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The Narrative Policy Framework and Sticky Beliefs: An Experiment Studying Islamophobia

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Abstract

Our study focuses on Islamophobia and the power of facts versus the power of a narrative in shaping individual opinion toward Muslims. We utilise an experimental design to explore three research questions: (1) Is Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment lowered in narrative or factual treatments?; (2) What are the differential effects of the treatments by ideological orientation?; and (3) Is Islamophobia a predictor of policy stances? We find that neither the narrative or factual treatments lowered Islamophobia or anti-Muslim sentiment. However, moderates were significantly influenced by the Facts Treatment, expressing lower levels of anti-Muslim sentiment. Finally, the treatments significantly influenced policy positions for individuals in the Facts Treatment group, who were less likely to support funding increases for border security than subjects in the narrative treatment. Our findings have implications for understanding persuasion, identity protection cognition, and the persistence of Islamophobia within the context of the power of narrative.

Keywords

Islamophobia – framing narrative policy – persuasion – stereotypes

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1 Introduction

Not only are discussions of 'alternative facts' and 'fake news' common, but many of those in power, along with large swaths of the public, seem to reject science's role in determining how to proceed for a wide variety of public policy issues.[1] While not equally true for the left and the right, both sides are guilty of this[2] depending on the topic (e.g., climate change or GMOs) . Disinformation campaigns that invent 'facts' run rampant on social media and spill over to print and electronic media, leading many pundits and academics to worry about the future of US democracy.[3] Ideally, in a democratic form of government, educated individuals would possess sufficient political knowledge and critical thinking skills to effectively use evidence to rationally sort through alternative facts and fake news; thereby protecting democracy and resisting authoritarian beliefs and manipulation.[4]

Unfortunately, studies in the social sciences call into question the rationality of individuals, as advances in cognitive neuroscience, cognitive psychology, and biology help us understand that humans are at least partially emotional creatures, just as prone to accepting a good story as they are to accepting fact.[5] Thus, in the climate change debate, more facts and evidence tend not to change a climate change denier's belief. In fact, some studies suggest that more facts demonstrating climate change could even have the unintended outcome of making the denier's beliefs stronger in the direction of denial.[6]

1 S. Lewandowsky, K. Oberauer and G.E. Gignac, 'NASA Faked the Moon Landing – Therefore, (Climate) Science Is a Hoax An Anatomy of the Motivated Rejection of Science', 24:5 *Psychological Sciences* (2013), https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797612457686.

2 B.S. Steel and E. Allen Wolters, *When Ideology Trumps Science: Why We Question the Experts on Everything from Climate Change to Vaccinations* (Praeger, Santa Barbara, CA, 2018).

3 H. Allcot and M. Gentzkow, 'Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election', 13:2 *Journal of Economic Perspectives* (2017) pp. 211–236; C.J. Vargo, L. Guo and M.A. Amazeen, 'The Agenda-Setting Power of Fake News: A Big Data Analysis of the Online Media Landscape from 2014 to 2016', 20:5 *New Media & Society* (2018) pp. 2028–2049.

4 M.X. Delli Carpini and S. Keeter, *What Americans Know About Politics and Why It Matters* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1996).

5 J.R. Hibbing, K.B. Smith and J.R. Alford, *Predisposed: Liberals, Conservatives, and the Biology of Political Differences* (Routledge, New York, 2013); J. Gottschall, *The Storytelling Animal: How Stories Make Us Human* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, New York, 2012); D. Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences* (SUNY Press, New York, 1988).

6 D.M. Kahan, 'Ideology, Motivated Reasoning, and Cognitive Reflection', 8 *Judgment and Decision Making* (2013) pp. 407–424; C. Taber and M. Lodge, 'Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs'. 50 *American Journal of Political Science* (2006) pp. 755–769.

This understanding about policy beliefs, and the debate about how to impact public opinion, is certainly relevant to our focus on Islamophobia. Specifically, we use the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) in our experimental study of Islamophobia to develop the framework further so scholars and those trying to affect public opinion can better understand the role that policy narratives play (or don't play) in public policy formation.

The events of 11 September 2001 greatly impacted US public opinion.[7] On that day, terrorists hijacked airplanes and flew them into the World Trade Centers in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, DC. A fourth plane crashed in Pennsylvania after passengers attempted to retake the plane from the hijackers. The hijackers were member of Al-Qaeda, a Sunni Islamist terrorist organisation. The events of that day led to dramatic changes in the US and worldwide, as well as to dramatically altered beliefs about the entire Muslim religion[8] and to discrimination toward adherents of the Muslim religion in the US and elsewhere.[9]

In stark contrast to President George W. Bush's widely praised caution to not conflate Islam and extremist Islamic terrorism; among many statements about Islam, then US presidential candidate Donald Trump stated in 2016, "I think Islam hates us. There's something there that – there's a tremendous hatred there. There's a tremendous hatred. We have to get to the bottom of it. There's an unbelievable hatred of us."[10] More recently, in late 2017, President Trump chose to retweet three inflammatory, anti-Islam, false, bigoted videos posted by Britain First, a small extremist, racist, right-wing group from the United Kingdom.[11]

7 A. Gershkoff and S. Kushner, 'Shaping Public Opinion: The 9/11-Iraq Connection in the Bush Administration's Rhetoric', 3:3 *Perspectives on Politics* (2005) pp. 525–537, doi: 10.1017/S1537592705050334.

8 E.g. C. Panagopoulos, 'The Polls-Trends: Arab and Muslim Americans and Islam in the Aftermath of 9/11', 70 *International Journal of Public Opinion Quarterly* (2006) pp. 608–624; K.O. Kalkan, G.C. Layman, and E.M. Uslaner, '"Bands of Others"? Attitudes toward Muslims in contemporary American society', 71:3 *The Journal of Politics* (2009) pp. 847–862; J. Sides and K. Gross, 'Stereotypes of Muslims and Support for the War on Terror', *The Journal of Politics* (2013) pp. 583–598.

9 E.g. D. Helly, 'Are Muslims Discriminated Against in Canada Since September 2001?', 36:1 *Canadian Ethnic Studies* (2004) pp. 24–47.

