Researching American Muslims: A Case Study of Surveillance and Racialized State Control

Hajer Al-Faham

How does surveillance shape political science research in the United States? In comparative and international politics, there is a rich literature concerning the conduct of research amid conditions of conflict and state repression. As this literature locates "the field" in distant contexts "over there," the United States continues to be saturated with various forms of state control. What this portends for American politics research has thus far been examined by a limited selection of scholars. Expanding on their insights, I situate "the field" in the United States and examine surveillance of American Muslims, an understudied case of racialized state control. Drawing on qualitative data from a case study of sixty-nine interviews with Arab and Black American Muslims, I argue that surveillance operated as a two-stage political mechanism that mapped onto research methodologically and substantively. In the first stage, surveillance reconfigured the researcher-researchee dynamic, hindered recruitment and access, and limited data-collection. In the second stage, surveillance colored the self-perceptions, political attitudes, and civic engagement of respondents, thereby indicating a political socialization unfolding among Muslims. The implications of this study suggest that researchers can mitigate against some, but not all, of the challenges presented by surveillance and concomitant forms of state control.

How does surveillance shape political science research in the United States? In what ways might it configure the relationship between researchers and research populations? And what can we learn about the politics of state control from researching under conditions of surveillance? Among scholars of comparative and international politics, there is a wealth of literature on the conduct of research amidst conflict, state control, and repression (Carapico 2006; Wood 2006; Fujii 2010, 2012; Bhattacharya 2014; Lynch 2016, Parkinson and Wood 2015; Morgenbesser and Weiss 2018; Greitens and Truex 2020; Bellin et al. 2019). For example, Lynch (2016, 37) documents the tremendous challenges of protecting respondents when coordinating research within authoritarian regimes in the Middle East. Similarly, Greitans and Truex (2020, 7, 10) have identified "repressive research experiences" among scholars of Chinese politics, who face barriers in accessing research materials as well as monitoring by local authorities.

As this literature locates "the field" in distant contexts "over there," the American political environment continues to be saturated with various forms of state control and policing (Gottschalk 2001; Roberts 2004; Uggen and Manza 2002; Clear 2008; Majic 2011; Michener 2013; Burch 2011; Parker and Towler 2019).[1] Many of the same themes that overshadow research in comparative and international politics prevail over research emerging from the United States.[2] What these conditions imply for American politics and the work that we do as political scientists has thus far been examined by a selection of scholars (Majic 2017; Soss and Weaver 2017; Zepeda-Millán 2017; Michener 2017; Prowse, Weaver, and Meares 2019).

Building on their insights, this article centers on the surveillance of American Muslims, an understudied but politically salient case of racialized state control.[3] Over the last twenty years, Muslims have become associated with pressing political issues, ranging from immigration

A list of permanent links to Supplemental Materials provided by the author precedes the References section.

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and citizenship, to political incorporation, security, and terrorism. In response, political scientists have produced invaluable knowledge on Muslim religiosity and democratic values (Dana, Wilcox-Archuleta, and Barreto 2017), mosques and civic engagement (Westfall et al. 2017), as well as partisanship and political consciousness (Ayers and Hofstetter 2008; Barreto and Bozonelos 2009; Chouhoud, Dana, and Barreto 2019). However, this literature tends to underemphasize the role of state authority by primarily researching Muslims in relation to society. In doing so, this scholarship overlooks a key piece of the political puzzle: the outcomes captured in data emerge out of the conditions set and cultivated by the state. That is, this literature misses how Muslims are situated vis-à-vis the state, as the subjects of disproportionate surveillance, and the consequences of this dynamic for researching Muslims.

Therefore, as a starting point, I open with an overview of the racial and ethnic politics of state control in the United States, thereby situating "the field" and the research population. Then I trace how surveillance, in the form of monitoring, discipline, and containment, disproportionately targets American Muslims. [4] In turn, surveillance generates heightened fears of state repression and diminished trust among Muslims, that map directly onto research. Drawing on a case study of sixty-nine ethnographic interviews with Arab and Black American Muslims in Philadelphia, I argue that surveillance operates as a two-stage political mechanism, structuring the entire research process. In the first stage, the robust influence of surveillance reconfigured my positionality vis-à-vis the research population. Despite extensive outreach, sharing a Muslim faith background, and the advantages of "insider" knowledge of American Muslim community norms, there were indomitable barriers to reaching respondents. That is, surveillance distorted the researcher-researchee dynamic, limited who selected into research participation, and set bounds on data-collection.

In the second stage, surveillance exerts weight on those research participants who overcome initial barriers to outreach by coloring their perceptions and experiences of politics. The data gathered through field research reveals that Muslims are acutely aware of surveillance directed at them, they understand the political rationale for it, and in certain respects, they accommodate it. These self-perceptions link to Muslim political attitudes and civic engagement, indicating a broader process of political socialization that can be further explored by future studies. Accordingly, the final segment of this article considers implications for future studies, highlighting innovation in research design, reciprocal and direct engagement with participants, and bilateral reflexivity as strategies for addressing some of the challenges presented by surveillance and concomitant forms of state control to research.

Racialized State Control in the United States

In the United States, research occurs within a political context that is structured by race.[5] As a "fundamental organizing principle," race and more specifically, racialization, entails the grouping and categorization of people from superordinate to subordinate (Bonilla-Silva 1991; Lowndes et al. 2008; King and Smith 2008; Omi and Winant 2014).[6] This arrangement corresponds with the distribution of "benefits and burdens" across groups in asymmetrical and heterogeneous ways (Michener 2019, 427). The presumption of innocence and equal protection by the law constitute some of the "benefits" distributed, while some of the "burdens" entail surveillance, racial profiling, and unequal enforcement of the law (Kennedy 1997; Pettit and Western 2004; Bobo and Thompson 2006; Eberhardt et al. 2006; Soss and Weaver 2017). That the American political environment is arranged in this way has profound implications for how people come to view, contemplate, and (dis)engage in politics.

