrayal and representation of Muslim Americans.

## **B. METHODOLOGY**

Over 75 articles were reviewed from the *NYT* and *WSJ* with search terms that included “mosque OR gurdwara,” “hijab OR burqa OR niqab OR turban,” and “Ground Zero Mosque.” The search focused on specific periods of time, as outlined in Table 1 that correspond to incidences of terrorism or controversy surrounding Islam. The search for articles related to religious institutions and garments sought to capture articles associated with Muslim and Sikh Americans; the later are often mistaken as Muslim because of their turbans and beards. Articles selected had a domestic focus with the exception of articles surrounding a controversial French law banning the niqab in public. Articles covering the French ban were included because they created a broad discourse over American sentiment on the ban.

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<sup>52</sup> Mitchell et al., “The Modern News Consumer.”

<sup>53</sup> Pew Research Center’s Journalism Project, “Newspapers Fact Sheet,” Pew Research Center, June 1, 2017, <http://www.journalism.org/fact-sheet/newspapers/>.

<sup>54</sup> “Ideological Placement of Each Source’s Audience,” Pew Research Center, January 26, 2016, [http://www.pewresearch.org/pj\\_14-10-21\\_mediapolarization-08-2/](http://www.pewresearch.org/pj_14-10-21_mediapolarization-08-2/).

Table 1. Incidents of Terror and Controversy

| <b>Time Period</b>                     | <b>Description</b>  |
|--|---|
| September 11, 2001                     | Al Qaeda attack on airlines, the World Trade Center, and the Pentagon resulting in over 3,000 deaths. <sup>55</sup>                           |
| Ft. Hood Shooting—<br>11/5/2009        | Army Major Nidal Hasan kills 13 at the Ft. Hood military base in Texas. <sup>56</sup>   |
| Oak Creek Massacre—<br>8/5/2012        | White supremacist Wade Michael Page kills 6 Sikh worshippers at the Sikh Temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. <sup>57</sup>                        |
| Ground Zero Mosque—<br>2010-Present    | Controversy surrounding the planned development of an Islamic center several blocks from the World Trade Center. <sup>58</sup>                |
| French Veil Ban—2010–<br>Present       | Controversy surrounding the French ban on Muslim veils and burqa styled swimsuits. <sup>59</sup>  |
| San Bernardino Attack—<br>12/2/2015    | Syed Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik kill 14 at a Christmas party. <sup>60</sup>   |
| Orlando Nightclub Shooting—<br>6/12/16 | Omar Mateen kills 49 at a gay nightclub in Orlando. Mateen swore allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). <sup>61</sup> |

<sup>55</sup> “U.S. Terrorist Attacks Fast Facts,” CNN, updated November 1, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/04/18/us/u-s-terrorist-attacks-fast-facts/index.html>.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Iyer, “Oak Creek Community Marks Two Years since Sikh Temple Shooting.”

<sup>58</sup> Claudia Rosett, “Where in the World Is Imam Feisal?,” *Forbes*, July 30, 2010, <https://www.forbes.com/2010/07/30/imam-faisal-ground-zero-mosque-money-opinions-columnists-claudia-rosett.html>.

<sup>59</sup> Micallef, “Is France Right to Ban the Burkini?”

<sup>60</sup> “U.S. Terrorist Attacks Fast Facts.”

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

Each article was assigned a label as positive, negative, or neutral. Of the combined 79 articles, nine were labeled negative (11%), 41 neutral (52%), and 29 positive (37%). The negative articles draw associations between terrorism and mosques, religious dress, or are outwardly negative toward Islam by including mosques and hijab in the story when they are unrelated to the news event. These associations perpetuate the idea that mosques, people with hijabs, and similar head covers are associated with terrorism.<sup>62</sup>

Positive articles include stories that promote an objective understanding of Islam, allow members of the Muslim faith to speak for themselves, and highlight achievements of Muslims in society. The third category, neutral articles, is fact-based without a negative or positive component. A neutral article discusses terrorism by an Islamic extremist, but does not reference the terrorist's mosque or religious dress unless it is vital to the story.

Overall, the study showed that the *NYT* had 23 positive articles as compared to six for the *WSJ* (54 *NYT* articles were reviewed compared to only 25 *WSJ* articles). The positive articles focus on an array of categories that include mosques promoting peace, dispelling myths on Islam, communities coming together in the wake of terrorism, the fight for civil rights, and stories of success in the Muslim community. Both newspapers ran similar stories of Muslim women competing in the 2016 Rio Olympics wearing hijabs.<sup>63</sup> The articles depict female Muslim athletes in a positive light, while dispelling negative stereotypes surrounding their subordinate role in society.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Sut Jhally and Jeremy Earp, "Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People," Vimeo, video, 50:11, 2006, <https://vimeo.com/56687715>.

<sup>63</sup> Roger Cohen, "Olympians in Hijab and Bikini," *New York Times*, sec. Opinion, August 11, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/12/opinion/olympians-in-hijab-and-bikini.html>; and Ben Cohen, "How Ibtihaj Muhammad Made It to the Olympics," *Wall Street Journal*, sec. Life, August 3, 2016, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/how-ibtihaj-muhammad-made-it-to-the-olympics-1470172437>.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

Of the six negative articles featured in the *NYT*, four of them came within a month after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. These articles falsely link extremists and supposed mosques that radicalized them. For instance, an article titled “A Nation Challenged: The Hunt; Trail of Man Sought in 2 Plots Leads to Chicago and Arrest,” highlights a mosque that had been under federal scrutiny even though the suspected terrorist in the article had no association to the mosque in question.<sup>65</sup> This theme of unnecessary association or irrelevantly calling attention to religious institutions or clothing was common in the negative articles. While it is possible that the articles featured religious garb to paint a visual picture of those featured in the article, it is problematic, as it exacerbates the linkage between religious clothing and terrorism.

The negative articles in the *WSJ* feature a more direct questioning of Islam that plays into common stereotypes regarding Islam’s role in terrorism. The *WSJ* Editorial Board blames liberals for refusing to acknowledge that “radical Islam” can be the reason for a terrorist attack.<sup>66</sup> While someone of the Islamic faith perpetrated the terrorist act examined in the article, the *WSJ* article fails to acknowledge that the vast majority of Muslims are *not* terrorists. Looking at this viewpoint in a different context, other research has found that newspapers do not make similar statements about fundamental Christians who facilitate terror.<sup>67</sup> Usually, news coverage shows them as an exception or not linked to the community at large or the church.<sup>68</sup> The news associates them with mental illness or having come from poor socio-economic backgrounds.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Jodi Wilgoren and Judith Miller, “A Nation Challenged: The Hunt; Trail of Man Sought in 2 Plots Leads to Chicago and Arrest,” *New York Times*, sec. U.S., September 21, 2001, <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/21/us/nation-challenged-hunt-trail-man-sought-2-plots-leads-chicago-arrest.html>.

<sup>66</sup> Dorothy Rabinowitz, “Liberal Piety and the Memory of 9/11,” *Wall Street Journal*, sec. Opinion, August 4, 2010, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748703545604575407160266158170>.

<sup>67</sup> Kimberly A. Powell, “Framing Islam: An Analysis of U.S. Media Coverage of Terrorism since 9/11,” *Communication Studies* 62, no. 1 (January 31, 2011): 90–112, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10510974.2011.533599>.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

The articles selected did not include stories depicting religious garb and institutions outside the United States; however, it is important to mention that the stories often included unflattering views of radical mosques in other countries that could also perpetuate anti-Muslim sentiment in the United States. One such *WSJ* article, “A Mosque as Extremist Megaphone,” took President Obama’s visit to a Baltimore mosque as an opportunity to highlight extremist mosques overseas.<sup>70</sup> While the article correctly identifies violent rhetoric from the al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, the association with President Obama’s trip to a mosque in Baltimore makes one wonder if the association was meant to suggest that mosques in the United States are also preaching violence against Jews and America.

A conclusion that can be drawn from this analysis is that articles not overtly negative still play a role in framing Muslim Americans and Islam in a negative context. This finding coincides with Kimberly Powell’s study on U.S. media coverage since 9/11. Powell’s research included a larger pool of articles (1,638) from the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, USA Today, CNN, MSNBC, and FOX News.<sup>71</sup> Powell and her team identified important themes related to this study.

Powell’s research found that the media was quick to assume publicly that the perpetrators of terrorist attacks were Arab extremists, even before any evidence was presented as to who may have carried out an attack.<sup>72</sup> This situation also occurred with the initial news coverage of the Oklahoma City Bombing when several news outlets reported that two Middle Eastern men were seen fleeing the scene, which resulted in a wave of anti-Muslim harassment across the country.<sup>73</sup> In a battle of religions, Powell

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<sup>70</sup> Steven Stalinsky, “A Mosque as Extremist Megaphone,” *Wall Street Journal*, sec. Opinion, February 3, 2016, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/a-mosque-as-extremist-megaphone-1454459321>.

<sup>71</sup> Powell, “Framing Islam: An Analysis of U.S. Media Coverage of Terrorism since 9/11,” 95.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Larry B. Stammer and Carla Hall, “Terror in Oklahoma City : American Muslims Feel Sting of Accusations in Bombing’s Wake,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 22, 1995, [http://articles.latimes.com/1995-04-22/news/mn-57460\\_1\\_oklahoma-city-bombing](http://articles.latimes.com/1995-04-22/news/mn-57460_1_oklahoma-city-bombing).

found that news reports regularly identified victims as Christians and perpetrators as Muslim, which furthered in-group/out-group conflict within society.<sup>74</sup>

The other group analyzed as part of the study, the Sikhs, had relatively few articles published about them compared to Muslims. A simple *NYT* search between January 2000 and December 2016 yielded only 294 articles that referenced “Sikh” as compared to 9,847 articles that referenced “Muslim” over the same period.<sup>75</sup> The lack of information and awareness about Sikhs along with arguably similar attire as Muslim men conflates the two groups.

The research shows that while newspapers are somewhat balanced in their portrayal of Muslims, articles related to terrorism are problematic, as they regularly associate terrorists with their cultural attire and Islam. While newspapers are no longer the primary news source in the United States, they still influence public opinion and their articles often form the basis of news featured on television.

### **C. TELEVISION NEWS AND INFOTAINMENT**

Television news has changed drastically over the course of the last 30 years. The original three broadcast channels of ABC, CBS, and NBC now compete with hundreds of other channels for viewership and advertisement revenue. The creation of 24-hour news with the start of CNN in 1980 transformed news into a hybrid of communicating the daily news and providing entertainment for television consumers. The commercialized media framework has forced news programs to attract audiences with the goal of profit-making as opposed to what is supposed to be a platform to promote a well-informed public.<sup>76</sup> This phenomenon produced “infotainment,” or television programs that report the news, but also seek to entertain the viewer. Not only are TV shows, such as “Good Morning America” and “Fox and Friends,” included but nightly comedy shows, such as the “The Daily Show” that provide satirical coverage of news events, are also included.

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> The search was conducted using a ProQuest search of the *NYT* for, “Sikh,” and “Muslim,” between January 1, 2000 and December 31, 2016.

<sup>76</sup> Curran, *Media and Democracy*, 51–52.

Although online news has gained popularity, television news remains the primary method for Americans to receive the news.<sup>77</sup> Since television news is the primary method of learning about current events, it is the most impactful at influencing societal norms through agenda setting and framing.<sup>78</sup> For this reason, the study of television news, as related to the portrayal of Muslims, and a greater extent Middle Easterners and South Asians, is not new. Researchers are not only using general media theory to explain how media influences society, but are also looking at how Orientalism may explain why TV news so often negatively frames Muslims.

In 1978, Edward Said first introduced the notion of Orientalism defined as the delineation of the world into the “Orient” (Asia and the Middle East) and the “Occident,” (the West) where the Occident is superior to the lesser Orient in terms of civilization using colonial and stereotypical terms.<sup>79</sup> The Orient also is a group category that includes people from Turkey to Japan although these places have very distinct histories and people, which is an important framework to consider when studying Sikhs in America. Orientalism groups Sikhs into a wider category in which their own customs and religion are no longer distinct from other groups. As such, many non-South Asian Americans tend to view Sikhs with colonial stereotypes and their turbans as being affiliated with Islam.

In social identity theory, Western society is always looking for the “other” that can be blamed for all of society’s problems, and at the same time, create an in-community group. While social identity theory explains the need for socially constructed in-groups and out-groups, further theories illustrate how governments and media help create these narratives to avoid greater domestic unrest. If an external group in society can be blamed for their problems, then society may be less likely to look at their own government as the root cause of their problems.<sup>80</sup> Padgett and Allen looked at this phenomenon in the aftermath of 9/11 and showed the evolving enemy of the United

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<sup>77</sup> Mitchell et al., “The Modern News Consumer.”

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Mitchell et al., “The Modern News Consumer.”

<sup>80</sup> Andrew Padgett and Beatrice Allen, “Fear’s Slave: The Mass Media and Islam after September 11,” *Media International Australia Incorporating Culture & Policy*, 109, no. 1 (2003): 32–40, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1329878X0310900106>.

States from the Soviet Union, to the War on Drugs, to the War on Terrorism.<sup>81</sup> Subsequently, the Global War on Terrorism and the recent development of the 24-hour news cycle created an environment in which the media constantly reminded society of old Orientalist stereotypes.<sup>82</sup> Dehumanizing the enemy through stereotypes and negative portrayals is as old as war itself; unfortunately for many Muslims, the prejudice continues into peacetime, as seen in the 2010 coverage of the plan to build an Islamic center in lower Manhattan.

The controversy surrounding what became known as the “Ground Zero Mosque” provides a robust example of TV news’ anti-Muslim sentiment. The Ground Zero Mosque was a planned inter-faith community center near the site of the Twin Towers, led by Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, the founder of the American Society for Muslim Advancement (later known as the Cordoba Initiative).<sup>83</sup> Researcher Ruth DeFoster extensively analyzed the media coverage through CNN, MSNBC, and FOX News transcripts.<sup>84</sup> What DeFoster found was that the stories on the Islamic center were initially positive, but changed after the *Associated Press* ran a story about family members of 9/11 victims outraged by the building of a “mosque” so close to ground zero.<sup>85</sup> Pamela Geller, a conservative blogger and founder of the group “Stop the Islamization of America,” created a movement to protest the approval of the center.<sup>86</sup> These two occurrences helped fuel the media’s fascination with the story that then became national news.