10 R. Flores, 'Donald Trump: I Think Islam Hates Us', CBS News, 2016; J. Johnson and A. Hauslohner, '"I think Islam hates us": A timeline of Trump's comments about Islam and Muslims', *The Washington Post*, 2017.

11 A. Buncombe, 'Islamophobia Even Worse under Trump than after 9/11 Attacks, Says Top Muslim Activist', *Independent*, 27 December 2017, online at: https://www.independent

In the US, the narrative around Islam is a negative one, based primarily on ignorance and negative stereotypes, rather than a careful weighing of facts and evidence. Nonetheless, this problematic negative narrative is real in its consequences, including, one assumes, affecting policy preferences as seen in issues like the siting of a mosque at 'ground zero'.[12] Thus, we became interested in whether or not it is possible to use a positive narrative that 'humanizes' Muslim individuals (and strives to make them seem part of 'us' rather than a 'them') to change individuals attitudes toward Islam, and whether that narrative might be more powerful than more evidence or facts.

Using an experimental design, we study Islamophobia and whether either facts or a narrative can change individuals' views about individuals of the Muslim faith. Some literature[13] finds that facts can be persuasive in policy debates, whereas other studies find that narratives are more powerful than facts or science.[14] However, none of these studies have necessarily dealt with an issue where beliefs might well be 'sticky' – an issue that is grounded in religion and identity. Whether cognitive dissonance,[15] confirmation bias, or motivated reasoning,[16] there is ample evidence that suggests that individuals, both liberals and conservatives, will seek evidence and answers that fit with their predispositions or that corroborate what they want to believe.[17] On this topic, research has shown that self-described conservatives are the ones more likely to hold negative attitudes toward Muslims.[18] Kahan's work in particular, such

.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/trump-islam-muslim-islamophobia-worse-911-says-leader-a8113686.html.

12 D.S. Gutterman and A.R. Murphy, 'The "Ground Zero mosque": sacred space and the boundaries of American identity', 2:3 *Politics, Groups, and Identities* (2014) pp. 368–385, doi: 10.1080/21565503.2014.926822.

13 E.g. J. Sides, 'Stories or Science? Facts, Frames, and Policy Attitudes', 44:3 *American Politics Research* (2016) pp. 387–414.

14 M.A. Husmann, 'Social Constructions of Obesity Target Population: An Empirical Look at Obesity Policy Narratives', 48 *Policy Sciences* (2015) pp. 415–442.

15 L. Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1957).

16 Z. Kunda, 'The Case for Motivated Reasoning', 108 *Psychological Bulletin* (1990) pp. 480–498; M. Lodge and C. Taber, 'Three Steps toward a Theory of Motivated Political Reasoning', in A. Lupia, M.D. McCubbins and S.L. Popkin (eds.), *Elements of Reason: Cognition, Choice, and the Bounds of Rationality* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000); C.S. Taber, D. Cann and S. Kucsova, 'The Motivated Processing of Political Arguments', 31 *Political Behavior* (2009) pp. 137–155.

17 Kahan, *supra* note 6.

18 M. Lipka, 'The Political Divide on Views toward Muslims and Islam', Pew Research Center, 2015.

as his formulation of the idea that certain beliefs become loaded down with cultural baggage and ultimately tied to our political identities, suggested to us that on an issue such as Islamophobia, an issue that has been extensively debated, and has become so partisan and is so emotional, we should expect to run into 'sticky beliefs', that is, beliefs that have crystallised, making change difficult regardless of the approach taken.

2 Literature Review

Our literature review helps develop our theoretical argument of why a narrative might or might not be more powerful than facts when it comes to the study of Islamophobia. Our review proceeds as follows. First, we discuss the argument over the power of narratives versus facts. Secondly, we discuss the Narrative Policy Framework and the concepts of congruency and breaching. Thirdly, we discuss beliefs and the importance of beliefs as articulated in the Advocacy Coalition Framework. Finally, we conclude our literature review with a theoretical framework that sets up our research design.

2.1 *Narrative v. Facts*

Prominent arguments about public policy and public opinion sees public policy as a political contest over policy proposals relative to socially constructed public problems. Political beliefs, support for policy, and community norms are all seen as malleable. Scholars such as Stone[19] and Clemons and McBeth[20] have long used narrative analysis to focus on the role of language, stories, and framing by competing groups to impact public support and affect policy.

On the other side of the spectrum is the more rational approach to public policy, that asserts that more information, better facts, and better data will change public opinion. In issues such as climate change, for example, the 'knowledge-deficit' model,[21] asserts that some stakeholders believe more scientific knowledge will convince the public and decision makers that climate change is a problem and requires policy action. Yet, often neither the public

19 D. Stone, *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making* (3rd edn., W. W. Norton & Company, New York, 2011).

20 R.S. Clemons and M.K. McBeth, *Public Policy Praxis: A Case Approach for Understanding Policy and Analysis* (3rd edn., Routledge, Abingdon, 2016).

21 P.M. Kellstedt, S. Zahran and A. Vedlitz, 'Personal Efficacy, the Information Environment, and Attitudes toward Global Warming and Climate Change in the United States', 28 *Risk Analysis* (2008) pp. 113–126.

nor decision makers are convinced solely by science. In short, the knowledge deficit model argues that if individuals have the right knowledge and facts, they will agree with certain policy proposals – but there is also clearly evidence that calls into question the efficacy of this approach.

The literature presents an ongoing debate over whether narratives or facts are more, or less, persuasive to individuals. A variety of different disciplines have studied how narrative is an important way that individuals make sense of their world including psychology,[22] healthcare,[23] and the field of advertising.[24] There are some studies that show that facts and statistical evidence convinces individuals more than narrative,[25] while other studies demonstrate the power of narrative over such evidence or facts.[26]

Slovic[27] and Small, Loewenstein, and Slovic[28] demonstrate that individuals often are persuaded by individual victim stories while they ignore atrocities committed against large groups of people. What these studies find is that an

22 E.g. M.C. Green and T.C. Brock, 'Persuasiveness of Narratives', in T.C. Brock and M.C. Green (eds.), *Persuasion: Psychological Insights and Perspectives* (2nd edn., Sage Publications, London, 2005) pp. 117–142; E.J. Baesler and J.K. Burgoon, 'The Temporal Effects of Story and Statistical Evidence on Belief Change', 21 *Communication Research* (1994) pp. 582–602.