Consider how historical and contemporary patterns of racialized state control and policing influence the political attitudes and behaviors of Black Americans. Weaver and Lerman (2010, 817) explain that contact with law enforcement is "not randomly distribut[ed]" but rather "racially concentrated," intensely burdening low-income Black Americans. In particular, they identify a pronounced relationship between "punitive encounters with the state" and significant declines in "several aspects of political life—turning out to vote, involvement in civic groups, and trusting the government" (Weaver and Lerman 2010, 824, 827). On a macro-level, Uggen and Manza (2002, 794) observe that across several election cycles, "disenfranchisement laws combined with high rates of criminal punishment" targeting Black Americans decisively influenced congressional and presidential election results. While at the individual level Burch (2011, 721) uncovers a long-term civic demobilization, such that even post-release from incarceration, the turnout of a released citizen "falls far short of the turnout demonstrated by similarly disadvantaged citizens who have not had a criminal conviction."

Beyond these outcomes, racialized experiences of state control constitute a political socialization with significant repercussions for American democracy. Traditionally, American politics scholars trace the roots of political socialization to early life experiences shaped by one's parents, schooling, and peer network (Berelson, Lazarsfed, and McPhee 1954; Campbell et al. 1960). However, scholarship emerging from the nexus of legal studies and race and ethnic politics finds that the types of interactions one has with the state subsequently affects their perceptions of state legitimacy, trust and confidence in rule of law, and political efficacy (Fagan and Tyler 2005; Piquero et al. 2005; Clear 2008; Lerman and Weaver 2014, Carlos

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2018). For example, Michener (2017, 15) writes of a "political disenfranchisement" whereby citizens come to be alienated from civic and political life as a result of "tarnished and injurious relations…with the state." This estrangement stems from "material realities most heavily determined by the state," such as disproportionate policing and punishment (Michener 2017, 15). Likewise, Justice and Meares explain that the state "plays a powerful role in providing a formal education in what it means to be a citizen" (Justice and Meares 2013, 159, 160). Specifically, criminal legal institutions communicate a "hidden curriculum" that socializes a self-perception that one belongs to a "class of problem people to be excluded, monitored, and surveilled, treated harshly and punished arbitrarily" (Justice and Meares 2013, 161, 167).

Indeed, research on Latinos in the United States traces links between policing of migration and political socialization (Vidales, Day, Powe 2009; Abrego 2011; Street, Zepeda-Millán, and Jones-Correa 2015; Terriquez 2017). For example, Menjívar and Bejarano (2010) find that how Latinos come into contact with criminal legal institutions affects whether, and to what extent, they are willing to exercise broader rights, like pursuing legal grievances in courts. Further, Theodore and Habans (2016, 977) observe that among a sample of more than 2,000 Latinos, 44% indicated an aversion to contacting law enforcement, even if victimized by a crime because of "fear that police officers will use this interaction as an opportunity to inquire into their immigration status" or that of a relative. Theodore and Habans note that fear of law enforcement agencies among undocumented Latinos in particular is accompanied by broader patterns of "isolation" and "mistrust" vis-à-vis society and the state (2016, 971).

Taken together, the literature reviewed here highlights the defining features of racialized state control and policing. First, racialization multifariously characterizes and classifies different populations. For Latinos, for instance, legal status has come to be a "proxy for race" so that concepts like "illegality" come to be "synonymous with 'Mexicanness' or being Latino" (Menjívar et al. 2018, 109; Chavez 2013; Vázquez 2015). Among other groups experiencing racialization, different attributes are demarcated but nevertheless also weighed with racial meaning. Further, in exerting control, the state is multi-armed and regulates a number of groups at once. For some populations, state control is most directly experienced by the local police, for others it is the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency, and for others still, it is the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Cumulatively, the burdens of disproportionate state control on racialized populations can fundamentally shape their socialization into American politics. Expanding on these insights, this article centers American Muslims, an understudied population that belongs among a broader set of cases exemplifying racialized state control.

Surveillance of American Muslims

American Muslims are by definition a population with a shared faith: Islam. As a group, they exhibit extensive heterogeneity with respect to race and ethnicity, as well as other markers of identity (Pew Research Center 2017). Despite this variation, scholars researching American Muslims have identified patterns of racialization rooted in religious identity (Jamal 2009; Selod 2014; Al-Faham and Ernst 2016; Abdul Khabeer 2017; Merseth 2019). For American Muslims, Jamal (2009, 204) explains, racialization is based less on phenotype and more on "assumptions about culture and religion." This process of racialization occurs along two channels: first, the cultural markers of an Islamic religious identity (e.g., religious garb, Islamic names, religious traditions) are set apart from the American mainstream and defined as "other" (Jamal 2009, 205). Subsequently, this positioning of Muslims as "other," paves the way for the production of an "essentialized, homogenous image of Muslims" as a threatening group of "non-whites who are naturally, morally, and culturally inferior to whites" (Jamal 2009, 205).

The racialization of Muslims, Merseth (2019, 310) observes, is longstanding because this population has been marked as "not only un-American but presumably anti-American" for decades.[7] In the aftermath of September 11, it has functioned to facilitate the core assumption undergirding the disproportionate surveillance of this population: terrorism "is not the modus operandi of a few radical individuals but a by-product of a larger cultural and civilizational heritage: the Islamic Other" (Jamal 2009, 206). In other words, Muslims are racialized such that they are understood to be inherently threatening, with proclivities that demand state intervention.