In addition to identifying people and groups promoting false narratives, DeFoster also looked to the concept of Orientalism as a way to explain how and why Muslims are negatively portrayed in the media. DeFoster found that, “Many of the arguments and

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Rosett, “Where in the World Is Imam Feisal?”

<sup>84</sup> Ruth DeFoster, “Orientalism for a New Millennium: Cable News and the Specter of the ‘Ground Zero Mosque,’” *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 39, no. 1 (2014): 63–81, doi: 10.1177/0196859914536577.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

stereotypes that were deployed in the cable news debate represented long-simmering centuries-old tropes about Islam, the East and the West—a clear return to old, well-documented Orientalist rhetoric.”<sup>87</sup> Similar to the use of terrorism-associated language described previously in print news, cable television regularly used the terms “jihad,” “Sharia law,” “battle,” “terror(ism),” amongst others when no clear or evidence-based reason existed to bring them into the discussion surrounding the Islamic center.<sup>88</sup> According to DeFoster, of the cable news channels analyzed, FOX News was the most egregious offender perpetuating false narratives.

FOX News incorporated several tactics in its slanted coverage to opposing the construction of the “Ground Zero Mosque.” FOX allowed commentators to state incorrect facts, also known as “fake news,” even after proven false by others in the mainstream media.<sup>89</sup> For instance, FOX commentators regularly asked where the funding was coming from in a way as to imply that it was from terrorist organizations and incorrectly reported that the center’s organizers were planning to open on September 11 as a sort of victory.<sup>90</sup> FOX deployed another tactic by personally attacking Rauf’s character and reporting without evidence that he had refused to condone Hamas, which was also unrelated to the cultural center.<sup>91</sup> FOX News also took advantage of the controversy to set its own agenda by opposing anything related to Islam.

When pressed on its bias coverage toward Islam, FOX claimed that it was not prejudiced in its reporting, as it was merely “brave enough to tell the truth about the dangerous nature of Islam.”<sup>92</sup> Further research shows that FOX’s reporting on the “Ground Zero Mosque” was not an anomaly.

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>88</sup> DeFoster, “Orientalism for a New Millennium: Cable News and the Specter of the ‘Ground Zero Mosque,’” 75–76.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 73.

Researcher Fred Vultee further provides an understanding of FOX's focus on an anti-Muslim message and FOX's contextualization of the message. Vultee analyzed stories from 2007 to 2008 and identified several trends that were also seen in FOX's handling of the "Ground Zero Mosque" story. Vultee found that FOX only reported on Muslims in stories associated with terrorism, failing to mention the other billion Muslims in the world not involved with terrorism.<sup>93</sup> While stories on terrorism are newsworthy, FOX chooses to blend in religion only when it involves a Muslim.<sup>94</sup> The same questioning of Christianity does not happen when a Christian American commits an act of violence.<sup>95</sup>

Vultee also points to the framework of Orientalism to understand how FOX portrays Muslims and Islam to build a socially constructed reality where the "Occident" is superior to the "Orient."<sup>96</sup> The need for superiority may come as Christian White Americans feel that their majority status and way of life is under threat. PEW Research projects that by 2055, Whites will no longer be the majority in the United States largely due to Asian and Hispanic immigration.<sup>97</sup> In fact, Vultee's research article is named "Jump Back Jack, Mohammed's Here," as a play on a FOX article that the name Mohammed will soon become the most popular baby name in the United Kingdom.<sup>98</sup> Not only did FOX assist in creating a sense of superiority over Muslims, but also pushed a narrative that Muslims "demand special privileges" at the sake of American customs and values, which created an aggressor/victim framework.<sup>99</sup> Vultee provided examples of stories where FOX left out the context of the story to invoke the sense of victimhood. For instance, FOX created a false association between a British tabloid story of a father and

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<sup>93</sup> Fred Vultee, "Jump Back Jack, Mohammed's Here," *Journalism Studies* 10, no. 5 (October 1, 2009): 629, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616700902797333>.

<sup>94</sup> Vultee, "Jump Back Jack, Mohammed's Here," 629.

<sup>95</sup> Powell, "Framing Islam: An Analysis of U.S. Media Coverage of Terrorism since 9/11," 95.

<sup>96</sup> Vultee, "Jump Back Jack, Mohammed's Here," 629.

<sup>97</sup> Pew Research Center, "Chapter 2: Immigration's Impact on Past and Future U.S. Population Change," *Pew Research Center's Hispanic Trends Project*, September 28, 2015, <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2015/09/28/chapter-2-immigrations-impact-on-past-and-future-u-s-population-change/>.

<sup>98</sup> Vultee, "Jump Back Jack, Mohammed's Here," 629.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

son turned away from a swimming pool because they were not Muslim, with a story about a Harvard pilot program for women only pool hours to accommodate Muslim cultural and religious values.<sup>100</sup> While Vultee uses Orientalism to help explain FOX's behavior, other organizations may be behind the Islamophobic messages.

While FOX and other cable news companies provide the forum for discussion, they are backed by a few organizations and individuals that set the agenda for the anti-Muslim rhetoric. As previously noted, Pam Geller, the founder of "Stop the Islamization of America," fought to prevent the Islamic Center in New York City. The Center for American Progress, a liberal think tank, produced a report that exposes other key players pushing the anti-Muslim agenda. The report titled, *Fear, Inc., The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America*, reveals members of anti-Muslim organizations and their active participation in the media.<sup>101</sup> According to this report, Sean Hannity's FOX news show regularly provides a platform for anti-Muslim rhetoric from hosts, such as Frank Gaffney, who continually warns America about succumbing to Sharia law; it also provides space to Robert Spencer who promotes the belief that Islam is an inherently violent religion.<sup>102</sup> These fringe organizations and individuals that make up a small part of civil society are successful at gaining a foothold in mainstream media that allow them to legitimize their prejudicial viewpoints. The symbiotic relationship between fringe organizations that stir controversy and news organizations that use that controversy to gain viewership follows an unfortunate trend of news organizations becoming spaces for gossip and entertainment television that have less to do with reporting fact-based news and more about increasing ratings to drive up advertisement revenue, as well as setting up a framework for a discussion that is not objective.

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 630.

<sup>101</sup> Ali, *Fear, Inc., The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America*.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

#### D. ENTERTAINMENT TV AND FILM

In 2016, Americans spent an average of 2.7 hours a day watching TV.<sup>103</sup> Although TV sitcoms, fictional shows, and movies do not try to be a source of news, they still have a great impact on civil society. Films and TV shows provide information on people, places, situations, professions, and products with which a consumer may not have personal experience. Shows, such as the “Big Bang Theory,” provide valuable insights into science, such as explaining the paradox of Schrodinger’s Cat while changing people’s perceptions on nerds.<sup>104</sup> Such fictional programming can positively affect civil society, but it can also have a negative effect on society. The negative depiction of Muslims, Arabs, Middle Easterners, and South Asians in TV and film continues to reinforce the Orientalist stereotypes.

Jack Shaheen, a Christian-Arab author and filmmaker, committed his life “trying to humanize Arabs and Muslims and to give visibility to American Arabs and American Muslims—to have us being projected no better, no worse, than anyone else.”<sup>105</sup> In addition to numerous books that expose prejudice toward Arabs, Shaheen also produced a documentary in 2006, “Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People,” which sought to expose the negative stereotyping of Arabs in the media. The documentary provides example after example of cartoonish stereotypes of Arabs as snake charmers, swindlers, and terrorists.<sup>106</sup> Shaheen believed that the degradation and dehumanization made it easier to go to war with Arabs over hostilities resulting from the Palestinian/Israel conflict, the 1973 Arab Oil Embargo, and the 1979 Iranian Revolution.<sup>107</sup> Based on extensive research, Shaheen illustrated that Muslim and Arab characters in a thousand

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<sup>103</sup> “American Time Use Survey Summary,” Bureau of Labor Statistics, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/atus.nr0.htm>.

<sup>104</sup> “The Big Bang Theory–Schrodinger’s Cat,” YouTube video, 3:58, posted by WikdGamer, October 6, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pNTMYNj2Ulk>.

<sup>105</sup> Sam Roberts, “Jack Shaheen, Who Resisted and Cataloged Stereotyping of Arabs, Dies at 81,” *New York Times*, sec. U.S., July 12, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/12/us/jack-shaheen-who-resisted-and-cataloged-stereotyping-of-arabs-dies-at-81.html>.

<sup>106</sup> Jhally and Earp, “Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People.”

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

films from 1896 to 2000 were positively portrayed only 12 times.<sup>108</sup> While Shaheen did not specifically look at Sikhs as part of the study, the fact that many of the stereotyped characters wore turbans is important to understand why Sikhs have faced prejudice and confusion over their faith.

A search of Hollywood films featuring Sikh characters is fairly limited. The 1983 James Bond film *Octopussy* may be the best-known film on the short list. The film unsurprisingly depicted Gobinda as a turbaned henchman, to the villain Kamal Khan, who falls to his death after an airplane fight with Bond.<sup>109</sup> In the years since 9/11, film and TV have continued to represent Muslims in similar ways as the past; however, more public discourse is now taking place on the effect on civil society.

Since 9/11, two popular shows stand out as broadly featuring Muslim characters and Islam. The first is the well-known FOX series *24* starring Kiefer Sutherland as Jack Bauer that ran eight seasons starting in 2001.<sup>110</sup> The show's original season finale in 2010 attracted over eight million viewers.<sup>111</sup> The second show is *Homeland*, which started airing on the Showtime network in 2011 and has run six seasons through 2017 with a 7th planned for 2018. The 2016 series of *Homeland* drew about 5.5 million viewers per week.<sup>112</sup> Throughout the series, Muslim antagonists, as well as non-Muslim antagonists, appear in the show. The fact that characters from the Middle East and South Asia are depicted as terrorists is not as problematic as the constant reminders in each show that Islam is central to the lives of the terrorists. While non-Muslim antagonists exist, the focus is not upon their religion.

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<sup>108</sup> Roberts, "Jack Shaheen, Who Resisted and Cataloged Stereotyping of Arabs, Dies at 81."

<sup>109</sup> "Gobinda," James Bond Wiki, accessed November 10, 2017, <http://jamesbond.wikia.com/wiki/Gobinda>.

<sup>110</sup> Eight full (24 episode) seasons of *24* ran with two additional shorter seasons that ran in 2014 and 2017.

<sup>111</sup> "TV Ratings: Jack Bauer, Law & Order Say Goodbye, Chuck Sees New Low," TV by the Numbers, May 25, 2010, <http://tvbythenumbers.zap2it.com/sdsdskdh279882992z1/tv-ratings-jack-bauer-law-order-say-goodbye-chuck-sees-new-low/>.

<sup>112</sup> Joe Otterson, "'Homeland' Season 6 Finale Scores Big Ratings Bump over Premiere," Variety, April 10, 2017, <http://variety.com/2017/tv/news/homeland-season-6-finale-ratings-1202027714/>.

Howard Gordon is the common executive producer of *24* and *Homeland*, which may explain some similarities in the themes. In an interview with *NYT* on the impact of his shows on society, Gordon agreed that *24* might have helped exacerbate anti-Muslim sentiment.<sup>113</sup> Unfortunately, the role of what appears to be a Muslim terrorist alone without a balance of positive Muslim characters reinforces the narrative that not all terrorists are Muslim, but all Muslims are terrorists. The fact that 9/11 occurred during the filming of the first season of *24* makes the association between the two inseparable, which Gordon refers to as an “accidental resonance.”<sup>114</sup> As the news focused on the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the show continued focusing on terrorism for the next eight years, which has helped to further galvanize fear in society. While Gordon has worked with Islamic organizations to minimize inadvertent stereotyping, the newest season of *24: Legacy* starring Corey Hawkins relies on similar narratives by portraying a jihadist team seeking revenge in the United States for the killing of Ibrahim bin Khalid.<sup>115</sup> The Arab sounding name alone builds on past antagonist characters Habib Marwan and Abu Fayed, which continues to connect Arab names to terrorists.

While *24* is an action packed thriller, *Homeland* offers both action and substance to the plot and delves deeper into Islam. The main character in seasons 1 and 2, Nicholas Brody (Damian Lewis), is a tragic character who is a recently freed prisoner of war trying to re-acclimate to life in the United States. The other main character, Carrie Mathison (Claire Danes), is also a tragic character plagued by bi-polar disorder and a fear of failing to prevent the next big terrorist attack. While a prisoner, Brody converts to Islam to calm his mind as he prays that helps him cleanse his mind of the violence that surrounds him, which depicts a peaceful side of Islam. Unfortunately, Brody turns out to be a sleeper agent for antagonist Abu Nazir, which allows for the optic of Brody as a Muslim terrorist.

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<sup>113</sup> Ryzik, “Can Television Be Fair to Muslims?”

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Poniewozik, “‘24: Legacy,’ a One-Hour Super Bowl Ad for Islamophobia”; and “24: Legacy, Official Trailer,” YouTube video, 2:30, posted by 24: Legacy, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOWpUB\\_Xdqs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOWpUB_Xdqs).

While every season of *Homeland* includes Muslims and terrorists from Pakistan, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria, humanity in these countries and charity in Islam is also presented that shows the media's attempts to balance out its stereotypes. In season 6, a good Samaritan who lives in the same flat as a group of terrorists rescues Quinn, a CIA operative, and nurses him back to health even though Quinn's presence alone puts the Samaritan in great danger. The show continued to mature through the seasons often mirroring real life events, which may explain why writers started season 6 with Carrie working for a Muslim aid and relief organization in New York City. The increase in anti-Muslim sentiment during the 2017 Presidential election may have pushed writers to have Carrie in a role working with and helping Muslims, which may show that Islam is at the center of the discussion in the United States. However, a white female Christian helping Muslims does not detract from commonly held norms that Muslims are incapable of helping themselves. The hero remains a Christian.