23 M.W. Kreuter, T.D. Buskirk, K. Holmes, E.M. Clark, L. Robinson, Xuemei Si, S. Rath, D. Erwin, A. Philipneri, E. Cohen and K. Mathews, 'What Makes Cancer Survivor Stories Work? An Empirical Study among African American Women', 2 *Journal of Cancer Survivorship* (2008) pp. 33–44.

24 J.E. Escalas, 'Narrative Processing: Building Consumer Connections to Brands', 14 *Journal of Consumer Psychology* (2004) pp. 168–180.

25 E.g. M. Allen and R.W. Preiss, 'Comparing the Persuasiveness of Narrative and Statistical Evidence Using Meta-Analysis', 14 *Communication Research Reports* (1997) pp. 125–131; H. Hoeken and L. Hustinx, 'When Is Statistical Evidence Superior to Anecdotal Evidence in Supporting Probability Claims? The Role of Argument Type', 35 *Human Communication Research* (2009) pp. 491–510; Y. Hong, 'Narrative and Frame in Health Communication: The Influence of Narrative Transportation to Promote Detection Behavior', Diss. University of Alabama Libraries (2011).

26 E.g. S.E. Morgan, H.P. Cole, T. Struttmann and L. Piercy, 'Stories or Statistics? Farmers' Attitudes toward Messages in an Agricultural Safety Campaign', 8 *Journal of Agricultural Safety and Health* (2002) pp. 225–239; M.S. Ricketts, 'The Use of Narratives in Safety and Health Communication', Doctoral Dissertation, Kansas State University (2007).

27 P. Slovic, 'If I Look at the Mass I Will Never Act: Psychic Numbing and Genocide', in S. Roeser (ed.), *Emotions and Risky Technologies* (Springer, Munich, 2010).

28 D.A. Small, G. Loewenstein and P. Slovic, 'Sympathy and Callousness: The Impact of Deliberative Thought on Donations to Identifiable and Statistical Victims', 102 *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* (2007) pp. 143–153.

individual might not be moved by the statistical presentation (hundreds of thousands of deaths) of individuals killed in genocide or children starving to death due to malnutrition. However, if there is a singular story about a victim of genocide or malnutrition, individuals are more impacted.

2.2 *The Narrative Policy Framework, Congruency and Breaching*

The now well-established approach known as Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) seeks to study the power of narratives in the public policy process at the micro, meso, and macro levels.[29] Among the concepts studied by the NPF at the micro-level is that of congruency and breaching. These two concepts (congruency and breaching) seemingly are in contradiction to each other. The NPF[30] hypothesises that if a narrative is congruent with an individual's world views, they are more likely to be persuaded by the narrative. At the same time, the NPF hypothesises that powerful narratives can 'breach' reality and are the most powerful tool to do so.

In other words, congruency argues that individuals look for stories that are congruent with the individual's worldview and political identity. A US conservative, for example, will look for a story that emphasises individual responsibility, free markets, and business efficiency. An individual whose views fit into Lakoff's strict father model will accept a narrative that taps into features of that model, while an individual that accepts the egalitarian model of Douglas and Wildavsky's cultural theory[31] will likewise be persuaded by stories that have elements of egalitarianism. Breaching, on the other hand, suggests that powerful narratives are those that deviate from what is expected. In other words, just as a good novel with an interesting plot twist or characters who play against type might be more interesting to us than a more standard plot or typecast characters, policy narratives that breach reality draw our attention. The problem, of course, is that research has shown that when presented with facts contrary to their position on an issue, individuals become more hard line and rigid in their views – specifically even when they have more information, education, and

29 M.D. Jones and M.K. McBeth, 'A narrative policy framework: Clear enough to be wrong?', 38:2 *Policy Studies Journal* (2010) pp. 329–353.

30 E.A. Shanahan, M.D. Jones, M.K. McBeth and C.M. Radaelli, 'The Narrative Policy Framework', in P.A. Sabatier and C. Weible (eds.), *Theories of the Policy Process* (4th edn., Westview Press, Boulder, CO, 2017) p. 183.

31 M. Douglas and A. Wildavsky, *Risk and Culture: An Essay on the Selection of Technical and Environmental Dangers* (University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 1982).

possess strong critical thinking skills.[32] What Kahan's larger work on cultural cognition suggests is that when it comes to public policy, we are drawn to stories that fit snugly into our worldviews and identity and not those that breach reality or deviate from what we expect. Instead, it seems we seek the pleasure of having our views confirmed and try to avoid the pain and discomfort of cognitive dissonance. The NPF[33] also deals with this latter point via one of the assumptions of the micro-level of analysis on 'identity-protective cognition' which states that such concepts as confirmation bias and selective exposure are "conditioned by knowledge and prior beliefs and are used by individuals in a way that protects their prior identity".

Husmann[34] found that liberal and Democratic participants (as well as women participants) were more likely to support government intervention benefiting obese children if exposed to ideologically congruent obesity policy narratives. However, research by Lybecker, McBeth and Kusko[35] has found that breaching and congruency are not necessarily mutually exclusive. These researchers found that characters can effectively breach policy preferences by positioning congruent characters (those who align with one's individual identity) with an opposing (breaching) policy preference. For example, conservatives who read a narrative about recycling that described individuals who recycle as heroes (exercising individual responsibility), while describing local governments (who have not been active in promoting recycling because they believe that people will not exercise individual responsibility) as villains, and portraying citizens as victims (facing higher costs for landfills, etc.), ended up strongly supporting recycling. In this case, by telling the story in a way that reversed the common script about recycling that talks about the need for government to be the hero and make irresponsible citizens do the right thing, the narrative breached the characters (and other narrative content) to make the narrative attractive or congruent to conservatives. Similar research to the recycling study was conducted using river restoration as the policy topic and had similar findings.[36]

32 Kahan, *supra* note 6.

33 Shanahan, *supra* note 30, p. 182.

34 Husmann, *supra* note 34.

35 D.L. Lybecker, M.K. McBeth and E. Kusko, 'Trash or Treasure: Recycling: Narratives and Reducing Political Polarization', 22 *Environmental Politics* (2013) pp. 312–332.