In the first few weeks following 9/11, a "War on Terror" was declared, and Congress swiftly passed the USA Patriot Act to prevent future terrorism and to protect national security. This legislation leveraged surveillance through wire tapping, delayed notification search warrants, indefinite detention, and the oversight and inspection of bank records (Lind 2015). In addition, a "Special Registration Program" was established to gather "information, fingerprints, and photographs" of Muslims and "monitor their status and movement" (Chishti and Bergeron 2011). Against this backdrop, President George W. Bush visited one of the oldest American mosques and emphasized that the "War on Terror" would not be waged against Islam or Muslims (Freedman 2012). Even as Bush called for the inclusion of Muslims, research indicates that state agencies, policies, and practices disproportionately targeted Muslims through surveillance.

Detention and incarceration comprised a central form of post-9/11, "thick" surveillance of Muslims (Torpey 2007, 116-118). Thick surveillance involves the

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curtailment of freedom by means of confinement (Torpey 2007). Domestically, an estimated 1,200 Muslims have been detained by the FBI, without warrants, for indefinite periods of time, and based on secret evidence (Chishti et al. 2003). Precisely how many Muslims are detained remains unknown, as "the government refuses to say how many, who they are, or what has happened" to them (Chishti et al. 2003, 7). Researchers explain that the punitive consequences of thick surveillance extend beyond the imprisonment of particular individuals, projecting onto the broader Muslim population by generating heightened fears of state repression (Shamas and Arastu 2013; O'Connor and Jahan 2014; Kamali 2017; Selod 2018; Aziz and Beydoun 2020). Thick surveillance amplifies fears of state repression because it involves practices like secret evidence and indefinite detention that communicate a lack of fairness, transparency, and accountability.

Along with thick surveillance, Muslims contend with a pervasive "thin" surveillance that centers on the gathering of information (Torpey 2007, 116-118). Following 9/11, the FBI began conducting thin surveillance through the deployment of over 15,000 paid informants" (Aaronson 2013).[8] Informants are trained with counterterror models that regard Muslims, who regularly attend worship services, grow facial hair, wear traditional garb, discuss politics, and devoutly practice Islam as suspicious (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2006; Naber 2008; Kundnani 2014; Alimahomed-Wilson 2018). With this training, informants are tasked with mapping Muslim communities, taking photos, and gathering voice records (Goldman and Apuzzo 2012; Shamas and Arastu 2013).

Research evaluating post-9/11 terrorism prosecutions finds that informants also engaged in entrapment (Sherman 2009; Said 2010; Norris and Grol-Prokopczyk 2015; Norris 2016). Muslims "with no previous terrorist plans" were targeted by informants with "aggressive inducement attempts" that created "terrorists out of law-abiding citizens" (Norris 2019, 467). Through these methods, thin surveillance not only reinforces fears of state repression but also generates a deficit in trust within Muslim communities. In their everyday lives, Muslims navigate an environment marked by the presence of state-appointed informants who might engage in practices like entrapment or, more commonly, "misrecognize radicalization" (Norris 2019) in their reliance on counterterror models that interpret everyday behaviors as sinister when exhibited by Muslims (Alimahomed-Wilson 2018).

To date, empirical evidence indicates that the majority of domestic terrorism is not perpetrated by American Muslims (Shane 2015; Bergengruen and Hennigan 2019; Wray 2020; MacFarquhar and Goldman 2020) and does not find strong ideological support among them (Wike and Smith 2009; Pew Research Center 2011, 2017; Chouhoud and Mogahed and 2018). Nevertheless, Muslims remain the primary targets of counterterror surveillance. Under these political conditions, this population is situated precariously, subject to arbitrary policing and accorded indeterminate safeguards against state repression. The positioning of Muslims in relation to the state, I argue, maps directly onto political science research. Through fieldwork with American Muslims, I found that surveillance operates as a two-stage political mechanism, shaping every step of research. Turning to examine this mechanism closely, I provide an overview of my case selection and research design, then proceed to the data and findings.

Research Design and Case Selection

In fall of 2018, I received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to conduct participant observation and ethnographic interviews with American Muslims.[9] The purpose was to gather qualitative data in order to explore how political incorporation unfolds among American Muslims. The study design was multi-stage and sequential, thereby allowing for the gathering of in-depth data for the purpose of generating hypotheses that would be further tested. In terms of case selection, Philadelphia was the first field site because it is home to an estimated Muslim population of 200,000, a significant segment of whom are Arab and Black American (Vitiello 2014; Hauslohner 2017; Saffron 2018). These co-religionists exhibit internal heterogeneity in terms of race and nativity, two dimensions of group identity that significantly shape citizenship and incorporation (Citrin, Reingold, and Green 1990; Kinder and Kam 2009; Jones-Correa et al. 2018). Therefore, I selected for range during recruitment, interviewing thirty-six Arab Americans and thirty-three Black Americans. The goal was to study how race, religion, and one's status as native-born or foreign-born interact and map onto citizenship and political integration (Small 2009, 13).

Three main approaches were utilized in recruitment. First, I conducted extensive outreach in person, by phone, and through e-mail correspondence. I introduced myself to mosques, as well as Muslim businesses, health clinics, grocery stores, cultural associations, non-profit organizations, and social groups. Then I circulated information about my study to local contacts, both Muslim and non-Muslim, with the goal of accessing participants who are situated in different social networks. After implementing these steps and completing pilot interviews, I relied on snowball sampling to continue to meet prospective research participants. Over the course of seven months of research, I completed participant observation and sixty-nine ethnographic interviews, the analysis of which contributed to this article and shaped my subsequent case selection.

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Surveillance Stage I: Influence on Access and Recruitment

As an American Muslim political scientist, I was positioned advantageously going into fieldwork because I was connected to local mosques and organically developed relationships with Muslims. Even so, research participants were not readily accessible. More often than not, individuals declined to participate and expressed apprehension at the prospect of discussing their political views and experiences. Turning to the help of local Muslim organizations and community leaders proved essential for recruitment but required extensive credibility-building. I needed to establish my credibility not only as a scholar affiliated with a research university but also, as a Muslim.