Paul Petrovic, in his *Representing 9/11: Trauma, Ideology, and Nationalism in Literature, Film, and Television*, paints a dim picture of society as a result of the continued appetite for shows depicting stereotypical Muslim and Arab terrorists. Petrovic writes, "These cultural traumas and triggers from the backdrop against which the stories of both *24* and *Homeland* are painted. Neither show could exist in a world without such prejudices—they rely on our fear as an audience to tell their stories. That these two shows have been so popular suggests that the American culture as a whole does not find fault with this interpretation of events."<sup>116</sup> While some shows continue to focus on Muslim terrorists, it would be remiss to ignore newer shows that reflect a more positive view of Muslims, such as Aziz Ansari's Netflix Original, *Master of None*, and NBC's show *Designated Survivor*.

While *24* began a new series in 2017 with a new lead actor, Kiefer Sutherland returned in the new series, *Designated Survivor*. The tenor of Sutherland's new character, President Kirkman, represents a rebuttal of Jack Bauer. The show addresses relevant present day themes, such as anti-immigrant rhetoric and fear mongering. President

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<sup>116</sup> Paul Petrovic, ed., *Representing 9/11: Trauma, Ideology, and Nationalism in Literature, Film, and Television* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 127.

Kirkman, a man of impeccable moral fiber, does not tolerate the rounding up of Muslims in Dearborn, Michigan, as it stands against American values. The creator of the show, David Guggenheim, attributes his writing to prejudice encountered by his Muslim wife.<sup>117</sup> Indian American actor Kal Penn, who portrays a Muslim press secretary in the show, also feels it is important to address real life scenarios.<sup>118</sup> While the show does initially blame Islamic terrorists for an attack on the Capital, the truth comes out that a domestic nationalist group that sought to destroy and rebuild America had framed the Islamic group.

Although newer shows like *Designated Survivor* attempt to be less prejudiced, the fact remains that Americans enjoy watching shows centered on terrorism. A lingering question for the entertainment industry, discussed in Chapter IV, is if private organizations focused on profit have a responsibility within civil society to curb prejudice within their works. For the time being, the entertainment industry is struggling to show terrorism without exacerbating old Orientalist stereotypes.

## **E. PREJUDICED MEDIA**

The analysis and research clearly shows the media is prejudiced in its depiction of Muslims and Islam. While many of the false depictions and recycled stereotypes were not intentional, they followed the Orientalist history of disparaging these groups. More concerning are the intentional depictions of Islam by FOX News acting as a legitimate forum for fringe organizations to spread false narratives.

Americans who lack an understanding and more than superfluous direct relationship with Muslims, Sikhs, and other South Asian minorities form perceptions of these groups by what they hear and see in the media. It is paramount that advocacy organizations consider the media's prejudice not as a symptom, but as a root cause for prejudice in society.

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<sup>117</sup> Sonia Saraiya, "ABC's 'Designated Survivor' Proves to Be an Unlikely Soothsayer for Our Era," *Variety*, November 17, 2016, <http://variety.com/2016/tv/news/designated-survivor-real-life-election-hate-crimes-1201919955/>.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

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### **III. ARE ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS MEETING THE CRITERIA OF INTERGROUP CONTACT THEORY?**

The Public Religion Research Institute reports that most Americans rarely come into contact with Muslims and only about three in 10 Americans have occasional contact.<sup>119</sup> As of 2015, only 3.3 million Muslims lived in the United States; this small percentage of the overall U.S. population, less than one percent, helps explain why such slight contact occurs with these groups.<sup>120</sup> Sikhs, and such other minorities, make up even a smaller number; therefore, their contact with non-Muslim Americans is even less. Americans who have no contact with this minority group are left to form opinions about such minorities based largely on media representation. As illustrated in Chapter II, the media's negative portrayal of Muslims leads to stereotyping by those who are not in contact with Muslim individuals in their own lives.

How should societies reverse this trend? As shown in Chapter I, research shows that exposure to members of a minority group has a positive effect on reducing prejudice toward that minority community. However, reducing prejudicial bias is more likely when certain criteria, such as intergroup cooperation and support of authorities, are met, as explained in intergroup contact theory earlier.<sup>121</sup> The purpose of this chapter is to examine the efforts by advocacy organizations to combat prejudice through increased exposure to Muslim Americans through direct and indirect contact, such as televised public service announcements and advocacy guides on reducing hate. In addition, this chapter looks at the organizational efforts to challenge media organizations directly and their use of prejudice.

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<sup>119</sup> "Americans Who Interact with Muslims Hold More Positive Views of Muslims, Refugees," PRRI, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.prrri.org/spotlight/social-contact-muslims-refugee-ban/>.

<sup>120</sup> Besheer Mohamed, "A New Estimate of the U.S. Muslim Population," Pew Research Center, January 6, 2016, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/01/06/a-new-estimate-of-the-u-s-muslim-population/>; and "Who Are Sikh Americans," Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund, accessed November 10, 2017, <http://saldef.org/who-are-sikh-americans/#.WchNrkyZORs>.

<sup>121</sup> Pettigrew and Tropp, "A Meta-Analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory," 766.

## A. METHODOLOGY

This chapter proposes a framework for analyzing the impact of organizations' specific programs using a scientifically validated set of criteria based on intergroup contact theory. While the conclusions and analysis are subjective, it offers a method to evaluate the organizational efforts that also allows for a comparative analysis of similarities and differences among organizations and their respective efforts to reduce prejudice. An important outcome is a third-party analysis of what may be missing in the overall effort to combat prejudice.

### 1. Intergroup Contact Framework

Intergroup contact theory, briefly summarized in Chapter I, provides the framework for understanding how to build social capital among groups, as well as how to develop guidance for reducing prejudice in the country. Thomas Pettigrew and Linda Tropp determined the following set of evaluation criteria as part of their meta-analysis study. Organizations studied are evaluated on the following eight criteria:

- *Have Equal Status*: The groups interacting with one another should have common respect for one another.<sup>122</sup> While difficult to do in cases where one group ideologically thinks it is superior, intergroup contact in this study focuses on general society and is not meant to alter hate groups' prejudice directly.
- Evaluation questions:
  - Do program guides and training materials include information on fostering interactions based on equal status?
  - Does the person delivering the message or the people portrayed in the message represent the minority and majority communities as equals?

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<sup>122</sup> Pettigrew, "Intergroup Contact Theory," 66.

- Do the groups appear to be of similar social class, career level, education, intellect, etc.?
- *Share Common Goals:* Pettigrew explains this criterion is similar to members of a sports team working toward a common goal.<sup>123</sup> Common goals may not be immediately apparent, but below the surface, most of society has common life goals, such as financial security, career success, and raising a family. Intergroup contact that incorporates these societal goals meets the criterion.
- Evaluation questions:
  - Does the program include a message that establishes common goals as an important element of group interaction?
  - Do media based messages include major themes based on common goals?
  - Common goals may include raising a family, safety of loved ones, patriotism, etc.
- *Have Intergroup Cooperation:* In line with common goals, intergroup relations should involve some sort of cooperation, without competition.<sup>124</sup> Again, an example is when people work together to achieve societal goals, such as students working together in the classroom.
- Evaluation questions:
  - Does the program include a message that establishes intergroup cooperation as an important element of group interaction?

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<sup>123</sup> Pettigrew, "Intergroup Contact Theory," 66.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

- Do the messages reveal stories of people collectively working together?
  - Does the interaction take place in an environment that naturally promotes teamwork?
  - Natural environments for promoting teamwork may include sports competitions, helping others in times of grief, educational settings, etc.
- *Have the Support of Authorities, Law, or Custom:* While Allport, the founder of intergroup contact theory, believed in building trust through informal interactions, he did not discount the necessity for formal institutions to be supportive of groups and provide protections for them.<sup>125</sup> Authority does not only need to consist of formal institutions, but also can include respected religious leaders, teachers, and other commonly respected members of society.
    - Evaluation questions:
      - Does the program include a message that promotes support of the authorities as an important element of group interaction?
      - Is a civic institution involved in the group interaction (i.e., mayor's office, police department)?
      - Does the interaction take place in a formal and respected environment such as a school or town hall?
      - Is the person delivering the message a member of a formal institution or a respected member of the community?

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<sup>125</sup> Campbell and Putnam, "America's Grace: How a Tolerant Nation Bridges Its Religious Divides," 622.

- *Social Likability*: Pettigrew and Tropp simplify Allport's four criteria into a straightforward concept that the criteria are similar to the conditions required to form friendships.<sup>126</sup> For this study, this criterion is distinctive of the ability to connect with someone based partially on attractiveness and cheerfulness, which researchers show increases social warmth.<sup>127</sup> Interaction among children assumes social likability as the environment lends itself to forming friendships.
- Evaluation questions:
  - Do program guides and training materials include information on fostering friendships with people outside their own groups?
  - Does the interaction occur in a school or other youth environment set up to promote learning and building friendships?
  - Is the person delivering the message someone who exhibits a friendly demeanor and general attractiveness?
- *Knowledge Sharing*: Pettigrew and Tropp followed up on their original meta-analysis to understand better how contact in and of itself reduced prejudice. They found that knowledge sharing about each other (religion or cultures) is a key component to intergroup relations.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Campbell and Putnam, "America's Grace: How a Tolerant Nation Bridges Its Religious Divides," 621.

<sup>127</sup> Nancy L. Etcoff, *Survival of the Prettiest: The Science of Beauty*, 1st ed. (New York: Anchor Books, 2000).

<sup>128</sup> Pettigrew and Tropp, "How Does Intergroup Contact Reduce Prejudice? Meta-Analytic Tests of Three Mediators," 922.

- Evaluation questions:
  - Does the program include materials that encourage cultural information sharing between groups?
  - Does the program have pre-existing cultural awareness guides?
  - Do media messages include knowledge sharing?
  - Does the knowledge sharing include information on how groups are similar to each other?
  
- *Reduction in Anxiety*: In some cases, one group or both groups perceive a threat by the out-group and are anxious over the interaction. Research shows that prejudice decreases when people overcome the anxiety and perceived threat.<sup>129</sup> While hard to measure, Schiappa's research on parasocial contact indicates that more frequent interaction decreases anxiety.<sup>130</sup>
  
- Evaluation questions:
  - Does the program address creating interactions to help reduce anxiety between groups?
  - Are the interactions and messages on a frequent basis?
  - Does the environment promote a safe space for interaction to occur?

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<sup>129</sup> Pettigrew and Tropp, "How Does Intergroup Contact Reduce Prejudice? Meta-Analytic Tests of Three Mediators," 922.

<sup>130</sup> Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes, "The Parasocial Contact Hypothesis," 97.

- *Empathy and Perspective Taking*: Prejudice toward a community reduces when an out-group has a sense of understanding the other's perspective.<sup>131</sup> This study not only measures out-groups' ability to empathize, but also looks at advocacy groups' efforts to share perspective in a way to seek empathy.
- Evaluation questions include:
  - Does the program include a message that empathy and perspective taking are important elements of group interaction?
  - Does the message or messenger share his/her perspective in a way as to seek empathy from the audience?

## 2. Scoring

Programs are evaluated on these eight criteria, each scored on a scale of 1 to 5, to reflect how well each criterion is represented in the program. The score for each criterion is added together to produce a total score and percentage for how well the effort meets intergroup contact theory. The percentage is equal to the total score divided by the total possible score of 40 (8 criteria x 5-point scale). The evaluation is limited due to a single evaluator, the author. However, the framework provides some guidance; therefore, it is sufficient for initial observations.

- 1—*Not at all* represented in the effort
- 2—*Slightly* represented in the effort
- 3—*Moderately* represented in the effort
- 4—*Considerably* represented in the effort
- 5—*Completely* represented in the effort

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

### **3. Directly Challenging Media Organizations**

The evaluation also reviews organizations' overall efforts in directly addressing the problem of media prejudice. In some cases, efforts are made to work with the media beforehand to prevent unintentional prejudice. In other instances, organizations seek changes in response to media prejudice through lawsuits, public pressure, and op-eds and interviews. The extent of each organization's work in this area helps to understand better if organizations are addressing the root cause of the problem. The information also allows for a comparative analysis of similarities and differences among organizations' approaches to combatting the media's prejudicial information directly. Examples are included in each of the respective organization's sections.

#### **B. ORGANIZATIONS AND COUNTER-PREJUDICE EFFORTS**

The research reviews efforts by five advocacy organizations: Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF), American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), and the Ad Council. The five organizations were selected because they represent a diverse type of advocacy group. The SPLC and Ad Council do not advocate for a specific minority community; whereas, the SALDEF, the ADC, and the CAIR address issues related to their respective communities, which are Muslim, Arab, and Sikh communities, the primary focus of this research. The size and resources of each organization was also considered in the selection process. The SPLC, the CAIR, and the Ad Council are larger organizations that have substantially more resources than the SALDEF and the ADC. While several organizations are similar, the selection process is also based on which organizations publicly share information about their programs.

Government organizations, such as the DOJ's Community Relations Service and the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS's) Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties also address prejudice and build social capital; however, this framework only applies to efforts by civil society groups. This framework was selected partly because politicians cannot agree as to whether the government should be fostering efforts to

reduce prejudice. Thus, and as a result of changing priorities between political administrations, this thesis only reviews the work of advocacy organizations.

## **1. Southern Poverty Law Center**

Civil rights attorneys founded the SPLC in 1971 as a civil rights organization in Montgomery, Alabama.<sup>132</sup> The SPLC's website makes the organization's mission quite clear. "The SPLC is dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of our society. Using litigation, education, and other forms of advocacy, the SPLC works toward the day when the ideals of equal justice and equal opportunity will be a reality."<sup>133</sup> The SPLC is one of the largest advocacy organizations in the United States and has traditionally had a large following.

To increase its outreach, the SPLC has expanded its messaging through its social media presence of over 260,000 Twitter followers and 1.1 million Facebook followers.<sup>134</sup> The SPLC uses its social media platform to address current events and spread its accomplishments to a wide audience. While a large element of its work is in seeking justice and combating hate groups, this study is more interested in its work to combat prejudice in society at large.