36 D.L. Lybecker, M.K. McBeth and J. Stoutenborough, 'Do We Understand What the Public Hears: Stakeholder Preferred Communication Choices for Discussing River Issues with the Public', 33 *Review of Policy Research* (2016) pp. 376–392.

2.3 *Beliefs*

All of this argues that beliefs are important and in fact, beliefs are central to the study of public policy processes. Most notably the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF)[37] has brought beliefs to the forefront of discussions over how policy changes or does not change. The classic ACF distinction of beliefs starts with "deep core beliefs" which are "basic ontological and normative beliefs" that are largely resistant to change.[38] This contrasts with "policy core beliefs" which represent "normative commitments and causal perceptions" in a policy area and these beliefs are more subject change but are still fairly consistent over time.[39] Islamophobia might well be a deep core belief as it is tied to religious beliefs and this would seem the very definition of such a belief. On the other hand, given the extent of discussion and policies directed toward Muslims over the past 18 years, an individual's beliefs about Islam might well be more a policy core belief and if they are presented with evidence that challenges those beliefs they might well change their attitudes toward Muslims. The current research tests whether making a personal narrative congruent with a person's beliefs will make the narrative more persuasive.

Those who argue for the power of narrative in changing beliefs might be committing not only a 'knowledge fallacy' (again, the discredited idea that more knowledge will necessarily change beliefs) but what Crow and Jones[40] term the 'empathy fallacy'. Crow and Jones argue that part of the appeal of the idea of the power of narrative is rooted in the belief that a storyteller can appeal to an audience's universal human empathy. Yet, as Crow and Jones point out, this appeal to empathy is little different from the similar appeal to knowledge, and emotion and identity still play into whether a person has empathy.

2.4 *Theoretical Development from the Literature Review*

At the core, we are testing the power of narrative versus facts. We are also exploring the power of Islamophobia as a belief and whether it is a sticky belief that is resistant to change. We are using the NPF to test congruency versus

37 P.A. Sabatier and H. Jenkins-Smith, 'The Advocacy Coalition Framework: An Assessment', in P.A. Sabatier (ed.), *Theories of the Policy Process* (Westview Press, Boulder, CO, 1999) pp. 117–166.

38 *Ibid.*, pp. 121, 122.

39 *Ibid.*

40 D. Crow and M.D. Jones, 'A Guide to Telling Good Stories That Affect Policy Change', paper presented at the Workshop on Policy Process Research, University of Colorado School of Public Affairs, 2017.

breaching. Additionally, we wondered if it was not perhaps overly optimistic to think that a narrative might change a person's ingrained beliefs. Thus, we are testing whether the NPF's hypothesis that making a narrative culturally congruent with a person's belief increases the power of that narrative versus the NPF's assumption that an individual's identity protection cognition will resist the power of a narrative even if it is congruent with the individual's values.[41] In other words, an identity preservation tendency might mean that the individual is resistant to empathising with another person.

Finally, Slovic and his colleagues' research has important implications for our study of Islamophobia where individuals might have negative stereotypes of Muslims as a group, but if they are exposed to a singular story – with an individual they can identify with – they might well have affective emotion toward that individual. In short, as Slovic[42] argues with different examples, perhaps statistics and facts about Muslims would largely become abstractions and lack the emotive appeal of a singular story. In other words, individuals might have negative views of Muslims but when presented with a narrative of a Muslim with a human face and story, some individuals might soften their anti-Muslim stance. Stories might be more powerful than facts.

We developed a human story of a Muslim, congruent with other values of those most likely to hold anti-Islamic attitudes. In our story, the narrator of the personal narrative is Republican, comes from a military family, has worked hard to become successful, likes sports, is patriotic, and worries about their family. Whether we are trying to create a breaching narrative or a congruent narrative is largely a matter of interpretation, and is dependent to a degree on what the respondent's values are. But what we have done with the story that we test is to represent a Muslim family whose values are those often viewed as conservative, and in doing so we create a breaching narrative but do so by making the narrative congruent with conservative values.

In sum, the study uses a personal narrative to study the power of such a narrative in changing a person's attitudes and policy preferences and in particular, examining the power of the narrative as opposed to the power of evidence. The study tests whether individuals who have Islamophobia will be less fearful of Muslims if they are exposed to a narrative that demonstrates the shared humanity of a Muslim family and portrays that family is a positive light and whether this also shapes their policy preferences. As Haidt[43] has shown that

41 Shanahan, *supra* note 30, pp. 181–184.

42 Slovic, *supra* note 27.

43 J. Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion* (Vintage, New York, 2012).

conservatives are often hostile to out-groups, the narrative tried to make the Muslim storyteller and narrator more of an in-group. In other words, our experiment studies whether or not a narrative that breaches a person's view of Islam with a narrative that is congruent with widely shared human values, and identifies them with characteristics conservatives are traditionally supportive of (e.g., small business owner, patriot, and veteran) can move a person away from Islamophobia.

3 Research Design

The goal of this research is to test what types of messages might blunt or reduce Islamophobia. This endeavour is relevant to the practical politics of today and most especially the anti-Muslim language and stories used by prominent figures, including elites such as former US presidential candidate, and now President of the United States, Donald Trump. To this end, we designed a study to test whether either facts or a personal narrative of a Muslim influences an individual's expression of Islamophobia with the expressed intent of testing and furthering the NPF and the understanding of the role of narrative in policy formation.