The former was straightforward: I presented documentation from my IRB application, my advisor's contact information, and a copy of my curriculum vitae. In the case of the latter, however, community organizations and contacts often inquired about which mosques I attended, my religious practice, and whether I subscribed to a particular Islamic school of thought. Along with confirming the veracity of my identity as a Muslim, I needed to address concerns about my research motivations. During outreach, I fielded questions about my aims for researching Muslims, how I planned on gathering data, why I was gathering data, to whom I would be sharing my findings, and my prior record of research. In these outreach conversations, Muslims directly explained their trepidation in terms of experiences with surveillance. For example, upon arriving to a meeting with a local Imam, the first question he asked was whether I was an informant with the FBI. This interaction became all the more striking as I met other Muslims who described experiences with FBI home visits, profiling and questioning by law enforcement, as well as pronounced neighborhood policing after 9/11. That these were consistent features throughout recruitment signaled that access would not be readily attainable and would require ongoing effort.

While it is not uncommon for researchers to need to establish trust with community gatekeepers in order to facilitate access (Geertz 1973; Berg 2004; McAreavey and Chaitali 2013; Fujii 2012), it is remarkable that surveillance reconfigured my positionality or "orientation and situatedness" in relation to respondents (Henry, Higate, Sanghera 2009, 168). Alongside the research population, I attend mosque, fast during Ramadan, and experience life in a predominantly non-Muslim context. Therefore, in fundamental ways, I am an insider or what Collins (1986, S25) describes as researchers who have "undergone similar experiences, possess a common history, and share taken-for-granted knowledge" with research participants.

Certainly, my background as a Muslim revealed vital opportunities for learning during research. For instance, I share my first name with a prominent figure in Islamic history and this frequently served as an opening topic of conversation with participants, that paved the way for in-depth discussions on how markers of Muslim identity shape access to employment, intensity of profiling during airport security screenings, and applications for housing in the United States. Similarly, my gender and experience with wearing a hijab encouraged rapport with female respondents that facilitated holistic conversations around the consequences of a visible Muslim identity in non-Muslim political environments. Further, my insider knowledge of Islam and American Muslim norms helped me adeptly navigate participant observation and interviews. When meeting with Imams or preparing for participant observation, for example, I understood the importance of reflecting Islamic standards of modesty in my presentation.

Yet across differences in race, native-birth and foreign-birth, gender, visibility, and socioeconomic background, American Muslims were wary of participating in political science research, even when led by a Muslim researcher. Surveillance foreclosed opportunities for learning by stymieing access and altering my positioning to the research population. Consider, from the perspective of the research population, the troubling resemblance between informants and the researcher. Informants often possess Muslim names, background stories, and embed within Muslim communities, taking part in everyday life over extended periods of time (Apuzzo and Goldman 2011, 2012; Bump 2015; Kamali 2017). In some cases, informants are Muslim and in other cases, they are donning a Muslim identity for the purpose of surveillance (Shamas 2018; Dolan 2019).

Under different political conditions, sharing a Muslim background would have positioned me as a co-religionist who could be trusted to gather data, not for the purpose of furthering state repression, but to contribute to social science knowledge of Islam and Muslims. As Collins (1986, S15) explains, scholars who share a common background with the communities they study often access invaluable research benefits, such as the willingness of participants to "confide" in the researcher (Simmel 1921 quoted in Collins 1986, S15). Likewise, Desmond (2007, 284) notes that researchers who are members of the populations they wish to study, "re(enter) the field with several advantages," most notably: access and trust.

This is not to suggest that there are no other conditions in the American political context that can affect research. Internal dynamics related to race, for example, are important within American Muslim communities. During participant observation at local mosques, I witnessed Imams leading weekly *halaqas* or sermons focused on recognizing and dismantling patterns of colorism within the Muslim community. Likewise, when I interviewed co-ethnic Arab Americans partnered with Black American co-religionists,

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participants confided experiences navigating the stigmatization of interracial relationships. However, heading into research, I anticipated the presence of internal cleavages because there is a vast literature in American politics that evaluates how different dimensions of group identity (e.g., race, class, gender) can influence internal dynamics both within and across groups (Cohen 1999; Rogers 2006; Jordan-Zachary 2007; Strolovitch 2007; Hancock 2011; Smith 2013; Greer 2013; Capers and Smith 2015; Adam 2017; Bunyasi and Smith 2019, Al-Faham, Davis, and Ernst 2019).

When Muslims discussed or alluded to internal community dynamics, it was not during outreach and recruitment. Rather, these conversations most often occurred after the interviews, when respondents would express curiosity about my experiences as an Arab American Muslim with a lighter skin complexion. I engaged candidly with respondents, acknowledging intra-Muslim tensions, and listening as they shared their insights. In these conversations, for example, some of the Black American Muslim respondents described experiences with "stop-and-frisk" practices by local law enforcement.[10] These investigative police stops constitute another form of state control in the everyday lives of these respondents, revealing the multiplicative ways that Muslims are racialized and surveilled by different arms of the state. Nevertheless, despite variation among the research participants, there is an overarching and common experience of state control, in the form of counterterror surveillance. By influencing who I could recruit, configuring my positioning to respondents, and precluding from my research those individuals most concerned about potential risks, surveillance functioned as a political mechanism. Moreover, this mechanism operates at a second stage, affecting Muslim self-perceptions and shaping their political attitudes and participation.