To achieve this result, the SPLC states that it works across four areas: fighting hate, teaching tolerance, seeking justice, and maintaining the civil rights memorial.<sup>135</sup> While the SPLC's work does not specifically target anti-Muslim groups or any other specific category, it broadly aims to combat hate in all forms.

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<sup>132</sup> "About Us," Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.splcenter.org/about>.

<sup>133</sup> "About Us," Southern Poverty Law Center.

<sup>134</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center, "SPLCenter," Twitter, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://twitter.com/splcenter>; Southern Poverty Law Center, "Southern Poverty Law Center," Facebook, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/SPLCenter/>.

<sup>135</sup> "What We Do," Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.splcenter.org/what-we-do>.

Its efforts in fighting hate consist of work across the United States with the intention of building awareness and exposing fringe groups' activities.<sup>136</sup> The SPLC's "Hate Map" geographically displays hate groups across the United States and tracks the national numbers of such groups. For instance, the SPLC reported a 197 percent increase in anti-Muslim hate groups from 2015 to 2016, with 101 total anti-Muslim hate groups.<sup>137</sup> Another example of the SPLC's work in combating hate is through its quarterly publication, *Intelligence Report*, which informs the public of current events in the fight against hate.<sup>138</sup> For instance, a recent article, "The Anti-Muslim Inner Circle," exposes anti-Muslim activists with the intention of building awareness so that people understand that information from such sources is not credible and such groups should not be provided forums for spreading their messages.<sup>139</sup>

Aside from such campaigns, they also seek justice through the legal system when vulnerable members of society are discriminated against.<sup>140</sup> The SPLC sued the Aryan Nation for violently intimidating an Idahoan family in *Keenan v. Aryan Nation*, which resulted in a \$6.3 million jury verdict to be paid to the Keenan family.<sup>141</sup> While most of the SPLC's court cases are not specific to Muslims or Sikhs, their efforts to combat prejudice at a civil society level stand out.

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<sup>136</sup> "Fighting Hate," Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate>.

<sup>137</sup> "Hate Map," Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map>.

<sup>138</sup> "What We Do."

<sup>139</sup> "The Anti-Muslim Inner Circle," Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2011/anti-muslim-inner-circle>.

<sup>140</sup> "Seeking Justice," Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.splcenter.org/seeking-justice>.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

Education is a foundational element of civil society. As such, the SPLC focuses on youth outreach and education through its Teaching Tolerance program that has the goal of “promoting equality, inclusiveness and equitable learning environments in the classroom.”<sup>142</sup> The SPLC also publishes a magazine for educators that references topics, such as “Countering Islamophobia through Education” and “Expelling Islamophobia.”<sup>143</sup> Their two specific programs, Mix It Up at Lunch Day and Ten Ways to Fight Hate: A Community Response Guide are evaluated as follows.

*a. Mix It Up at Lunch Day*

Mix It Up at Lunch Day is a nationwide, in-depth program that promotes group interaction to decrease prejudice.<sup>144</sup> The program was selected for this study because it is a popular effort that focuses on youth outreach and tolerance overall. The program is held in schools across the country. The basic concept of the program is to have students from different backgrounds (race, gender, socio-economic status, etc.) sit next to each other at lunch to make new friends and learn about someone else they may not have otherwise decided to sit next to.<sup>145</sup> The SPLC provides materials needed, such as lesson plans, checklists, guides, and actionable steps for schools to implement the Mix it Up program.<sup>146</sup> They provide examples of model schools that have created their own programs, and “how to” activities for different age groups.<sup>147</sup> The following analysis in Table 2 evaluates the SPLC’s program and materials related to implementing and carrying out a Mix It Up program.

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<sup>142</sup> “Teaching Tolerance,” Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.splcenter.org/teaching-tolerance>.

<sup>143</sup> Monisha Bajaj, “Countering Islamophobia through Education,” Teaching Tolerance, May 2, 2017, <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/countering-islamophobia-through-education>.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Bajaj, “Countering Islamophobia through Education.”

<sup>146</sup> “Getting Started,” Teaching Tolerance, August 2, 2017, <https://www.tolerance.org/mix-it-up/getting-started>.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

Table 2. Mix It Up at Lunch Day Evaluation

| <b>ICT Criteria</b>                     | <b>Criteria Score<br/>(1 to 5)</b> | <b>Description of Effort</b>   |
|---|------------------------------------|--|
| Equal Status                            | 5                                  | The school setting naturally sets students in a position of equal status.  |
| Common Goals                            | 5                                  | The program encourages activities, such as sharing what each student has in common with others. Students may also naturally have common goals while in school. <sup>148</sup>  |
| Intergroup Cooperation                  | 5                                  | The SPLC encourages teamwork activities during the program to build collaboration toward a shared objective that may include arts and crafts for younger children and more challenging projects for older students. <sup>149</sup>                     |
| Support of Authorities                  | 5                                  | The school and teachers qualify as the institutional authority.  |
| Social Likability                       | 4                                  | Students are encouraged to make new friends and keep them beyond the day of the program. <sup>150</sup>  |
| Knowledge Building                      | 3                                  | One recommended activity is a “show and tell” where students explain something personally important to them. <sup>151</sup> The instructions are not specific to focusing on culture/diversity.  |
| Address Anxiety                         | 1                                  | The plans do not discuss ensuring an environment to reduce anxiety of interacting with others. The official program requires two follow-up sessions and encourages further activities to reinforce concepts throughout the school year. <sup>152</sup> |
| Incorporates Empathy/Perspective Taking | 2                                  | The program encourages students to share personal stories so that others can relate to them and share their experiences. <sup>153</sup>  |
| <b>Total ICT Score</b>                  | <b>30</b>                          |  |
| <b>ICT %</b>                            | <b>75%</b>                         |  |

<sup>148</sup> “Activities during Mix,” Teaching Tolerance, July 27, 2017, <https://www.tolerance.org/mix-it-up/activities/activities-during-mix-it-up>.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> “Activities during Mix.”

<sup>152</sup> “Getting Started.”

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

Overall, the program receives a score of 75 percent, reflecting that most of the criteria were at least partially met; however, the program perfectly met all of Allport's four original criteria. The SPLC provides in-depth instructions on how to run the program and it is apparent, based on the score, that they considered social or behavioral science in the design of the program.

***b. Ten Ways to Fight Hate: A Community Response Guide***

The SPLC produces a guide for communities to use to prevent hateful behavior.<sup>154</sup> Through a press release, the SPLC states that the guide “advises readers on how to promote tolerance and effectively speak out against discrimination. And it encourages today’s activists to join forces with other like-minded people, to support victims of hate crimes, and to expose and denounce prejudice.”<sup>155</sup> The 2017 version is available on the SPLC’s website and marketed through newspaper ads and social media posts.<sup>156</sup> The SPLC does not further detail who it sends the guide to; however, the main users of the guide are likely people already subscribed to the SPLC’s news alerts. The guide was selected for this study as it serves as a nationwide effort to educate people interested in doing something to prevent hateful behavior against all groups, including Muslims.

The 36-page guide covers each of the 10 principles in detail and offers examples of what people can do to combat hate and the next steps to take.<sup>157</sup> The 10 principles outlined in the guide are: 1) act, 2) join forces, 3) support the victims, 4) speak up, 5) educate yourself, 6) create an alternative, 7) pressure leaders, 8) stay engaged, 9) teach

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<sup>154</sup> “Ten Ways to Fight Hate: A Community Response Guide,” Southern Poverty Law Center, February 15, 2010, <https://www.splcenter.org/20100216/ten-ways-fight-hate-community-response-guide>.

<sup>155</sup> “SPLC Releases New Edition of Ten Ways to Fight Hate Guide after Charlottesville Attack,” Southern Poverty Law Center, August 14, 2017, <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2017/08/14/splc-releases-new-edition-ten-ways-fight-hate-guide-after-charlottesville-attack>.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

acceptance, and 10) dig deeper.<sup>158</sup> The guide covers several avenues for expanding interaction with others, which sets the basis for evaluating the program using intergroup contact theory. One inherent problem with these types of guides and outreach efforts is that prejudicial people may avoid new interactions, but the SPLC does not see that as a reason to stop outreach.<sup>159</sup>

The guide also specifically addresses challenging media prejudice. It includes a pre-drafted letter titled, “Message for the Media,” which encourages individuals to share with media contacts to help expose false narratives from hate groups, to seek thoughtful coverage of complex issues, to take hate crimes seriously, and also to promote positive stories of tolerance.<sup>160</sup> The Teaching Acceptance section of the guide further recommends that parents expose themselves to children’s media consumption and discuss stereotypes to prevent children from learning prejudice.<sup>161</sup> The SPLC further works with the media to expose the activities of hate groups and individuals that preach intolerance.<sup>162</sup> Table 3 captures the evaluation of the guide.

While the guide’s overall score of 73 percent illustrates the SPLC’s scientific foundation for the program, the guide is weak in promoting interactions based on equal status and common goals. The guide promotes intergroup interaction, but fails to provide adequate information on developing meaningful interactions that build social capital. The guide likely serves as a good tool for those who want to become involved, but does not help with those not seeking help; consequently, opportunities for improvement do exist.

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<sup>158</sup> “Ten Ways to Fight Hate: A Community Response Guide.”

<sup>159</sup> Pettigrew, “Intergroup Contact Theory,” 80.

<sup>160</sup> “Ten Ways to Fight Hate,” 10–12.

<sup>161</sup> “Ten Ways to Fight Hate,” 29.

<sup>162</sup> “What We Do.”

Table 3. Ten Ways to Fight Hate Evaluation

| <b>ICT Criteria</b>                     | <b>Criteria Score<br/>(1 to 5)</b> | <b>Description of Effort</b>  |
|---|------------------------------------|---|
| Equal Status                            | 2                                  | The guide recommends people “Stay Engaged” by creating opportunities within their local communities to meet people outside their in-group, but does not make recommendations on ensuring equal status. <sup>163</sup> |
| Common Goals                            | 1                                  | The guide does not specifically promote interaction that includes meeting people with common goals.   |
| Intergroup Cooperation                  | 4                                  | Cooperation is suggested, as an activity where the community organizes to collectively challenge hate through peace rallies. <sup>164</sup>   |
| Support of Authorities                  | 5                                  | Suggestions to work with law enforcement and pressuring political leaders to act recognize that support of the authorities is needed. <sup>165</sup>  |
| Social Likability                       | 4                                  | Expanding someone’s friend circle to be more multicultural is offered as a way to teach children to form diverse friendships. <sup>166</sup>  |
| Knowledge Building                      | 5                                  | The section, “Educate Yourself,” recommends a person understand how to recognize prejudice and also to gain knowledge about others’ backgrounds. <sup>167</sup>   |
| Address Anxiety                         | 4                                  | The guide encourages people to “expand your comfort zone by reaching out to people outside your own groups.” <sup>168</sup>   |
| Incorporates Empathy/Perspective Taking | 4                                  | The SPLC includes a section on “Dig Deeper” to think how you may harbor your own prejudice and what others may face. <sup>169</sup>   |
| <b>Total ICT Score</b>                  | <b>29</b>                          |   |
| <b>ICT %</b>                            | <b>73%</b>                         |   |

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 21–24.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 4, 19.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 13, 23.

<sup>168</sup> “Ten Ways to Fight Hate,” 25.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 28–29.

## 2. Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund

The SALDEF is a Sikh community specific organization founded in 1996 and based in Washington, DC.<sup>170</sup> The mission on its website states, “To empower Sikh Americans by building dialogue, deepening understanding, promoting civic and political participation, and upholding social justice and religious freedom for all Americans.”<sup>171</sup> In pursuit of this mission, the SALDEF leads a variety of initiatives that include media initiatives, an internship program (SikhLEAD), engagement with law enforcement, and SikhVote, a program to promote civic engagement.<sup>172</sup>

In 2013, the SALDEF, in collaboration with Stanford University, produced *Turban Myths*, the first report on the public perception of Sikhs in America.<sup>173</sup> The report identifies key problems Sikhs face in America and attributes these problems to the lack of social contact between most Americans and Sikhs.<sup>174</sup> In addition to an overall misperception by the public that Sikhs are a sect of Islam, the SALDEF also found that the media played a role in promoting negative sentiment toward turbans and other Sikh articles of faith.<sup>175</sup>

*Turban Myths* and the SALDEF’s associated work to address prejudice align well with Putnam’s framework that suggests that lack of social contact among certain religious groups is problematic.<sup>176</sup> *Turban Myths* recommends that the community improves knowledge of bias in the community to prevent problems before they occur, works within the Sikh community to achieve consensus on pressing issues, identifies allies that can help influence and support the cause, and develops further capacity for advocating on

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<sup>170</sup> “SALDEF Mission & Vision.”

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund, *Turban Myths* (Washington, DC: Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund, 2013), <http://saldef.org/policy-research/turban-myths/#.WcmcBEyZORt>.

<sup>174</sup> “Turban Myths,” Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund, accessed November 10, 2017, [https://issuu.com/saldefmedia/docs/turbanmyths\\_121113](https://issuu.com/saldefmedia/docs/turbanmyths_121113).

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Campbell and Putnam, “America’s Grace: How a Tolerant Nation Bridges Its Religious Divides,” 622.

behalf of the community.<sup>177</sup> One section of the report promotes increased interaction between Sikhs and their local communities, acknowledging that it is human nature to spend more time with people you already know and in comfortable environments.<sup>178</sup> This revelation is important, as intergroup contact theory can only work when members of the minority group are willing and able to increase social contact with the broader society.

The SALDEF began several initiatives to increase contact and knowledge sharing based on the recommendations in *Turban Myths* that continue in 2017. The SALDEF extensively engages with the law enforcement community, including the DHS, the DOJ and local police departments.<sup>179</sup> In coordination with law enforcement agencies, the SALDEF developed several publications, *On Common Ground* (video), *A Guide to Sikh American Head Coverings*, and *A Guide to the Kirpan*, that help bring about more cultural awareness of Sikhism and protect Sikh's civil rights and civil liberties.<sup>180</sup> The SALDEF also brings people together through an annual event, *Langar on Capitol Hill*, where SikhLEAD interns pass out free meals on Capitol Hill to promote cultural understanding.<sup>181</sup> Indian American Congressman Amerish Bera expressed his support for the program, stating, "I think what's incredibly important... is celebrating the strength of the United States, the different ethnicities, the different religions, the different cultures all coming together."<sup>182</sup> While the SALDEF considers the event successful, the impact may not be substantial in decreasing prejudice, as the event only reaches a few hundred people.