Research in public opinion usually measures anti-Muslim sentiment by employing semantic differentials on stereotypes. For example, Sides and Gross find that Muslim Americans are consistently perceived as more violent than other groups in the United States.[44] While the term Islamophobia is frequently used to describe anti-Muslim attitudes, recent psychology research attempts to refine Islamophobia conceptually and in measurement.[45] Essentially this is an effort to understand the dimensions, and particularly the fear of Muslims, that Islamophobia connotes. For example, Lee et al. argue that Islamophobia should be understood in two dimensions. First, Islamophobia is partially defined by an affective component (affective-behavioural Islamophobia), where individuals have negative feelings about interacting with Muslims or Islam. Secondly, a cognitive dimension also characterises Islamophobia, where individuals believe that Islam and Muslims are hostile to Americans and a threat to their daily lives. Lee et al. propose that researchers need to account for both dimensions to better capture the phenomenon of Islamophobia. For

44 Sides and Gross, *supra* note 8.

45 S.A. Lee, J.A. Gibbons, J.M. Thompson and H.S. Timani, 'The Islamophobia Scale: Instrumental Development and Initial Validation', 19 *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* (2009) pp. 92–105.

our purposes, while we include measures of Muslim stereotypes, we focus on whether narratives can lessen the psychological concept of Islamophobia, and therefore, our study contains batteries derived from Lee et al.'s Islamophobia scale. Further, we will briefly examine the tie between Islamophobia and policy preferences toward the War on Terror, immigration, and border security.

We expected that people's partisan and political identity would be tied to their views on Islam and immigration, recognising that after such a predominant debate, during the last US presidential election and in fact since 2001, their views might be quite sticky; and that in response to a challenge to those crystallised views participants might reject either an individual based narrative or a fact-based appeal that conflicted with their settled view. Consequently, we decided to reject subtlety and to make both the personal and factual narratives powerful – we put the scalpel away and went with the sledgehammer to test the power of narratives.

Can facts (evidence) or a personal narrative impact individual levels of Islamophobia? Though Sides[46] recently found factual information can change people's minds, even on hotly contested issues, the recent work on political biology, on people's tendency to find ways to ignore or misread facts contrary to their beliefs, to use what is often called motivational reasoning to not change their views on salient and politically charged issues, suggests that any sort of significant movement might be difficult. Hibbing, Smith, and Alford affirm this, but also importantly suggest that there is a moderate, often even non-politically attuned group of people in the middle of the two ideologically predisposed groups, namely, conservatives and liberals.[47] The works of Nyhan and Reifler, Lewandowsky et al., and Kahan[48] showing how people, both liberals and conservatives, might double-down or at least dig in on their beliefs even in the face of overwhelming evidence, especially when dealing with issues that have gained cultural baggage and gotten tied up in one's sense of self-identity or woven into the DNA of the group they identify with, suggest that it might be more than merely difficult. On the other hand, work by Slovic[49] and work on

46 Sides, *supra* note 13.

47 Hibbing et al., *supra* note 5, pp. 24, 248.

48 B. Nyhan and J. Reifler, 'When Corrections Fail: The Persistence of Political Misperceptions', 32:2 *Political Behavior* (2010) pp. 303–330; S. Lewandowsky, W. Stritzke, K. Oberauer and M. Morales, 'Memory for Fact, Fiction, and Misinformation: The Iraq War', 16:3 *Psychological Science* (2005) pp. 190–195; Kahan, *supra* note 6.

49 Slovic, *supra* note 27.

the power of narratives[50] indicate that individual emotion and concern can be activated by a singular story more than by evidence or statistics. For both treatments we would expect those with more moderate, less politically defined (partisan) views to be most likely available to be affected.

3.1 *Subjects and Procedures*

The study was conducted using Amazon's Mechanical Turk (henceforth MTurk), where participants were 402 individuals who participated in the study for a small cash payment.[51] MTurk has been used in various social science studies partially because it allows researchers to gather more generalisable samples than that found in 'college sophomore' student samples.[52] Nonetheless, there are worries about the generalisability of MTurk, but also observations about how it improves upon student sampling. For instance, in a comparison of MTurk samples to both student and adult convenience samples,[53] and a randomised national sample (the 2008-9 ANES Panel Survey), Berinsky and colleagues note: "MTurk samples will often be more diverse than convenience samples and will always be more diverse than student samples … making them advantageous when compared to the long lamented 'college sophomore in the laboratory'".[54]

There have been some concerns with the integrity of data obtained through MTurk,[55] these concerns are more applied to the repeated administration of similar experimental designs over time, rather than to a singular study such as ours. Yet, MTurk samples have also been able to replicate classic experimental

50 Husmann, *supra* note 34.

51 The average age of participants in the sample was 41 years. The sample was 52% female, 84% white, 6% African American, 5% Hispanic, 4% Asian, and 1% other race. Democrats comprised 52% of the sample (including leaners), while Republicans were 34% of the sample (including leaners). Participants were paid USD 0.35 for their participation.

52 M.D. Buhmeister, T. Kwang and S.D. Gosling, 'Amazon's Mechanical Turk: A New Source of Inexpensive, yet High-Quality, Data?', 6 *Perspectives on Psychological Science* (2011) pp. 3–5.

53 See C.D. Kam, J.R. Wilking and E.J. Zechmeister, 'Beyond the "Narrow Data Base": Another Convenience Sample for Experimental Research', 29 *Political Behavior* (2007) pp. 415–440.

54 A.J. Berinsky, G.A. Huber and G.S. Lenz, 'Using Mechanical Turk as a Subject Recruitment Tool for Experimental Research', 20 *Political Analysis* (2012) pp. 351–368.

55 J. Chandler, P. Mueller and G. Paolacci, 'NonnaïVeté among Amazon Mechanical Turk Workers: Consequences and Solutions for Behavioral Researchers', 46 *Behavior Research Methods* (2014) pp. 112–130.

findings such as the classic Asian Disease framing experiment and others based upon more representative samples.[56]

Our MTurk subjects initially completed a brief demographic battery before being randomly assigned to one of two treatment conditions or the control group. The treatments consisted of either the 'Stories' Treatment, which was a vignette patterned after an op-ed piece in which an American Muslim describes the discrimination they have faced and calls for unity, or the 'Facts' Treatment, which presents subjects with four fact sets about Islam and terrorism.[57] Implicit in the factual op-ed is belief that a portion of Islamophobia stems from an artificially heightened concern of terrorism or that Americans are unaware of the military contribution of Muslim Americans. For example, one of the fact sets used in the op-ed was that

> The U.S. Department of Defense reports approximately 6,000 self-identified Muslims are currently serving in the military … Worldwide, hundreds of thousands of Muslims are fighting against ISIS and other terrorist organisations.