Surveillance Stage II: Coloring Self-Perceptions, Political Attitudes and Behaviors

Throughout fieldwork, a set of themes emerged in respondent interviews that illuminate how surveillance imprints on American Muslim politics. The interviews were semi-structured around a battery of more than two-dozen questions. Although the interview questions covered an array of topics, from religiosity to partisanship, the foremost theme that emerged from the data was an acute awareness among Muslims of being watched and scrutinized. At various points during interviews and in response to different queries, all of the research participants referenced "the image" of Muslims in the United States. According to respondents, Muslims are seen in negative and narrow ways; most often as "terrorists," "foreigners," and "radicals." For instance, when asked about the School District of Philadelphia's recent recognition of Muslim holidays, participants uniformly welcomed the decision and tied its importance to alleviating some of the negative effects of "the image" of their community for everyday life in America.[11] Khalila stressed the importance of recognizing Islamic holidays for young American Muslims:

> KHALILA, FEMALE, BLACK AMERICAN
>
> Our children feel different, like they're not a part of the accepted group. There's this disconnect between how they are seen and who [they] are because you have American-born Muslims who are not immigrants. There are a lot of Black and White American Muslims. But Muslims are seen as immigrants and . . . as terrorists. And Muslims are none of those things.

Comparably, when participants were asked if they conceptualized the United States as their home, often their responses drew a connection between perceptions of home and "the image" of Muslims. For example, Malik observed:

> MALIK, MALE, ARAB AMERICAN
>
> Yes, I have to say it [the U.S.] is home. But given my background, I am an Arab American with a Muslim name, there are times when I feel foreign. When I see people demonstrating against Islam or defaming Muslims, it does not feel like home. When Muslims are seen as separate and distinct, it does not feel like home.

These statements reflect a discernment among American Muslims that they, as a group, are surveyed. Throughout the interviews, the respondents described how Muslims are seen in consistent ways, referencing prominent stereotypes of their community. This awareness is linked with a second core theme: American Muslim self-perceptions are incongruent with "the image" of their community. In fact, the interviewees persistently stressed that Muslims are hard-working, law-abiding, and most importantly, American. For example, participants were asked if they attended mosque and whether they could describe their mosque. Sarah reported regular attendance and added:

> SARAH, FEMALE, ARAB AMERICAN
>
> We are your neighbors, your doctors, your teachers, your friends . . . . We share the same morals and values and hopes and wishes for the country.

Likewise, when participants were asked if they volunteered or took part in civic activities, Musa provided this response:

> MUSA, MALE, BLACK AMERICAN
>
> Yes, I volunteer because I have three daughters and I want to show them that we should use our resources and experiences to help others . . . . Most Muslims in America think like most Americans in general. They want romantic love, they want to be successful financially, they want education, they want their children to do well. All the aspirations America offers; this is what they want. Most people who immigrated to America, came here for financial reasons. They don't want to 'Islamicize' America or take it over. We watch football, I follow the playoffs, I do all the things Americans do but I also have this attachment to Islam and my way of life.

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Similarly, at the start of every interview when respondents are asked to introduce themselves, Jameel offered these remarks:

JAMEEL, MALE, ARAB AMERICAN

I was born and raised in Philadelphia, in the Germantown section. I lived in Germantown for most of my life. I went to school at Central High and then to Temple. I took gaps because after 9/11, I enlisted in the army and served in Afghanistan...I wanted to defend my country and show that we are not evil. We are not Bin Laden. There's a verse in the Quran that contradicts the narrative that people have of Islam. [It goes like this] to you, your religion and to me, mine. We are not trying to convert or hurt people. A lot of people think that Islam does not belong in a modern, developed country. They think that Muslims are radical[s] and are trying to change people. That is wrong . . . I think it is important [to point this out] because the image of Muslims is that we are the 3 Bs: bombers, belly-dancers, [and] barbarians.

Beyond challenging racialized stereotypes of Muslims, these responses are reflective of an effort by participants to defend their belonging in the United States. At different points throughout each interview, respondents unfailingly emphasized their incorporation: they watch football, they are productive and contributing members of society, they cherish freedom of religion, and perhaps most notably, they self-identify as American. That Muslims are compelled to make a case for their community reflects a cognizance of how they are situated, between thick and thin surveillance. The respondents know that they are surveyed ("the image of Muslims is that we are . . . bombers), they address this surveillance by rejecting terrorism ("don't want to 'Islamicize' America or take it over"), and asserting their ideological commitments to the United States ("we share the same morals and values and hopes and wishes for the country").

Part and parcel to establishing their place in the country, Muslims turn to civic engagement and volunteer work. Respondents described participation in activities like hosting Ramadan interfaith gatherings at their mosques, organizing annual Thanksgiving food drives, and volunteering to educate about Islam at local schools and faith centers. These forms of civic engagement were framed as pathways to contribute locally, set examples for younger Muslims, and encourage dialogue about Islam and Muslims with non-Muslims. As Sehar explained:

SEHAR, FEMALE, ARAB AMERICAN

You know, we're all really one, one community [Muslim and Non-Muslims]. We want the same things. We want security, we want success, we want to thrive, we want you to thrive, and we want to thrive with you. Not in competition. But in tandem, together . . . . This is why I ran for school board. I care about not just my kids but all the kids in the community.

During participant observation at a local mosque's "back-to-school" supply drive, volunteers framed their work in a similar manner. By gathering supplies for low-income families, they were filling a local economic need, while also opening the mosque to its neighbors. This type of civic work is vital in increasing awareness of their faith community, not only because non-Muslim Americans tend to hold negative views of Islam and Muslims (Pew Research Center 2017) and report little contact with Muslims (Cooper 2017) but also, because they are called upon by the state to "say something" when they "see something." In other words, as Muslims experience top-down surveillance from institutions and policies, the state generates a "citizen surveillance," from below, by enlisting the public (Selod 2018). Most commonly, the outcome of citizen surveillance has not been the interruption of terror plots but racial profiling, thereby making it all the more important for Muslims to connect with their neighbors (Neuman 2008; Revesz 2016; Juul 2016, Dvorak 2016). For example, Rahim noted:

RAHIM, MALE, BLACK AMERICAN

If they [other Americans] gave us a chance, we could talk about what we have in common. In terms of our faith, our values, how we want to live in America, how we love this country. Just sit down and listen to Muslims. We are family people, we are religious people, we are service-oriented. We are normal Americans. Some people might look at us and not understand us. I remember people used to say 'you must be thirsty in Ramadan.' [But] the fact that they [other Americans] talked to me, allowed us to talk about Ramadan and why Muslims fast.