In addition, the SALDEF directly engages the media to advance diversity on television. The organization's work focuses more on collaboration with the media, than confrontation, which some organizations deploy. In 2016, the SALDEF met with CBS

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<sup>177</sup> "Turban Myths," Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>179</sup> "Law Enforcement," Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund, accessed November 10, 2017, <http://saldef.org/initiatives/law-enforcement/#.Wcpj0yZORt>.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>181</sup> Geeta Goindi, "Kamala Harris, Ami Bera Co-Sponsor Fourth Annual Langar on Capitol Hill," *American Bazaar*, July 25, 2017, <https://www.americanbazaaronline.com/2017/07/25/harris-bera-co-sponsor-capitol-hill-langar-427472/>.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*

Entertainment leadership to “collaborate with the industry to increase diversity.”<sup>183</sup> The meeting was part of a broader effort of the Asian Pacific American Media Coalition to engage with ABC, CBS, FOX, and NBC “to increase diversity both in front of the cameras and behind the scenes.”<sup>184</sup> The efforts to engage the media follow the SALDEF’s previous efforts to spread its message on TV.

The SALDEF’s most far-reaching engagement effort is a Sikh American public service announcement (PSA) created in 2014 with support of Comcast and the Center for Asian American Media (CAAM).<sup>185</sup> The organization created a 30-second PSA video that aired in over 39 states, distributing more than 100,000 airings on channels, such as CNBC, A&E, VH1, and Fox.<sup>186</sup> The PSA was selected for this study because of its wide reach across the country and its specific message about Sikh Americans. The PSA features actor Waris Singh Ahluwalia, who received acclaim when he appeared in a 2013 GAP advertisement that was defaced to say “Make Bombs” instead of “Make Love” and “Please Stop Driving TAXIS.”<sup>187</sup> The PSA delivers a positive message explaining that “for over 125 years, Sikhs have been part of the American culture,” with a montage in the background of Sikh Americans playing basketball, riding motorcycles, serving in the community, and several other “American” activities.<sup>188</sup> The PSA is evaluated using the intergroup contact theory criteria in Table 4.

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<sup>183</sup> “SALDEF Meets with Major TV Networks,” Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund, October 10, 2016, <http://saldef.org/media/saldef-meets-major-tv-networks/#.WcmaQUyZORs>.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> “Comcast Commits \$1 Million to Sikh American Awareness,” Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund, September 13, 2017, <http://saldef.org/news/comcast-commits-1-million-sikh-american-awareness/#.Wcf-eEyZORt>.

<sup>186</sup> “Historic Media Message Addressing Anti-Turban Bias Re-Airs,” Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund, September 23, 2016, <https://medium.com/@saldef/historic-media-message-addressing-anti-turban-bias-re-airs-11089bee7a55>; and “Sikh PSA to Reach Millions,” CAAM, accessed November 10, 2017, <http://caamedia.org/blog/2015/06/04/sikh-psa-to-reach-millions/>.

<sup>187</sup> Yasmine Hafiz, “Gap’s Ad with Sikh Model Waris Ahluwalia Defaced with Racist Graffiti, Drawing Incredible Response from Company,” *Huffington Post*, sec. Religion, November 26, 2013, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/11/26/gap-ad-sikh-waris-ahluwalia\\_n\\_4343586.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/11/26/gap-ad-sikh-waris-ahluwalia_n_4343586.html).

<sup>188</sup> “First Ever Sikh American PSA via Comcast,” YouTube video, 5:44, posted by Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=1&v=2P4Geib5UmA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=2P4Geib5UmA).

Table 4. SALDEF PSA Evaluation

| <b>ICT Criteria</b>                     | <b>Criteria Score<br/>(1 to 5)</b> | <b>Description of Effort</b>   |
|---|------------------------------------|--|
| Equal Status                            | 4                                  | The PSA incorporates equal status by portraying Sikh Americans as basketball players, doctors, Boy Scouts, and Harley Davidson motorcyclists. <sup>189</sup> They use images that they hope will resonate with most Americans. |
| Common Goals                            | 4                                  | The PSA includes an image and a statement on America as a place (America) where it is possible to “Raise a Family,” which is a common goal for most Americans. <sup>190</sup>  |
| Intergroup Cooperation                  | 4                                  | The PSA references, “Serve the Community,” which expresses efforts to engage with others for the greater public good. <sup>191</sup>   |
| Support of Authorities                  | 1                                  | This PSA does not contain references to authority figures.   |
| Social Likability                       | 5                                  | Waris Ahluwalia, a handsome model, forms the basis of a likeable messenger.  |
| Knowledge Building                      | 4                                  | The message is that Sikhs have been part of America for 125 years and live an American life. <sup>192</sup>  |
| Addresses Anxiety                       | 1                                  | The shortness and indirect nature of the PSA, may not help to reduce anxiety.  |
| Incorporates Empathy/Perspective Taking | 4                                  | The PSA starts with, “Sometimes people ask me where I’m from.” <sup>193</sup> This statement gives a perspective of what a Sikh man faces every day in society.  |
| <b>Total ICT Score</b>                  | <b>27</b>                          |  |
| <b>ICT %</b>                            | <b>68%</b>                         |  |

<sup>189</sup> “First Ever Sikh American PSA via Comcast.”

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

Although the PSA is only 30-seconds long and only involves parasocial contact, it meets several intergroup contact theory criteria. However, the infrequency of contact between the PSA and viewers may make it difficult to foster enough of a relationship to reduce prejudice. The SALDEF and other Sikh organizations face a unique challenge, as they want to differentiate themselves from Muslims, but at the same time, they want to make clear that prejudice toward Muslims is not acceptable. The SALDEF partners with several other Sikh and Muslim groups; however, the messages rarely discuss different religions. One recommendation in the following chapter discusses the opportunity to reach greater audiences by incorporating Sikh and Muslim messages into combined efforts.

### **3. American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee**

James Abourezk, the first Arab American U.S. Senator, founded the ADC in 1980.<sup>194</sup> The organization lists three core values: “PROTECTS civil rights and civil liberties of Arab Americans, PROMOTES mutual understanding, PRESERVES Arab American cultural heritage.”<sup>195</sup> The ADC was selected for this study because of its grassroots structure and because it is the largest Arab-American advocacy organization in the United States.<sup>196</sup> The ADC focuses on the following five objectives:

- Defend and promote human rights, civil rights, and liberties of Arab Americans and other persons of Arab heritage.
- Combat stereotypes and discrimination against and affecting the Arab-American community in the United States.
- Serve as a public voice for the Arab American community in the United States on domestic and foreign policy issues.

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<sup>194</sup> “Our Founder,” American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, accessed November 10, 2017, <http://www.adc.org/our-founder/>.

<sup>195</sup> “About Us,” American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, accessed November 10, 2017, <http://www.adc.org/about-us/>.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

- Educate the American public to promote greater understanding of Arab history and culture.
- Organize and mobilize the Arab American community in furtherance of the organization’s objectives.<sup>197</sup>

The ADC operates from its headquarters in Washington, DC, but has affiliations in 21 states.<sup>198</sup> The ADC has a small social media presence with about 21,000 Facebook followers.<sup>199</sup> The ADC’s website does not include information on outreach events, but it suggests, “Members need to develop ways to reach out beyond the Arab-American community by becoming involved in community affairs and involving the non-Arab groups in Arab-American issues.”<sup>200</sup> The lack of information on outreach programs to other parts of the community makes it difficult to assess any one ADC initiative against the intergroup contact theory framework. As such, a variety of initiatives, as briefly outlined, are used in the evaluation.

One ADC initiative extensively works toward combating what it perceives to be civil rights and civil liberties violations by governments and public institutions. For instance, one of its targets is the DHS/DOJ countering violent extremism (CVE) program that attempts to work with Arabs and Muslims to prevent radicalization within their communities.<sup>201</sup> In challenging CVE, the ADC has documented how CVE affects the Arab-American community. It has written letters to Congress and federal agencies, started petitions against the program, and worked with other organizations, such as the Brennan Center for Justice, in opposition to certain elements of the program.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> “About Us,” American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee.

<sup>198</sup> “Chapters,” American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, accessed November 10, 2017, <http://www.adc.org/organizing/chapters/>.

<sup>199</sup> ADC National, “American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee,” Facebook, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/adcnational/>.

<sup>200</sup> “Organizing,” American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, accessed November 10, 2017, <http://www.adc.org/organizing/>.

<sup>201</sup> “Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Programs,” American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, accessed November 10, 2017, <http://www.adc.org/countering-violent-extremism-cve/>.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

While the ADC opposes some government programs, it supports others, particularly programs in education. The ADC, similar to the SPLC, provides education toolkits to parents and schools as part of their Reaching the Teachers campaign.<sup>203</sup> The ADC's website includes resources for educators. A few examples are presentations and lesson plans on combating Arab stereotypes, information on Arab culture, how to respond to discrimination, and Arabs' contributions to society.<sup>204</sup> The organization is ardent on making sure that the Arab American perspective is considered in all areas of society.

To ensure the Arab American perspective is included, the ADC keeps a "vigilant eye on anti-Arab defamation and discrimination in the media and provide[s] corrections and alternative perspectives on important issues."<sup>205</sup> One of its most acclaimed examples of correcting media stereotypes was convincing the Disney Company to alter the *Aladdin* song lyrics that portrayed the Arab world in an overly barbaric way.<sup>206</sup> Another example was when the ADC took on the Coca-Cola Corporation for its 2013 Super Bowl ad that depicted a hapless Arab stuck with his camel in the desert while others tried to win a race.<sup>207</sup> In addition to combatting discriminatory media, the ADC actively participates in media interviews to ensure that Arab-American perspectives are accounted for on controversial issues like the Trump travel ban.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> "ADCRI," American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, accessed November 10, 2017, <http://www.adc.org/adcri/>.

<sup>204</sup> "Educational Resources," American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, accessed November 10, 2017, <http://www.adc.org/education/educational-resources/>.

<sup>205</sup> "Organizing," American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, accessed November 10, 2017, <http://www.adc.org/organizing/>.

<sup>206</sup> Marvin Wingfield and Bushra Karaman, "Arab Stereotypes and American Educators," American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, November 18, 2009, <http://www.adc.org/2009/11/arab-stereotypes-and-american-educators/>.

<sup>207</sup> Sue Zeidler, "Arab-American Groups Call Coke Super Bowl Ad Racist," Reuters, January 31, 2013, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-superbowl-ad/arab-american-groups-call-coke-super-bowl-ad-racist-idUSBRE90U03T20130131>.

<sup>208</sup> Thomas Roberts, "Brooklyn Judge Blocks Trump Immigration Ban," MSNBC, January 29, 2017, <http://www.msnbc.com/thomas-roberts/watch/brooklyn-judge-blocks-trump-immigration-ban-865343555711>.

While the ADC conducts several initiatives, from combating media to youth outreach, the fact remains that not enough information is available on its outreach efforts to determine what these engagements are and whether they reflect the criteria for intergroup contact theory. The intergroup contact theory framework is still used to evaluate the ADC in Table 5, with the understanding that the evaluation was conducted with limited information.

Table 5. ADC Evaluation

| <b>ICT Criteria</b>                     | <b>Criteria Score<br/>(1 to 5)</b> | <b>Description of Effort</b>  |
|---|------------------------------------|---|
| Equal Status                            | 1                                  | The ADC materials do not focus on this criterion.   |
| Common Goals                            | 1                                  | The ADC materials do not focus on this criterion.   |
| Intergroup Cooperation                  | 1                                  | The ADC materials do not focus on this criterion.   |
| Support of Authorities                  | 5                                  | The ADC has formed relationships with Congress and federal agencies that call on the ADC for an Arab-American perspective. <sup>209</sup> |
| Social Likability                       | 1                                  | The ADC materials do not focus on this criterion.   |
| Knowledge Building                      | 4                                  | The ADC shares knowledge about Arab-Americans through its educational resources. <sup>210</sup>   |
| Address Anxiety                         | 1                                  | The ADC materials do not focus on this criterion.   |
| Incorporates Empathy/Perspective Taking | 3                                  | Through the ADC's media engagements, it provides the perspective of Arab-Americans that may have been overlooked.                         |
| <b>Total ICT Score</b>                  | <b>17</b>                          |   |
| <b>ICT %</b>                            | <b>43%</b>                         |   |

<sup>209</sup> "Hate Crimes," American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, accessed November 10, 2017, <http://www.adc.org/hate-crimesracial-profiling/>.

<sup>210</sup> "Educational Resources."

Based on the ADC's efforts and a score of 43 percent, the organization is more focused on ensuring that the Arab-American perspective is considered in education, the media, and government, than intergroup contact. While the ADC does not appear to focus on reducing prejudice through intergroup contact, it does heavily emphasize negative perceptions of Arabs in the media. While this study is not meant to measure whether the ADC's efforts are working, it is important to mention that they have been successful in changing the media narrative. After the ADC challenged the Coca-Cola Corporation's 2013 Super Bowl commercial, Coke came back in 2014 (and again in 2017) with its *America the Beautiful* commercial that prominently featured seven diverse women, one of whom wore a hijab.<sup>211</sup> Coke's 2014 ad choice may have resulted from other circumstances, but the ADC's 2013 campaign against Coke likely played a role.

#### **4. Council on American-Islamic Relations**

Started in 1994 by Omar Ahmad and Nihad Awad, the CAIR is now the largest Islamic grassroots organization in the United States with 22 state chapters and a Facebook following of about 137,000.<sup>212</sup> The CAIR's website details its values and describes its mission as follows, "to enhance understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding."<sup>213</sup>

While the CAIR engages with federal, state, and local governments and communities, it endures accusations that it is involved with the Muslim Brotherhood and

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<sup>211</sup> "2014/2017—Coca Cola—America the Beautiful—Super Bowl Ad/Anuncio Comercial," YouTube video, 1:00, posted by MPR Group, February 5, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYVu7tRXuoM>.