The personal narrative revolves around a Muslim mother, who is also a veteran and small business owner, who is dismayed by the anti-Islamic sentiment in the US. As a personal narrative, the Muslim mother's narrative is more monolithic and is not as easily disaggregated into the NPF's narrative elements and in this way the narrative is similar to the NPF work of Lybecker, et al.[58] Subjects in the control did not receive the Stories Treatment or Facts Treatment and simply were instructed to proceed to the subsequent batteries. Again, as noted, previously, we rejected subtlety in favour of strongly argued cases for both approaches.[59]

Following the treatments (or the instructions to proceed for those in the control), subjects were presented with four batteries, presented in random order (with the items within each battery also randomised). Subjects were asked

56 K. Casler, L. Bickel and E. Hackett, 'Separate but Equal? A Comparison of Participants and Data Gathered Via Amazon's Mturk, Social Media, and Face-to-Face Behavioral Testing', 29 *Computers in Human Behavior* (2013) pp. 2156–2160; J.K. Goodman, C.E. Kryder and A. Cheema, 'Data Collection in a Flat World: Strengths and Weaknesses of Mechanical Turk Samples', 26 *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making* (2013) pp. 213–224; C.J. Holden, T. Dennie and A.D. Hicks, 'Assessing the Reliability of the M5–120 on Amazon's Mechanical Turk' 29 *Computers in Human Behavior* (2013) pp. 1749–1754.

57

58 Lybecker, et al., *supra* note 35.

59 Full text of both treatments is available in the appendix.

to complete semantic differential items evaluating members of groups as violent or peaceful, with the items being split into two separate batteries. In the first, subjects were asked to evaluate Whites, Latinos, African Americans, and Middle Easterners, and in the second, they were asked to evaluate Christian Fundamentalists, Catholics, Jews, and Muslims. We split the categories to try to capture differences between ethnic and religious discrimination. The final three batteries consisted of a reduced eight-item version of the 16-item Islamophobia Scale,[60] three tolerance items asking about Muslims, and the three policy items. Therefore, the experiment contains two narrative treatments (one science based, one story based) and multiple measures of anti-Muslim sentiment and Islamophobia.

We explore the following questions with our data:

1. Is Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment lowered in narrative or factual treatment groups?
2. What are the differential effects of the treatments by ideological orientation?
3. Is Islamophobia a predictor of policy stances?

We then consider the implications of our findings for the Narrative Policy Framework.

4 Results

4.1 *Is Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Sentiment Lower in Narrative or Factual Treatment Groups?*

Table 1 provides the results for our base test: Is Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment lower in narrative or factual treatment groups? We use a difference of means test between experimental groups to test this question.[61]

There are minimal effects for either treatment. When considering the effects of factual and emotional appeals on anti-Muslim sentiments, we see that neither rhetorical approach seems to 'move the needle'. Neither of the treatments approach conventional levels of statistical significance, whether the outcome in question is stereotypes, or variations of the Islamophobia

60 Due to concerns of social desirability bias or other response biases derived from completing the full 16-item Islamophobia scale, we reduced the scales, using the full 16-item scale (measured in a previous study) to inform our reduced instrument. The two scales have alpha reliabilities of 0.85 and 0.90, respectively. Mean values for the Affective-Behavioural scale and Cognitive scale are 2.44 and 2.61, respectively.

61 Descriptive statistics for our dependent variables are available in the appendix.

TABLE 1 Mean responses (by experimental condition)

	Stories Group	Facts Group	Control Group
Muslim Stereotypes	4.06	3.91	4.15
Middle Eastern Stereotypes	4.13	4.00	4.25
Islamophobia 1 (Affective-Behavioural)	2.42	2.44	2.45
Islamophobia 2 (Cognitive)	2.66	2.56	2.61
Islamophobia 3 (Combined)	3.75	3.72	3.76

Cell values are means by experimental group. Stereotype scales range from 1 to 7. Islamophobia 1 & 2 range from 1 to 5. Islamophobia 3 ranges from 1 to 10.

scale. Table 1 shows this by simply presenting the means for each experimental group and the control group. Even without statistical testing, there are marginal differences between the treatments and the control. For example, when using the affective-behavioural component of Islamophobia, the means for the Facts Treatment, Stories Treatment, and Control Group are 2.44, 2.42, and 2.45, respectively. When using an overall Islamophobia measure (combining affective-behavioural and cognitive components of Islamophobia), the means are 3.76, 3.75, and 3.72 for the Control Group, Stories Treatment, and Facts Treatment, respectively. In other words, there is substantively (and statistically) no difference between the experimental groups on Islamophobia. Tables 2 and 3 display the difference of means tests between the Story Treatment versus the Control Group and the Science Treatment versus the Control Group for our stereotype and Islamophobia measures. Though the mean differences are generally negative (implying that the treatment groups have lower scores than the Control Group), the tests are universally not statistically significant at the .05 level.

This would give further credence to our earlier supposition that attitudes toward Muslims are sticky, resistant to attempts to persuade.[62] The robustness of these findings, across models and measures of anti-Muslim sentiment would seem to suggest that our initial expectations were correct, that despite

62 These results coincide with supplemental analysis on our tolerance items. The scenarios of a Muslim giving a speech in the community, teaching in a local university, or having a book in a local library were not affected by the narrative treatments with neither the Science or the Stories treatments reaching conventional levels of significance.