Even as Muslims seek increased awareness and inclusion of their faith community, they do so as a population that has been associated with terrorism. This positioning maps onto their political attitudes in significant ways. Take, for example, how differently participants responded to questions of religious accommodation depending on whether they assumed or perceived a link to national security. When asked about Muslim prayer or fasting in predominately non-Muslim settings (e.g., the workplace, school), the majority of interviewees described their general support for the accommodation of religion, for instance:

ELIYA, FEMALE, BLACK AMERICAN

It [religious accommodation] contributes to a sense of belonging. It is as simple as having a multi-purpose room that is available for folks to pray. It is a reasonable accommodation. Observing prayer at work takes about the same amount of time as using the restroom. It is not a time grab.

AMAL, FEMALE, ARAB AMERICAN

Just to be allowed to pray is important. It's the same thing for women who are nursing, you need to be allowed a quiet, private place to do something that is a big part of your life.

As a follow-up question, participants were asked whether other religious traditions, sometimes practiced by Muslims, like face veiling in photo identification cards, should be accommodated. Rather than framing their answers in terms of religious freedom or accommodation, the

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interviewees increasingly emphasized the urgency of national security and public safety. Take the following responses:

ZAYN, MALE, BLACK AMERICAN

> We live in a society where trust is important and people being able to recognize each other is important. The thing is, I and most people, are not skilled enough to be able to identify and recognize someone only by looking at their eyes. This is what we see when Muslim sisters wear the niqab or veil. Facial recognition is valued in the U.S. I may be in the minority but I will be honest, Muslims are not trusted in the U.S. I would rather accommodate safety and security.

MAHMOUD, MALE, ARAB AMERICAN

> Just practically speaking, what is the point of identification cards if you are wearing a niqab? . . . I also know from being an attorney that there are issues with people testifying in court while having their faces covered. As an attorney, when I cross-examine someone in front of a jury and judge, your credibility is not just in your answers. It is in your face, your expressions, how your entire body is responding. There are legitimate interests in seeing people's faces beyond bigotry or denying religious rights. There are practical interests like safety, worthy of being discussed and addressed.

Most participants prioritized the accommodation of national security over religious freedom. While a smaller set took the position of balancing the accommodation of religious practices with the security needs of the nation. Here too, the responses invariably alluded to terrorism, with participants evaluating face veiling through the lens of surveillance.

ELIYA, FEMALE, BLACK AMERICAN

> I sit in a middle place. The middle place for me is I understand why there could be an aversion to the niqab. Is it truly an identifying document, if there is no facial recognition and the basis of the identification is facial recognition? But I also understand and have a particular sensitivity to the idea that if this [wearing a niqab] is how I present to the world, you wouldn't encounter me in any other way. If I'm observing the niqab, you only see me in the niqab. So, if that's the case, why wouldn't there just be liberty extended?

ANDRE, MALE, BLACK AMERICAN

> The purpose of a photo identification card is to have facial recognition. Unfortunately, there have been terrorist attacks here and elsewhere. But there has to be reasonable accommodations, where we don't sacrifice people's safety and don't disrespect people's religion.

FARAH, FEMALE, ARAB AMERICAN

> I believe women have the right to wear the niqab or veil. But if you have security or other issues, you have to balance individual rights with the rights of society. That doesn't mean you should ban it or no one should wear it. For national security, you are obligated as a citizen to comply with the rules. I truly believe Islam has a balance between individual rights and the rights of society. Sometimes society's rights are more important.

Out of all the interviews, a total of only three participants expressed views that emphasized religious accommodations or critiqued surveillance.

ZAREENA, FEMALE, ARAB AMERICAN

> Why do we need to have photo records of people? We normalize it but it is actually disturbing that we need to have everyone be so easily recognized. My fingerprints, our cameras . . . we're being watched constantly. That stuff is disturbing to me. And it's a basic part of how we live now.

IMAM WILLIAM, MALE, BLACK AMERICAN

> I can tell you a story from experience. In Philadelphia, a woman wearing a niqab was pulled over by the local police . . . The police needed to identify her, but they didn't know how to, so they called our mosque and asked for advice. We suggested that they deploy a female police officer to the scene since that would allow the niqabi sister to show her face to the female police officer. Yes, this took more time and work for the police, but they need to build trust and relationships with us.

SULEIMAN, MALE, ARAB AMERICAN

> Women who wear the veil in the US, especially the ones who wear niqabs are . . . courageous. It's brave. As far as identification is concerned, I do believe that women in the niqab should take their photos in their niqabs. A woman who wears a niqab for religious reasons should be allowed to be covered in her photo.

Discussion: Surveillance and Political Socialization

These excerpts from ethnographic interviews are insightful, revealing some of the political attitudes held by Muslims and underlining the concerns they weigh when evaluating issues of religious freedom, accommodation of religious diversity, and national security. The data presented in this article points to a broader political socialization unfolding contemporaneously among Muslims. Surveillance colors their self-perceptions so that they describe themselves in opposition to the racialization of their community. In parallel, it instills an uncertainty about belonging in the United States, reflected in respondent efforts to establish their integration as Americans and encourage understanding of their faith through civic engagement. Equally important, the remarks of the participants indicate an understanding of the political rationale for surveillance and in certain ways, a willingness to prioritize national security even when doing so may result in circumscribing some forms of religious practice.