<sup>212</sup> "About Us," Council on American-Islamic Relations; Council on American-Islamic Relations, "CAIR," Facebook, accessed November 10, 2017, [https://www.facebook.com/pg/CAIRNational/about/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/CAIRNational/about/?ref=page_internal).

<sup>213</sup> "About Us," Council on American-Islamic Relations.

Hamas.<sup>214</sup> The CAIR vehemently opposes those rumors and condemns all acts of violence as one of its core principles.<sup>215</sup>

The CAIR's website includes numerous initiatives and resources on civil rights work, monitoring and combating legislation harmful to the Muslim community, challenging media relations that stereotype Islam, voter registration efforts, Islamophobia watch, and outreach and interfaith relations.<sup>216</sup> The CAIR offers several guides and publications specifically related to those areas that address the problems and offer solutions.

The CAIR publications include specific guides for educators, employers, health care workers, and correctional institution employees; so that these institutions better understand Islam and cultural differences.<sup>217</sup> A community safety kit, not utilized by other organizations, encourages local communities to develop relationships with law enforcement, meet with elected officials, build interfaith coalitions, report incidents of hate, and consider mosque security.<sup>218</sup> A guide on security may reflect the reality that many Muslim communities live in some amount of fear because of anti-Muslim sentiment in the United States.

In addition to guides on cultural and religious understanding, the CAIR and the state chapters have three particular initiatives that are prominent in the fight against prejudice. In 2007, the CAIR developed and distributed 35,000 copies of *American Muslims: A Journalist's Guide to Understanding Islam and Muslims*, with the goal of educating journalists about Islam, so as to reverse prejudiced media portrayals of

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<sup>214</sup> "Dispelling Rumors about CAIR," Council on American-Islamic Relations, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.cair.com/about-us/dispelling-rumors-about-cair.html>.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> "About Us," Council on American-Islamic Relations.

<sup>217</sup> "Guides and Toolkits," Council on American-Islamic Relations, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.cair.com/publications/guides-and-toolkits.html>.

<sup>218</sup> "CAIR Muslim Community Safety Kit," Council on American-Islamic Relations, March 11, 2015, <https://www.cair.com/publications.html?limitstart=0>.

Muslims.<sup>219</sup> Another more recent guide, created in 2009–2010, *Same Hate, New Targets*, documents Islamophobia in the United States, with sections that include advocates against Islamophobia, significant perpetrators of Islamophobia, hate crimes, public discrimination, and what communities should do to combat it.<sup>220</sup>

A third CAIR initiative involved the development and release of three public service announcements in 2010, with the first video receiving 54,000 views on YouTube.<sup>221</sup> The first PSA features New York City firefighter Hisham Tawfiq’s solemn remembrance of 9/11, portraying the loss of a close friend.<sup>222</sup> The clip’s ending features a still frame with the words, “9/11 happened to us all,” and returns to Tawfiq saying, “I am a New York City firefighter and I responded to 9/11. [pause] And I am a Muslim.”<sup>223</sup> The second PSA follows a similar story line, showing a female 9/11 medical responder telling her story and ending with “And I am a Muslim.”<sup>224</sup> The final PSA, *We Have More in Common than We Think*, shows interfaith leaders all reciting similar religious sayings that repeat “do unto others as you would have others do unto you,” in different idiomatic ways.<sup>225</sup> The PSAs were selected for this study because they directly address 9/11, and represent average Americans who cannot be easily identified as Muslim through religious dress. These three PSAs are collectively analyzed against the intergroup contact theory framework, in Table 6, to see if they meet the criteria for building social capital.

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<sup>219</sup> “American Muslims: A Journalist’s Guide to Understanding Islam and Muslims,” Council on American-Islamic Relations, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.cair.com/american-muslims-a-journalist-s-guide-to-understanding-islam-and-muslims.html>.

<sup>220</sup> Council on American-Islamic Relations, *Same Hate, New Target: Islamophobia and Its Impact in the United States, January 2009–December 2010* (Berkeley, CA: UC Berkeley Center for Race & Gender, 2011), <http://crg.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/islamophobiareport2009-2010.pdf>.

<sup>221</sup> “CAIR ‘9/11 Happened to Us All’ PSA, Firefighter,” YouTube video, 1:00, posted by CAIRtv, August 31, 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mU5W-iUv8fg>.

<sup>222</sup> “CAIR ‘9/11 Happened to Us All’ PSA, Firefighter.”

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> “CAIR, 9/11 Happened to Us All,” PSA, Medical Responder (30-Second),” YouTube video, 0:30, posted by CAIRtv, August 31, 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVtup1bB7aM>.

<sup>225</sup> “CAIR, We Have More in Common than We Think,” PSA, Interfaith (30-Second),” YouTube video, 0:30, posted by CAIRtv, August 31, 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OhOi5gRkK0M>.

Table 6. CAIR PSA Evaluation

| <b>ICT Criteria</b>                     | <b>Criteria Score<br/>(1 to 5)</b> | <b>Description of Effort</b>   |
|---|------------------------------------|--|
| Equal Status                            | 4                                  | The stories of regular people, a firefighter and medical worker, represent respected groups within society. The interfaith PSA shows commonality across religions. |
| Common Goals                            | 4                                  | After 9/11, there was a collective sense of coming together as one country. The common goal is America.  |
| Intergroup Cooperation                  | 4                                  | The reaction to 9/11 took a massive community response effort.   |
| Support of Authorities                  | 5                                  | The fire department is a respected public institution and religious leaders are respected members of the community. Both are seen as authority figures in society. |
| Social Likability                       | 5                                  | The firefighter is particularly likable as he emotionally breaks down over the loss of his friend.   |
| Knowledge Building                      | 2                                  | While the knowledge gained is not specifically about culture, it educates others that Muslims are Americans and part of society.                                   |
| Address Anxiety                         | 1                                  | The PSAs do not discuss interacting with others and reducing fears.  |
| Incorporates Empathy/Perspective Taking | 5                                  | The firefighter PSA is particularly moving as he copes with the loss of his friend.  |
| <b>Total ICT Score</b>                  | <b>30</b>                          |  |
| <b>ICT %</b>                            | <b>75%</b>                         |  |

As the largest Islamic organization, the CAIR has the resources to affect a large portion of society. The PSAs collectively receive a score of 75 percent, as they include all the criteria to some extent, except addressing anxiety. A commonality uncovered in the scoring is that the backdrop of 9/11 brings an immediate sense of solemnness that was revealed in the PSAs to allow the viewer to empathize with the characters naturally and promote the message of the PSA, that we are all human and were all affected.

## 5. Ad Council

The Ad Council, a non-profit organization, was created in November 1941 and embarked on a campaign to sell War Bonds in support of World War II.<sup>226</sup> Since then, the Ad Council is the “leading producer of public service communications” and works on well-known campaigns such as Smokey Bear and the *Just Say No* anti-drug campaign.<sup>227</sup> The Ad Council’s website lists its mission as, “Identify a select number of significant public issues and stimulate action on those issues through communications programs that make a measurable difference in our society.”<sup>228</sup> While the Ad Council is a non-profit organization, it also works with for profit organizations.

The organization receives pro bono support from advertising agencies and distributes the ads to over 33,000 media outlets that donate significant airtime and ad space.<sup>229</sup> The campaigns focus on education, family and community, health, and safety.<sup>230</sup> The Ad Council has been working on campaigns related to discrimination since 1981 with the *Life’s too Short, Stop the Hate* campaign to combat racial prejudice.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> “About Us,” Ad Council, accessed November 10, 2017, <http://www.adcouncil.org/About-Us>.

<sup>227</sup> “The Story of the Ad Council,” Ad Council, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.adcouncil.org/About-Us/The-Story-of-the-Ad-Council>.

<sup>228</sup> “About Us,” Ad Council.

<sup>229</sup> “Frequently Asked Questions,” Ad Council, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.adcouncil.org/About-Us/Frequently-Asked-Questions#How%20do%20we%20create%20ads>.

<sup>230</sup> “Our Campaigns,” Ad Council, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.adcouncil.org/Our-Campaigns>.

<sup>231</sup> “The Story of the Ad Council.”

The Ad Council continues to combat racial prejudice; in addition, it now combats religious prejudice and discrimination. In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, Ad Council partners felt duty-bound to do something positive to help unite the country.<sup>232</sup> Ten days after the attacks, they released the *I Am an American* PSA, in what normally would have taken eight to nine months to complete.<sup>233</sup> The PSA is simple; each frame depicts a diverse American repeating, “I am an American,” and ends with the slogan *E Pluribus Unum—Out of Many, One*.<sup>234</sup> The Ad Council has expanded this concept with the *Love Has No Labels* campaign that began in 2015 to “promote inclusion to reduce bias.”<sup>235</sup>

*Love Has No Labels* is more than a series of PSAs. It includes a website dedicated to fighting bias and helping people understand their own inherent biases.<sup>236</sup> The campaign and associated PSAs were selected for this study, as the campaign does not specifically focus on any one race or religion; rather it focuses on diversity as a whole and includes images of people of all faiths and backgrounds. The Ad Council partners with organizations to create content and use materials already developed from groups like the Anti-Defamation League and the SPLC (specifically the teaching tolerance materials previously discussed).<sup>237</sup> The PSAs are cinematically impressive in their own right by helping to drive traffic to the website.

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<sup>232</sup> “Public Service Advertising That Changed a Nation,” Ad Council, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.adcouncil.org/Impact/Research/Public-Service-Advertising-that-Changed-a-Nation>.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> “I Am an American,” YouTube video, 1:05, posted by billboardnumber1, November 2, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vPIXLUrIjXg>.

<sup>235</sup> “Diversity and Inclusion (2015),” Ad Council, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.adcouncil.org/Impact/Case-Studies/Diversity-and-Inclusion-2015>.

<sup>236</sup> “Love Has No Labels,” Ad Council, accessed November 10, 2017, <http://www.adcouncil.org/Our-Campaigns/Family-Community/Diversity-Inclusion>.

<sup>237</sup> “Are You Biased?” Survey Gizmo, accessed November 10, 2017, <http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/1988701/Are-You-Bias>.

The first PSA, *Skeletons*, features a crowd watching a screen that has two skeletons interacting. As the people behind the screen come out, people see that they are diverse couples.<sup>238</sup> The PSA has been viewed over 164 million times, which makes it the most watched PSA ever.<sup>239</sup> The second PSA, *#WeAreAmerica*, features famous WWE wrestler John Cena strolling down an average street in America. While Cena asks viewers to imagine what the average American looks like, he starts to reveal just how diverse America is and that being patriotic means to love not just America, but all Americans.<sup>240</sup> The Ad Council launched the 3-minute PSA on July 4, 2016, to coincide with Independence Day. It was immediately a success, having been viewed more than 92 million times.<sup>241</sup> The third and most recent PSA, *Fans of Love*, plays on the idea of kiss cams at sporting events, but highlights diverse couples and people with disabilities.<sup>242</sup> Since February 2017, the PSA has been viewed over 38 million times.<sup>243</sup>

In addition to measuring the number of times PSAs are viewed, the Ad Council also attempts to measure the change in society. While the survey methodology is not independently verifiable, the Council touts that nearly 60 percent of Americans are familiar with the *Love Has No Labels* campaign.<sup>244</sup> Since the PSAs have aired, the Council reports that more adults agree that, “supporting diversity and acceptance around race, gender, sexuality, religion, and disability is very important (33% to 44%).”<sup>245</sup> The following intergroup contact theory evaluation in Table 7 considers all three PSAs.

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<sup>238</sup> “Diversity & Inclusion—Love Has No Labels—Skeletons,” YouTube video, 1:00, posted by Ad Council, March 3, 2015, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yWFUT5WQjOQ&index=10&list=PLdSSK SOSBh4mknah4uWyiZ2lslUv\\_UTSD](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yWFUT5WQjOQ&index=10&list=PLdSSK SOSBh4mknah4uWyiZ2lslUv_UTSD).

<sup>239</sup> “Diversity and Inclusion (2015).”

<sup>240</sup> “We Are America Ft. John Cena|Love Has No Labels|Ad Council,” YouTube video, 3:34, posted by Ad Council, July 4, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0MdK8hBkR3s>.

<sup>241</sup> “Diversity and Inclusion (2015).”

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>244</sup> “Diversity and Inclusion (2015).”

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*

Table 7. AD Council PSA Evaluation

| <b>ICT Criteria</b>                     | <b>Criteria Score<br/>(1 to 5)</b> | <b>Description of Effort</b>   |
|---|------------------------------------|--|
| Equal Status                            | 5                                  | The PSAs include average people from all walks of life.  |
| Common Goals                            | 4                                  | Particularly, the <i>We Are America</i> PSA highlights patriotism as a common theme that all Americans can support.                      |
| Intergroup Cooperation                  | 1                                  | The PSAs do not reflect or suggest intergroup cooperation.   |
| Support of Authorities                  | 1                                  | References to authority or the law in the PSAs do not appear.  |
| Social Likability                       | 5                                  | Each of the PSAs depicts average Americans. The use of John Cena also lends credibility as a well-liked professional wrestler and actor. |
| Knowledge Building                      | 2                                  | The PSA teaches about implicit bias, but nothing about the diverse people represented.   |
| Address Anxiety                         | 1                                  | The PSAs do not discuss interacting with others and reducing fears.  |
| Incorporates Empathy/Perspective Taking | 1                                  | The PSAs do not specifically seek empathy or offer perspectives from the minority.   |
| <b>Total ICT Score</b>                  | <b>20</b>                          |  |
| <b>ICT %</b>                            | <b>50%</b>                         |  |

The Ad Council PSAs only meet a few of the intergroup contact theory criteria, which may be because the messenger is not from a minority community. Diverse groups from society carry out the other messages in the two other organizations' PSAs. The Ad Council's model, using professional advertisers, shines through in the production quality of the PSAs and the ability to capture significant airtime and ad space. What immediately distinguishes these PSAs from others is that they are part of a much larger effort and seek to capture the audiences' attention and then drive them to their website for more information. Unfortunately, the Ad Council does not publish statistics on how well the PSAs drive traffic to the website, which can certainly help ascertain if the PSAs are effective.