TABLE 2 Story Treatment vs. the control group on Anti-Muslim sentiment and Islamophobia (difference of means tests)

Measure	Mean Difference	Pr. Value
Muslim Stereotypes	-0.09	0.64
Middle Eastern Stereotypes	-0.12	0.48
Islamophobia 1 (Affective-Behavioural)	-0.27	0.81
Islamophobia 2 (Cognitive)	0.05	0.73
Islamophobia 3 (Combined)	-0.004	0.98

Note: A statistical significance level of < .05 (Pr. Value column) is conventionally used for hypothesis testing. Though the mean differences are negative, none of the tests show a statistical difference between the Stories Treatment and the Control Group at the .05 level.

TABLE 3 Science Treatment vs. the control group on Anti-Muslim sentiment and Islamophobia (difference of means tests)

Measure	Mean Difference	Pr. Value
Muslim Stereotypes	-0.24	0.18
Middle Eastern Stereotypes	-0.25	0.16
Islamophobia 1 (Affective-Behavioural)	-0.01	0.93
Islamophobia 2 (Cognitive)	-0.052	0.68
Islamophobia 3 (Combined)	-0.04	0.83

Note: A statistical significance level of < .05 (Pr. Value column) is conventionally used for hypothesis testing. Though the mean differences are negative, none of the tests show a statistical difference between the Science Treatment and the Control Group at the .05 level.

what we 'know' about the power of facts and narratives to impact public opinion, that Muslim sentiments are not easily moved by rhetoric, regardless of the form, regardless of facts or issues of fairness. That is, neither factual and statistical evidence nor a personal narrative, both heavily armed with information incongruent with Islamophobia's values, was able to breach the wall

of prejudice and change minds Despite the null results in our experimental design – which we argue is itself a significant finding – there are two areas where we extend the analysis. First, we explore the differential effects of the treatments by ideological orientation. As noted previously, research has shown that self-described conservatives are more likely to hold negative attitudes toward Muslims.[63] Thus, we can explore whether ideology influences how the narratives are received. Secondly, we explore the importance of Islamophobia as a predictor of policy stances to better understand its importance in political choice and discourse. For ease of analysis in the extended findings, we focus on measures of Islamophobia instead of the stereotype batteries.

4.2 *What Are the Differential Effects of the Treatments by Ideological Orientation?*

The results of our ideology analysis are shown in Table 4. Our first cut at an ideological analysis uses OLS regression (Model 1) with the affective-behavioural component of Islamophobia regressed on our treatment groups controlling for respondent ideology, age, race, and partisanship.[64] As noted above, previous research shows that self-described conservatives and Republicans hold more negative opinions and stereotypes toward Muslims than the rest of the American population, and our analysis reflects this finding with conservatives significantly more likely to score higher in Islamophobia. While the treatment group dummy variables are not significant, implying that our treatments are indistinguishable from the Control Group, our education control variable is significant and in the expected direction. Higher education corresponds to lower Islamophobia. While not surprising, indeed the impact of education on tolerance has been widely known for decades, in the current atmosphere where attacks on higher education are commonplace, it is worth noting this finding.

We also find an interesting and noteworthy result when exploring the reception of the narrative by groups. While conservative and liberal subjects were unmoved by the narratives (fittingly given our understanding of the cultural resonance and identity at play in these attitudes), as expected moderates do seem more receptive to the narratives than ideologues on either side of the spectrum. By splitting the sample on ideology and running our regression model, there is evidence that the Facts Treatment in particular lowers

63 Lipka, *supra* note 18.

64 Partisanship is measured using the classic 7-point scale from 1 (strong Democrat) to 7 (strong Republican). Ideology is also a 7-point scale running from 1 (very liberal) to 7 (very conservative). Gender is a dummy variable for female respondents. Education is an ordinal variable from less than high school (1) to doctoral degree (8).

TABLE 4 The influence of narratives on Islamophobia by ideological groups

VARIABLES	Model 1 Full Sample	Model 2 Conservatives	Model 3 Liberals	Model 4 Moderates
Facts Treatment	0.002	0.171	0.026	**-0.55***
	(0.105)	(0.195)	(0.141)	**(0.286)**
Stories Treatment	-0.001	0.018	0.044	-0.364
	(0.099)	(0.2)	(0.133)	(0.281)
Partisanship	**0.063***	**0.15****	**0.173*****	-0.04
	(0.034)	**(0.071)**	**(0.038)**	(0.094)
Ideology	**0.18*****	....	....	....
	(0.038)			
Race (Non-white)	0.022	0.054	0.067	-0.204
	(0.11)	(0.289)	(0.142)	(0.236)
Female	0.006	0.065	-0.015	0.094
	(0.085)	(0.162)	(0.114)	(0.302)
Education	**-0.10*****	**-0.164*****	**-0.07***	**-0.154***
	(0.028)	**(0.053)**	**(0.038)**	**(0.077)**
Constant	2.01***	2.633***	1.995***	3.431***
	(0.186)	(0.511)	(0.255)	(0.613)
Observations	402	122	230	50
R-squared	0.252	0.105	0.117	0.156

Coefficients generated using OLS Regression. Robust standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the affective-behavioural Islamophobia measure.

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Islamophobia in self-described moderates. The negative coefficient on the Facts Treatment (controlling for race, gender, and education) corresponds to moderates in the factual treatment group being less Islamophobic than moderates in the Control Group. Thus, while our treatments generally do not move individuals or shift the expression of Islamophobia among ideologues, the factual treatment does move moderates to express less Islamophobia.

4.3 *Is Islamophobia a Predictor of Policy Stances?*

With any research on the ability to shape attitudes and opinion, there is a question of whether the attitude or opinion in question matters for actual political

behaviour or policy. In this case, does Islamophobia actually relate to important policy preferences and actions by government? Our final analysis explores the influence of Islamophobia on policy preferences as a means of justifying the importance of studying the phenomenon and our ability to shape its expression. To this end, we model support for three policies by the American government with the affective-behavioural Islamophobia score as the independent variable. The policies are whether funding should be increased, decreased, or stay the same for border control and the War on Terror as well as whether immigration should be increased, decreased, or stay the same. These policies are also linked to the fear aspect of Islamophobia, as greater fear of Muslims should manifest in policy positions related to the War on Terror, immigration, and border security. For the three models we would expect Islamophobia to be related to lower support for immigration but increased support for spending on the War on Terror and border security. Each model controls for race, gender, education, ideology, and partisanship.