Further, these findings illuminate the potency of surveillance, as a form of state control that socializes its subjects to "assume responsibility" for the presumptions it is built upon and the constraints it imposes (Foucault 1995, 205). The research presented in this article comports with nationally-representative data on American Muslims: 62% of Muslims report feeling "personally ashamed" when a member of their faith "commits an act of violence" and 30% believe that "their faith community is more prone to negative behavior than other faith communities" (Chouhoud and Mogahed 2018).

To date, the full scope of Muslim political socialization by the state remains largely unexplored by political scientists. Previous research teaches that the outcomes of

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political socialization, among populations subject to disproportionate and racialized state control, are neither uniform nor obvious. Rather, there are a number of potential trajectories that can be traced among different groups, including but not limited to: mass mobilization against state policies (Zepeda-Millán 2017), political disenfranchisement (Michener 2017), organized efforts for economic and self-determination (Bassett 2016), and defiance or disobedience of criminal legal institutions (Johnson 2013).

As of March 2020, the Department of Homeland Security operates the "Targeted Violence and Terrorism" program (TVTP) that "takes-a-whole-of-society" approach to "establish or enhance capabilities" for "identifying signs of violent extremism" and reporting "susceptible individuals" (Department of Homeland Security 2019, 12). Building on the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) program, the TVTP extends the reach of state control further into Muslim communities, by enlisting everyday Muslims in the former, and nonprofits, community organizations, and institutions of higher education in the latter (Department of Homeland Security 2019). Thus, rather than waning over time, surveillance remains a defining property of the post-9/11 American political environment.

As it permeates within and around American Muslim communities, surveillance intensifies fears of state repression and generates a deficit in trust. Consequently. it renders access to this population difficult to attain and therefore limits political science knowledge to a subset of American Muslims who are willing to participate in research. The following section considers implications for research and identifies promising pathways for future studies.

Implications: Mitigating the Trust Deficit

Fear of state coercion and shortages in trust are not unique challenges to research with American Muslims. Rather, these conditions are relevant considerations for research with a range of hard to reach groups, including: race-class subjugated communities (Soss and Weaver 2017),[12] undocumented immigrants (Lahman et al. 2011), sex workers (Johnston and Sabin 2010), gang members (Pawelz 2018), and Arab Americans (Stephan and Ennis 2012). Ethically, political scientists are not positioned to mitigate against respondent concerns over state repression. These fears are legitimate, rooted in experiences of disproportionate state control and policing. However, insights drawn from cross-subfield literature point to innovation in research design, reciprocal and direct engagement with research populations, and bilateral reflexivity as promising pathways for addressing shortages in trust and facilitating research.

The Portals for Research Project is an illustrative example of innovation in research design. As a study of inequality and mass incarceration with race-class subjugated populations, the researchers began by integrating community members to coordinate outreach and to manage the portals where data is gathered (Prowse, Weaver, Meares 2019). This collaborative approach modifies the researcher-researchee dynamic so that it becomes a partnership around transparent research objectives, thereby facilitating trust. With participants recruited, the data collection occurs through portals, shipping containers with audio and visual technology, grounded in local neighborhoods. Here, participants connect with researchers and one another, engaging in dialogue on their experiences with criminal legal institutions. These portals operate as respondent-driven and unscripted forums that connect participants across field sites.

The importance of creating these spaces for groups vulnerable to state control is underscored in research by scholars of comparative and international politics. For example, Thomson (2010, 25, 32) writes that creating such forums encourages trust-building because it signals the researcher's commitment to listening and understanding. Further, Wood (2006, 377) explains that in contexts of state repression, participants often have a "need" to share their stories and histories so they can be preserved and disseminated. By studying participants in this way, the Portals for Research project documented more than 850 accounts from communities that are otherwise difficult to reach. When research is not underway, the portals function as "civic infrastructure" for art, cultural, and community programming. This ethos of direct engagement and reciprocity is at the center of a second promising approach for building trust. Here, I turn to Majic's (2011) study of non-profit organizations serving sex worker populations.

Sex workers, Majic (2011) explains, comprise a group subject to criminalization as well as overlapping structural issues rooted in race, class, gender, and sexuality. Theoretically, this population should be one of the "least likely group[s] to engage in political action" (Majic 2017, 105). Nonetheless, they have formed organizations that use state funding and "serve as sites for both service provision and civil association," without forgoing their activist political foundations (Majic 2011, 822). To understand how these social movement-borne nonprofits "maintain commitments to sex workers' rights," while enduring as organizations, Majic (2011, 832) utilized a multi-method qualitative approach that emphasized direct engagement and reciprocity with respondents.

In addition to interviews and participant observation, the researcher completed an archival project, grant writing, street outreach, and volunteer work on clinic nights (Majic 2011, 832). The researcher also shared their published findings with the organizations. Key to observe about Majic's (2011) approach, is that it was neither extractive nor unidirectional. Rather, it was mutualistic, borne out of

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the researcher's reflexivity on their positioning and that of these organizations, who serve communities in need with limited resources. By utilizing their time and skills in assisting these organizations, the researcher invested valuable resources and established trust through sustained and direct engagement. Taking this approach, Majic (2011) completed 141 interviews, significant participant observation, and uncovered a process of "radical institutionalization" that challenged longstanding theories on organizational endurance.

Alongside reciprocal and direct engagement, a third promising method for addressing shortages in trust and facilitating research is bilateral reflexivity. Similar to Majic's (2011) approach, bilateral reflexivity begins with the researcher evaluating their positioning to the research population. However, it extends one step further, considering how the research population simultaneously evaluates and studies the researcher. Bilateral or dual reflexivity can be a vital tool in building relationships of trust with research participants by alerting the researcher to "metadata." This type of data captures "how conditions in the present" influence how respondents evaluate researchers, allow or withhold access, and reveal or conceal information (Fujii 2010, 233). Research conducted by Zepeda-Millán (2017) with Latino immigrant rights activists offers an instructive example of bilateral reflexivity in American politics scholarship. Setting out to study how and why the Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act (H.R. 4437) generated mass mobilization, Zepeda-Millán (2017) needed to conduct research in multiple cities, each presenting different hurdles to trust.