### **C. COMBINED ASSESSMENT**

The advocacy organizations selected represent just a few of the organizations and their efforts to combat prejudice. The study indicates that all the programs include some of the intergroup contact theory criteria. A significant difference in scores between programs evaluated based on their materials that promote intergroup contact and the video PSAs did not occur. The programs include several similarities and differences.

One of the commonalities across several programs is youth outreach. Youth outreach, particularly in schools, incorporates most of the intergroup contact theory criteria. Students naturally participate in social interaction at school, whereas it is difficult to get adults to interact with unknown people and groups. Although each organization has some similar outreach efforts, differences, as well in the approach they use, do occur.

While all the organizations work with the media, some of the efforts are based on collaboration to prevent prejudice, whereas others are based on combatting already existing prejudice. The ADC is particularly aggressive in combating media inaccuracies, which may lead to its successful efforts. Social media provides a new forum for organizations to combat media misperceptions directly.

All the organizations have a social media presence, but the larger organizations, the SPLC, the CAIR, and the Ad Council, have superior social media campaigns that promote their materials to a wider audience. The organizations use social media as an avenue for addressing current events, even those outside the interest of their respective communities.

The SALDEF, the ADC, and the CAIR, organizations that specifically represent their own communities, mostly focus on efforts only important to their communities. Some exceptions were seen in this study when Sikh groups incorporate information about Muslims into the conversation and vice versa, but it is secondary to the main message. The SPLC and the Ad Council more broadly promote tolerance of all minority groups, but a discernable difference in intergroup contact theory scores does not occur between these organizations and the more specific ones. The combined evaluation in Table 8 provides a side-by-side comparison by program.

Table 8. Combined Evaluation

| <b>Social Capital Criteria</b>          | <b>SPLC: Mix it Up at Lunch</b> | <b>SPLC: Guide to Combat Hate</b> | <b>SALDEF: PSA</b> | <b>ADC</b> | <b>CAIR: PSAs</b> | <b>Ad Council: PSAs</b> |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Equal Status                            | 5                               | 2                                 | 4                  | 1          | 4                 | 5                       |
| Common Goals                            | 5                               | 1                                 | 4                  | 1          | 4                 | 4                       |
| Intergroup Cooperation                  | 5                               | 4                                 | 4                  | 1          | 4                 | 1                       |
| Support of Authorities                  | 5                               | 5                                 | 1                  | 5          | 5                 | 1                       |
| Social Likability                       | 4                               | 4                                 | 5                  | 1          | 5                 | 5                       |
| Knowledge Building                      | 3                               | 5                                 | 4                  | 4          | 2                 | 2                       |
| Address Anxiety                         | 1                               | 4                                 | 1                  | 1          | 1                 | 1                       |
| Incorporates Empathy/Perspective Taking | 2                               | 4                                 | 4                  | 3          | 5                 | 1                       |
| <b>Total Score</b>                      | <b>30</b>                       | <b>29</b>                         | <b>27</b>          | <b>17</b>  | <b>30</b>         | <b>20</b>               |
| <b>% Criteria were Included</b>         | <b>75%</b>                      | <b>73%</b>                        | <b>68%</b>         | <b>43%</b> | <b>75%</b>        | <b>50%</b>              |

While this evaluation was subjective, it provides a good place for researchers to begin to understand and streamline what these organizations are trying to do. The next chapter makes further recommendations regarding how to improve on this framework of understanding and evaluating, and also include actions that organizations can take to help further reduce prejudice.

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## IV. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research sought to answer the initial question of how and why American media plays a role in promoting prejudice, what organizational response is there to this promotion, and are these organizations using intergroup contact theory to combat prejudice? Chapter I reviewed foundational literature on media theory and conflict in civil society. Chapter II analyzed how and why the media promotes prejudice. Chapter III included research into advocacy organizations and an analysis of organizations' efforts using an analytical framework for intergroup contact theory. Overall, this research found that the absence of social interaction between minorities such as Muslims and Sikhs and the majority non-Muslim Americans creates a paradigm where many Americans view Muslims only through the lens of a prejudiced media. Prejudice creates discord within a civil society that can lead to violence and present a danger to homeland security. Advocacy organizations attempt to decrease this prejudice by filling the void in interaction; yet, instability continues that can lead to a conflict in society. This chapter provides an overview of the major findings in the thesis and offers recommendations on how advocacy organizations and civil society can further reduce prejudice. In addition, the thesis concludes by focusing on the future of prejudice in America and further areas of study.

### A. MAJOR FINDINGS

A problem in civil society does occur when groups such as Muslims, Arabs, and Sikhs, not only face prejudice, but also acts of violence that target them. Over the course of researching this thesis, several new instances of violence occurred, including the murder of Srinivas Kuchibhotla in Kansas, "because of his actual and perceived race, color, religion and national origin."<sup>246</sup> In March 2017, a Sikh man was shot in the arm outside of his home in a Seattle suburb after the attacker shouted, "Go back to your

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<sup>246</sup> Matt Stevens, "Kansas Man Indicted on Hate Crime Charges in Shooting of Indian Immigrants," *New York Times*, sec. U.S., June 9, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/09/us/indian-immigrants-kansas-hate-crime.html>.

country.”<sup>247</sup> The increase in hate crime and violence across the United States in 2017 makes the findings of this thesis ever more important.

As explained in Chapter II, Orientalism partially explains why prejudice exists, specifically in the media. Stereotypes of people spanning the Arab World through Asia were developed to create an out-group seen as inferior to the Occident. Muslims, Arabs, Sikhs, and other South Asians who are non-Western in appearance and culture conveniently serve as this out-group that takes the blame for societal ills. While Orientalism shows up in nearly all forms of media, another explanation can be found as to why the media continues to purport prejudiced messages.

“Stop Islamization of America” and other fringe organizations use the media as a means to spread their own prejudiced messages. These organizations and individuals often pose as experts on Islam and push their negative agendas through the media. Advocacy organizations attempt to expose these groups; however, members of the anti-Muslim movement, including Pam Geller, continue to make appearances on FOX News and other news outlets. While some advocacy organizations attempt to expose fringe organizations, they largely focus on reducing prejudice through group interaction.

Chapter III looked at advocacy organizations’ efforts to combat prejudice by analyzing how well organizations’ efforts include the foundations of intergroup contact theory and how the organizations directly challenge media prejudice. A variety of six programs were analyzed using a framework to measure how well each of the programs incorporates the principles of intergroup contact theory. The analysis revealed that each program includes some elements of intergroup contact theory, but not enough evidence was available to show that all programs use a scientific basis for fostering group interaction to reduce prejudice. The research also revealed that efforts that include indirect interaction through public service announcements received similar scores to those that foster direct engagement. In addition to the intergroup contact theory analysis framework, the research revealed several broad similarities across programs. For

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<sup>247</sup> Artemis Moshtagian, Huizhong Wu, and Susannah Cullinane, “Sikh Man’s Shooting in Washington Investigated as Hate Crime,” CNN, March 5, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/03/05/us/washington-sikh-shooting/index.html>.

instance, several of the programs emphasize reducing prejudice through group interaction among children and using social media as a means to expand messaging.

While some advocacy organizations recognize that many Americans will not have direct contact with small Muslim, Arab, and Sikh populations in the United States, this thesis did not uncover evidence of organizations' efforts to tackle this problem consciously. Although the populations of groups, such as Sikh Americans, are quite small, opportunities exist to increase awareness and understanding of Sikh religion and culture. The following section provides broad recommendations on reducing prejudice by expanding the reach of advocacy groups to fill the current knowledge gap in society.

## **B. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations are divided into three sections that address: 1) improving outreach to decrease prejudice, 2) directly addressing fringe organizations, and 3) working with the media to reduce prejudice. If implemented, the recommendations will allow both advocacy groups and other parts of civil society to reduce prejudice in America.

### **1. Improving Outreach to Decrease Prejudice**

To be effective, organizations must find better ways not only to increase interaction with non-minority groups in America, but also improve the quality of the interactions to reduce prejudice. These interactions will help reverse prejudice learned through Orientalist media narratives. Rajdeep Singh Jolly, an advocate with the Sikh Coalition, accurately summarizes the challenge advocacy organizations face, "Preventing hate crimes requires sustained grass-roots engagement in every aspect of life over the course of generations. It requires eternal vigilance."<sup>248</sup> The following recommendations are not offered as a quick fix to reducing prejudice; instead, they are offered as a way to help advocacy groups gradually allow people to give up their own prejudices.

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<sup>248</sup> "Why American Sikhs Think They Need a Publicity Campaign," National Public Radio, April 28, 2017, <http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2017/04/28/525899092/why-american-sikhs-think-they-need-a-publicity-campaign>.

**a. *Harness the Collective Power of Advocacy Organizations***

The research did not uncover anything wrong in the actions of advocacy organizations; however, each organization analyzed had particular strengths and weaknesses in the type of advocacy work they conduct. For instance, the Ad Council is able to produce top quality public service announcements that are better than ads smaller grassroots organizations can produce. The SPLC and ADC are effective at using the legal system to seek justice, which is outside of the SALDEF's area of expertise in working with law enforcement and communities to help others understand Sikh religion and culture. The point is that each advocacy organization should continue with what they are good at, and at the same time, leverage the work of other groups to possibly allow for each organization to use limited resources most effectively in combating prejudice in society.

In addition, organizational partnership will reach wider audiences. Interfaith groups already work together, but it should be expanded upon to the extent possible. A recent example occurred when Muslim activists helped raise money for and personally volunteered to help clean up Jewish cemeteries vandalized in St. Louis and Philadelphia.<sup>249</sup> The partnerships resulted in positive group interaction and positive media attention that dispelled prejudice toward both Jews and Muslims. These new relationships also create allies who are able to speak up for minorities to reduce prejudice further.

**b. *Harness the Power of the Digital Age***

PSAs, Facebook, and Twitter posts are the most effective at distributing messages to large audiences across America. The results of the intergroup contact theory framework show that parasocial contact is as effective as direct contact in meeting the criteria to create positive group interaction that reduces prejudice. While local information campaigns and interfaith meetings are still necessary, they alone do not reach

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<sup>249</sup> Colby Itkowitz, "'Stand Together against This Bigotry': Another Jewish Cemetery Vandalized and Again Muslims Reach out to Help," *Washington Post*, February 27, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/inspired-life/wp/2017/02/27/stand-together-against-this-bigotry-another-jewish-cemetery-vandalized-and-again-muslims-reach-out-to-help/>.

enough people. In the age of Internet gifs and memes, organizations must find creative ways to reach mass audiences. In January 2017, the Department of Defense (DOD) sent out a tweet that featured Marine Corporal Ali J. Mohammed, who recently immigrated to the United States from Iraq.<sup>250</sup> The tweet reached DOD's five million Twitter followers, many of whom may not be people who would have ever met a Muslim American, let alone known that Muslims serve in the U.S. military.<sup>251</sup>

*c. Better Define the Target Audience*

Each of the advocacy organizations had some level of focus on youth outreach and education. Fostering positive intergroup contact among children is ideal for meeting the criteria of intergroup contact theory; however, more targeted outreach to other groups needs to happen. Through the review of the five advocacy organizations and several others not included in the thesis, it became apparent that much of the time advocacy groups spend is conducting outreach to like-minded people. This outreach often happens at community round table events where non-prejudiced people want to come and show support for the minority communities. While a good thing, it does not focus efforts on people who may harbor inherent prejudice as a result of lack of interaction with minority groups.

It is not easy for advocacy organizations to force non-Muslim Americans to interact with Muslims, but some strategies can help attract the attention of the desired groups. For instance, John Cena plays an active role in the *Love Has No Labels* ad campaign. Cena's celebrity alone helps attract people to the ad campaign and the largest

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<sup>250</sup> Paulina Firozi, "Defense Department Honors Refugee on Twitter as Trump Prepares to Restrict Refugees," TheHill, January 25, 2017, <http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/316032-defense-dept-honors-refugee-on-twitter-as-trump-prepares-to>.

<sup>251</sup> Department of Defense, "From Refugee to #Marine. @USMC Cpl Ali J. Mohammed Takes the Fight to the Doorstep of Those Who Cast His Family Out," Twitter post, January 5, 2017 (5:00 AM), [https://twitter.com/DeptofDefense/status/824240417885429760/photo/1?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw&ref\\_url=http%3A%2F%2Fthehill.com%2Fblogs%2Fblog-briefing-room%2Fnews%2F316032-defense-dept-honors-refugee-on-twitter-as-trump-prepares-to](https://twitter.com/DeptofDefense/status/824240417885429760/photo/1?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw&ref_url=http%3A%2F%2Fthehill.com%2Fblogs%2Fblog-briefing-room%2Fnews%2F316032-defense-dept-honors-refugee-on-twitter-as-trump-prepares-to).

WWE markets are often in places like Little Rock, Arkansas, that have minimal Muslim American populations.<sup>252</sup>

In addition to attracting people who may not have interactions with Muslims and Sikhs, advocacy organizations must ask themselves if their efforts reach regions where little interaction and higher levels of prejudice occurs. For instance, many advocacy organizations have large outreach efforts in New York City; however, it may not be the most useful place for outreach efforts since New York City's diversity allows for regular intergroup contact. Although, just because regular intergroup contact happens does not mean that the contact is positive and reduces prejudice. Further research could study if there is a correlation between where hate crimes occur and where advocacy organizations focus their efforts. A good starting place would be to use the SPLC's *Hate Map* that geographically places hate crimes.

*d. Use Data and Scientific Theory to Improve Effectiveness of Programs*

Aside from the Ad Council, none of the other organizations analyzed attempt to measure how effective their efforts are at reducing prejudice. Just like running a business, advocacy organizations need to do a better job to ensure that their efforts are working, and are most effective. While it is extremely difficult to measure the impact an effort has on reducing prejudice, methods such as using the intergroup contact theory need to be used to determine if the effort at least meets the scientifically validated criteria of success.

Researcher Seth Stephens-Davidowitz has developed a new way to measure anti-Muslim sentiment based on Google search data.<sup>253</sup> Stephens-Davidowitz analyzed a speech by President Obama following the San Bernardino Massacre in December 2015, and found that Obama's remarks actually increased anti-Muslim searches online.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> "Tracking Fan Avidity for the Fight Game," Sports Business Daily, 24, April 22, 2013, <http://www.sportsbusinessdaily.com/Journal/Issues/2013/04/22/In-Depth/Fight-fan-avidity.aspx>.

<sup>253</sup> Evan Soltas and Seth Stephens-Davidowitz, "The Rise of Hate Search," *New York Times*, sec. Opinion, December 12, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/13/opinion/sunday/the-rise-of-hate-search.html>.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

However, one of President Obama’s phrases was positive, “Muslim Americans are our friends and our neighbors, our co-workers, our sports heroes and yes, they are our men and women in uniform, who are willing to die in defense of our country.” The phrase reversed negative searches and replaced searches like “Muslim terrorists” with “Muslim athletes.”<sup>255</sup> Advocacy organizations should work with researchers to understand how they can use technology to help measure and improve the effectiveness of their efforts. They should also try different approaches, such as highlighting individuals, as was done in President Obama’s speech, to see what works best for different audiences.

## **2. Directly Address Fringe Organizations**

While this thesis only intended to review prejudice in overall society, it was impossible to ignore the work of fringe organizations and individuals promoting hateful rhetoric that poisons society. As previously covered in Chapter III, the SPLC reported a 197 percent increase in anti-Muslim hate groups from 2015 to 2016, with 101 total anti-Muslim hate groups.<sup>256</sup> This thesis recommends focusing efforts on combating these fringe organizations in several ways.

### ***a. Combat Fringe Organizations through the Justice System***

Just as the SPLC continues to combat the Klu Klux Klan over hate and violence mostly targeted toward African Americans, advocacy organizations can defeat anti-Muslim fringe organizations as well. In extreme cases where groups commit acts of violence, advocacy organizations can help support victims and ensure that justice is carried out against the perpetrators. In addition to criminal complaints, civil complaints can help to disband and bankrupt these groups so they can no longer operate.

### ***b. Expose Fringe Groups to Civil Society***

As hate groups shed their white hoods and swastikas to fit into mainstream society, advocacy organizations must remain vigilant of these groups and their hateful and violent rhetoric. The SPLC has found that in addition to an increase in anti-Muslim

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<sup>255</sup> Soltas and Stephens-Davidowitz, “The Rise of Hate Search.”

<sup>256</sup> “Hate Map.”

hate groups, the groups are building ties to elected officials to direct policy.<sup>257</sup> These ties are creating a dangerous phenomenon whereby American values are being overtaken by bigotry and fear. Both the SPLC and CAIR have developed reports that not only expose the fringe groups, but also where they receive and how they spend funds.<sup>258</sup> Other advocacy organizations and individuals should help promote such reports to wider audiences to raise awareness.

Advocacy organizations can also work with other elements of civil society to expose these groups and individuals. For instance, advocacy organizations can partner with law enforcement organizations to ensure that training materials and presenters are actual experts as opposed to claiming to be experts on theology and terrorism. In 2011, *Wired* magazine revealed that the FBI was not only teaching new agents flawed information about Islam from unqualified facilitators, but also keeping books such as *Onward Muslim Soldiers* by Robert Spencer, a prominent member of “Stop the Islamization of America.”<sup>259</sup> If the FBI had worked with partner organizations earlier, they may have prevented the infiltration of information from fringe members of society. The next section specifically addresses working with the media to expose fringe groups.

### **3. Working with the Media to Reduce Prejudice**

While increasing positive interactions among groups may be the best way to reduce prejudice toward Muslims, Arabs, and Sikhs, a gap will continue to exist in interactions due to their small populations in the United States. The media is not only responsible for causing some of the prejudice in society, but also has the power to help reverse and decrease prejudice. The following recommendations offer approaches to help reduce and prevent future media prejudice.

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<sup>257</sup> “Anti-Muslim,” Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.splc.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/anti-muslim>.

<sup>258</sup> Council on American-Islamic Relations, *Confronting Fear: Islamophobia and Its Impact in the United States, January 2013—December 2015* (Berkeley: UC Berkeley Center for Race & Gender, 2016), <https://www.cairoklahoma.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Confronting-Fear-Report-2016.pdf>; and Ali, *Fear, Inc., The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America*.

<sup>259</sup> Spencer Ackerman, “New Evidence of Anti-Islam Bias Underscores Deep Challenges for FBI’s Reform Pledge,” *WIRED*, September 23, 2011, <https://www.wired.com/2011/09/fbi-islam-domination/>.

**a. *Work with Media to Combat Orientalist Stereotypes***

Media organizations understand that they have a huge impact on the rest of civil society. Yet, they may not all be aware of Orientalism and how old stereotypical narratives have crept into mainstream news, television, and film. This recommendation is for advocacy organizations to work with the media to help them understand culture and religion and screen for prejudiced material. Some advocacy organizations, such as the SALDEF and the ADC, do work with media groups so they can better understand Sikh and Muslim religion and culture, but the efforts need to be expanded. The Muslim Public Affairs Council is an example of an organization that focuses on relationships with the media and has a Hollywood bureau to work directly with the film industry.<sup>260</sup> Advocacy organizations and individuals need to alert the media to problems while working with them to prevent future ones. One suggestion is to try working with media trade associations, such as the National Association of Broadcasters, so that they can understand the issue and work to address problems across the industry and make it into a standard practice. While it is hoped that media organizations are eager to work with advocacy organizations to help correct media prejudice, that will not always be the case.

**b. *Work with Advertisers and through Social Media to Promote Change***

When media organizations are not interested in curtailing their prejudiced content, options are available to help convince them. The ADC, examined in Chapter III, created a public relations problem for Coca-Cola and Disney, which resulted in changed content and future sensitivity for prejudiced free content. In terms of social media, advocacy groups and individuals voiced frustration across the entertainment industry for its lack of diversity. For instance, the Twitter handle #OscarsSoWhite went viral and helped the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences realize it needed to change membership and voting rules.<sup>261</sup> Social media is a powerful tool that advocacy organizations can

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<sup>260</sup> Ryzik, "Can Television Be Fair to Muslims?"

<sup>261</sup> Aggi Ashagre, "A Conversation with the Creator of #OscarsSoWhite," National Public Radio, January 25, 2016, <http://www.npr.org/2016/01/25/464244160/a-conversation-with-the-creator-of-oscars-sowhite>.

harness to raise awareness of issues and show companies that their consumers want change.

An important recommendation is for advocacy groups and individuals to work with media advertisers and sponsors. If advertisers and sponsors threaten to pull funding from prejudiced media, a good chance remains that the media organization will have a renewed interest in discussing how it can produce prejudiced free content. In an unfortunate instance in 2011, a so-called advocacy group, the Florida Family Association, wrote weekly letters to Lowes, the home improvement corporation, to pull advertising from TLC's *All-American Muslim* show that was regularly attracting over one million viewers.<sup>262</sup> Muslim advocacy organizations later discovered that the Florida Family Association was actually an anti-Muslim fringe organization made up of only one individual. While the case is an unfortunate example of anti-Muslim prejudice, it does highlight how effective pressuring advertisers can be to impact media behavior. Ultimately, change will come when consumers of media demand it.

***c. Challenge Media Organizations to Refute Fringe Organizations and Individuals***

Advocacy organizations are already working with the media in many instances to prevent fringe groups from gaining a platform; however, based on the research in this thesis, FOX News and other outlets willingly accept fringe organizations and individuals into their newsrooms. Advocacy organizations need to do more than alert the media organizations of the fringe groups. Organizations should run information campaigns to discredit these groups and individuals while also working with advertisers to pull funding from organizations that continue to serve as a forum for intentional hate.

Another option may be for advocacy groups to challenge slanderous language and violent rhetoric in court. While the 1st Amendment does protect freedom of speech, language that incites violence and purposefully slanders Muslims, Sikhs, Arabs, and other minority groups is illegal. Some people and fringe groups will be beyond rational

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<sup>262</sup> Edith Honan, "Lowe's Defends Pulling Ads from Muslim TV Show," Reuters, December 13, 2011, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-media-muslim-lowes/lowes-defends-pulling-ads-from-u-s-muslim-tv-show-idUSTRE7BC01D20111213>.

understanding and nearly no amount of group interaction will help ease prejudice. It is important to understand that institutions in civil society need to be utilized to help neutralize these groups and prevent them from disrupting the rest of civil society.

**d. Work with Community Members and Allies to Create New Programming**

*All-American Muslim* was an opportunity for viewers to see an average Muslim American family having the same life experiences and issues as every other American family.<sup>263</sup> Canadian television has a similar show, *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, with a storyline that allows non-Muslims to become more familiar with Muslim culture and religion. Just as Schiappa found that *Will and Grace* helped to reduce homosexual prejudice in America, a show, such as *Little Mosque*, may be able to help reduce anti-Muslim sentiment in the United States.<sup>264</sup> While it is not easy to convince organizations and advertisers to fund shows that portray average Americans, it is possible to include more average Muslim characters on television and in film to show “normal” characters.

To do so, advocacy organizations should reach out to Muslims and South Asians who are in positions that can help effect change in media organizations. Chapter II highlighted the creator of *Designated Survivor*, David Guggenheim, who supports raising awareness of anti-Muslim sentiment because he understands the unfortunate anti-Muslim experiences of his Muslim-American wife.<sup>265</sup> On a smaller scale, Asif Maanvi, who gained fame on *The Daily Show*, produces and acts in a web-based TV show, *Halal in the Family*, which uses humor “to combat bias and challenge misconceptions about Muslims and communities associated with Muslims.”<sup>266</sup> While the show does not have a large audience, it is still a powerful tool and step in the right direction.

In addition to showcasing Muslim and Sikh characters in positive roles, actors and actresses should refuse to act in roles that exacerbate Orientalist stereotypes. Actor Riz

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<sup>263</sup> Ryzik, “Can Television Be Fair to Muslims?”

<sup>264</sup> Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes, “The Parasocial Contact Hypothesis,” 92–115.

<sup>265</sup> Saraiya, “ABC’s ‘Designated Survivor’ Proves to Be an Unlikely Soothsayer for Our Era.”

<sup>266</sup> “Halal in the Family,” Halal in the Family TV, accessed November 10, 2017, <http://halalinthefamily.tv/>.

Ahmed made a decision in his career that “I’d rather go broke,” than play a terrorist.<sup>267</sup> While Hollywood would likely find others to play terrorists, it would be a bold statement for actors and actresses to refuse playing roles that continue to fill the gap in understanding Islam and Muslim culture with false prejudicial information.

### **C. FURTHER RESEARCH**

Unfortunately, no magic solution exists that will correct prejudice and anti-Muslim sentiment in civil society. Some optimistic signs for the future are discernible, but many challenges also remain ahead. The most disturbing unknown on prejudice in America currently, is the impact of President Trump’s hateful rhetoric on society. As discussed previously, the President’s use of the bully pulpit has an effect on how people perceive minorities and President Trump may be exacerbating prejudice not only by voicing personal resentment toward minority groups, but also providing a forum for fringe organizations and hateful individuals. While President Trump’s tweets are a negative use of social media, companies are starting to question their role in protecting American values in civil society.

Although corporations are focused on profits above all else, the situation may be changing. Millennials are changing corporate behavior, as a majority of them not only care about the services or product a company offers, but also care about how the company is trying to make the world a better place.<sup>268</sup> As briefly mentioned in Chapter III, a 2013 Gap advertisement featuring Waris Singh Ahluwalia, was defaced to say “Make Bombs” instead of “Make Love” and “Please Stop Driving TAXIS.”<sup>269</sup> Gap swiftly responded and changed its Twitter icon to the Ahluwalia advertisement to bring

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<sup>267</sup> Lacey Rose, “Drama Actor Roundtable: Riz Ahmed, Ewan McGregor on Why Loser Roles Are ‘More Fun Than Someone Like Trump,’” *The Hollywood Reporter*, June 1, 2017, <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/features/drama-actor-roundtable-riz-ahmed-ewan-mcgregor-why-loser-roles-are-more-fun-someone-like-trump-1008056>.

<sup>268</sup> Sarah Landrum, “Millennials Driving Brands to Practice Socially Responsible Marketing,” *Forbes*, March 17, 2017, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/sarahlandrum/2017/03/17/millennials-driving-brands-to-practice-socially-responsible-marketing/>.

<sup>269</sup> Hafiz, “Gap’s Ad with Sikh Model Waris Ahluwalia Defaced with Racist Graffiti, Drawing Incredible Response from Company.”

further awareness to support diversity and Sikh Americans.<sup>270</sup> This small act may be part of a larger trend of companies helping promote diversity and cultural understanding.

The 2017 Super Bowl commercials support the notion that corporations are trending toward promoting inclusiveness and also combatting some of President Trump's most controversial actions, such as the border wall. The Super Bowl advertisements included Budweiser's ad on the immigrant experience, AirBnB's "We Accept" campaign, an Audi ad for equal pay for women, and 84 Lumber's ad featuring a Spanish-speaking mother and daughter crossing the border into the United States.<sup>271</sup> These corporate advertisements may have a significant effect on reducing prejudice in civil society, but this warrants further studies as not enough is known. The future of combating prejudice may lie in working with corporations that have the means to both fund and deliver messages centered on inclusion while also selling a product.

The most important recommendation offered in this thesis is for you. Please make an effort to get to know people different from yourself; you may just make a new friend and reduce prejudice while you are at it. Be a leader. When others see you with a group of diverse friends, you may promote thoughts of inclusion in their minds, and thereby, person by person, achieve the ultimate goal of decreasing prejudice in our society.

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<sup>270</sup> Hafiz, "Gap's Ad with Sikh Model Waris Ahluwalia Defaced with Racist Graffiti, Drawing Incredible Response from Company."

<sup>271</sup> Sapna Maheshwari, "Super Bowl Commercials Feature Political Undertones and Celebrity Cameos," *New York Times*, sec. Media, February 5, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/05/business/media/commercials-super-bowl-51.html>.

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