Heading into the field, the researcher studied how each research population was situated within their respective cities and evaluated the implications for how they might receive outreach. For example, conducting research in New York, where immigrant rights activism has a long history, required earning the trust of seasoned activists who were skeptical of researchers. In the eyes of this research population, social scientists are distant and unconnected from the movement (Zepeda-Millán 2017, 226). Thus, during outreach, the researcher emphasized their own background in immigrant rights activism, drew on ties with fellow activists, and communicated a commitment to producing knowledge that is as "precise as possible so that it is of practical use" to both scholars and activists (Zepeda-Millán 2017, 228).

By contrast, the Florida site required fostering trust not with "professional activists" but "regular immigrants," many of whom were employed in agricultural work (Zepeda-Millán 2017, 227). Here, respondents would not be reached in formal organizations but in informal gatherings at churches, ethnic restaurants, grocery stores, and community parks. In recruitment, Zepeda-Millán (2017, 228) explains: "I immediately spoke to them in Spanish; let them know that I was of Mexican descent, raised by Mexican immigrants." In addition, Zepeda-Millán (2017, 228) revealed a family history in farm labor and undocumented immigration that allowed for the forging of a powerful connection with the research population, who came to view the researcher as the "child[] of Mexican farmworkers" and "someone like them."

Notice, the commonality in both the Florida and New York field sites was a bilateral reflexivity that the researcher tapped into, consequently tailoring their approach for building trust with each research population. With this two-way lens, Zepeda-Millán (2017) overcame scarcities in trust and completed 131 interviews. In doing so, Zepeda-Millán (2017) enriched political science theories of social movements by identifying and evaluating the "inner workings and external factors" driving activism among Latinos (Zepeda-Millán 2017, 196, 215, 221).

Conclusion

This article opened by asking how surveillance, a defining feature of post-September 11 American politics, influences research in the United States. Drawing on qualitative data from sixty-nine ethnographic interviews with Arab and Black American Muslims, I demonstrate that surveillance structured the entire research process. Amidst heightened concerns over state repression and diminished trust, surveillance operated as a two-stage political mechanism. In the first stage, it distorted outreach and hindered access by reconfiguring the researcher's positioning in relation to the research population. This, in turn, constrained data-collection and shaped respondent interactions with the researcher. Next, among the subset of the research population who bypassed initial barriers to recruitment, surveillance exercised a second effect. In the second stage, it influenced respondent self-perceptions, political attitudes, and experiences with political engagement. Taken together, these findings suggest a broader process of political socialization that can be further explored in future studies. To alleviate some of the challenges of research under conditions of surveillance, I highlight innovation in research design, reciprocal and direct engagement with respondents, and bilateral reflexivity as promising approaches.

Today, American Muslims comprise a highly politically salient population that remains understudied in political science and largely misunderstood in the United States. In the absence of adequately accounting for how conditions of state control in the United States affect research, political scientists miss the opportunity to build holistic knowledge of groups, like Muslims. Researchers also risk overlooking how the political outcomes captured in our data are generated by conditions that are cultivated by state institutions, policies, and practices. Looking to the future, scholars of American politics may build on the findings I presented by integrating more substantively in cross-

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subfield discourse and literature concerning research under conditions of state repression, conflict, and violence. Americanists can evaluate how state control manifests within a Western democratic regime and produces distinct political outcomes. In doing so, we can enrich our discipline's knowledge of state-citizen relations, political socialization processes, and the interconnection between politics in the "real world" and the work that we do as political scientists.

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Notes

1 "State control" and "policing" are used to refer to government institutions, practices, and policies that "exercise social control by means of coercion, containment, repression, surveillance, regulation, predation, discipline, and violence"; Soss and Weaver 2017, 567.
2 This insight emerged out of conversation with Dr. Jamila C. Michener.
3 This article uses "American Muslim" and "Muslim" interchangeably.
4 This conceptualization of surveillance is drawn from Foucault 1995.
5 My research is informed by Kimberlé Crenshaw and Patricia Hill Collins, in that I recognize there are overlapping structures of inequality in the United States. I emphasize race because of the prominent role it occupies in state control.
6 Omi and Winant 2014, 111, define racialization as the "extension of racial meanings to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice, or group." This means "political actors construct and reconstruct race" to classify and categorize groups and in doing so, "define the terms of their relations, and subject them to different modes of governance"; Soss and Weaver 2017, 579.
7 This is echoed in research on Arab Americans, a group often conflated with Muslims and historically racialized in similar ways. See Naber 2012, Alsultany 2012, and Shaheen 2003.
8 Concurrently, local law enforcement agencies, like the New York Police Department, collaborated with the Central Intelligence Agency in appointing informants for the monitoring of Muslims at universities, restaurants, shopping centers, and mosques; Hawley 2012.
9 Please see the online appendix for more on my research design and methodology.
10 Stop-and-frisk practices are "investigatory police stop [s]" which are "not to enforce traffic laws, vehicle codes, or the laws governing pedestrian activity but to check out people (or vehicles) who look suspicious"; Epp, Maynard-Moody, Haider-Markel 2017, 169.
11 The names of all participants mentioned throughout this article have been altered to protect confidentiality.
12 Race-class subjugated communities are "positioned at the intersection of race and class systems, and these two dimensions of power relations remain thoroughly entwined in experiences of civic ostracism, social and political oppression, economic marginalization, and state-led governance"; Soss and Weaver 2017, 565.

Supplementary Materials

Methodological Appendix

To view supplementary material for this article, please visit http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S1537592720003655.

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