The ordered logistic regression results are presented in Table 5 below. We, again, is significantly related to favouring decreased immigration. Further, it is also significantly related to favouring more funding for border security and the War on Terror. Islamophobia is clearly capturing something beyond partisanship and ideology, even though ideology is also an important predictor with conservatives favouring less immigration and more funding for the War on Terror and border security. Yet, Islamophobia is consistently significant even controlling for the other variables.

Another notable finding is that the treatments again do not significantly influence many policy positions. However, individuals in the Facts Treatment group were less likely to support funding increases for border security than individuals in the Control Group. This might suggest this issue, compared to the other two, is perceived less emotionally, and therefore can be affected by effectiveness arguments without having to change one's views of Islam or Muslims, thereby not challenging one's identity. This fits with the research of Slater and Rouner[65] mentioned earlier, in the sense that the statistical evidence was not incongruent with their values and identity, but rather suggested a changed understanding of the nature of the threat (and how to proceed) rather than actually asking them to identify the 'them' as an 'us' as did the narrative.

65 M.D. Slater and D. Rouner, 'Value-Affirmative and Value-Protective Processing of Alcohol Education Messages that Include Statistical Evidence or Anecdotes', 23 *Communication Research* (1996) pp. 210–235.

TABLE 5 Islamophobia as a predictor of public policy preferences

VARIABLES	Model 1 Immigration	Model 2 Border Funding	Model 3 War on Terror
Islamophobia 1 (Affect-Behavioural)	**1.092*** **	**0.634*** **	**0.553*** **
	(0.156)	**(0.135)**	**(0.132)**
Facts Treatment	-0.344	**-0.570** **	-0.318
	(0.239)	(0.242)	(0.233)
Stories Treatment	-0.071	-0.397	-0.0896
	(0.262)	(0.261)	(0.249)
Partisanship	0.075	**0.184** **	0.0800
	(0.086)	**(0.0847)**	(0.0646)
Ideology	**0.332*** **	**0.257** **	**0.245*** **
	(0.099)	**(0.104)**	**(0.0762)**
Race (Non-white)	-0.165	0.269	0.338
	(0.324)	(0.294)	(0.296)
Female	**0.401***	0.249	**0.595*** **
	(0.210)	(0.210)	**(0.202)**
Education	0.019	0.0934	**0.133** **
	(0.078)	(0.0734)	(0.0660)
Constant cut1	1.925***	0.988**	2.841***
	(0.547)	(0.500)	(0.499)
Constant cut2	4.679***	3.113***	4.568***
	(0.611)	(0.547)	(0.531)
Observations	402	402	402

Coefficients are generated using Ordered Logistic Regression. Robust standard errors in parentheses. DV coding for Immigration 1 (increase) to 3 (decrease). DV coding for Border funding 1 (decrease) to 3 (increase). DV coding for funding War on Terror 1 (decrease) to 3 (increase).
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Overall, the clear, systematic influence of Islamophobia on policy support even when controlling for other political attitudes further justifies the study of Islamophobia beyond the timely, humanistic, and normative reasons for study.

5 Discussion

David Easton's classic arguments about behaviouralism and post-behaviouralism captured in the phrase *credo of relevance*,[66] the policy critiques of post-modernism and post-positivism, the Perestroika movement in our discipline, and the derogatory use of the phrase 'Ivory Tower' all suggest the same thing: important academic work needs to speak to important public policy issues. If Easton's battle cry was relevance and action as the basis for applied research, then Islamophobia and understanding the role that effective communication can or cannot play in exacerbating or diminishing the negative attitudes and stereotypes attributed toward Islam, Muslim Americans, people of Middle Eastern descent, and Muslims worldwide qualifies. And, of course, knowing which type of rhetorical strategy to use (facts or narrative), that is, which one might be more effective in impacting public policy and public opinion, is vitally important to policy entrepreneurs and policy makers, and even to public administrators who deal with the implementation of policy relative to issues such as immigration.

In our study, different academic literature seemed to suggest different conclusions and solutions, leading to contradictory expectations for our experiments in terms of which story might be most effective. It also led to our shaping experiments in a way that was designed to maximise the power of the two competing narratives, so as to overcome the sticky beliefs we believed had come from the crystallisation of opinions and identity around Islamophobia. That is, our two treatments were designed to try to not end up with null results by utilising what different research suggests could move the needle and demonstrate possible paths forward to reduce Islamophobia. Our results did not move the needle but nonetheless our results present several important theoretical angles for the study of the power of narratives versus facts.

First, part of the appeal of the NPF as a theory of the public policy process is that it can potentially provide insights into how narrative impacts the way that different groups (scientists, public administrators, other experts) might most effectively use narrative.[67] Previous research had shown that on policy issues such as recycling[68] and river restoration,[69] a narrative can be presented with congruent characters that will impact how various ideological groups view a policy issue. Our findings call into question whether such narratives will

66 D. Easton, 'The New Revolution in Political Science', 63 *The American Political Science Review* (1969) pp. 1051–1061.

67 E.g. Crow and Jones, *supra* note 40.

68 Lybecker, et al., *supra* note 35.

69 Lybecker, et al., *supra* note 36.

influence individual opinion on issues such as Islamophobia which it appears is more a deep core belief rather than a policy core belief.[70] We had thought that using the Narrative Policy Framework hypothesis of (in)congruency and by constructing Muslims as an in-group[71] and removing Muslims from an abstraction to an actual story of a family[72] we could significantly move conservatives in a direction away from Islamophobia. While the NPF has demonstrated the power of a congruent narrative in public policy issues such as recycling and river restoration, exploration of the power of narratives on such sticky issues as beliefs about religion is beneficial to the framework's research agenda, and suggests further study of this topic is warranted. Here, we contend that the NPF assumption of identity-protection cognition overrides the power of congruent narratives for issues such as Islamophobia.

Secondly, we are equally intrigued by the factual treatment moving moderates on the scale (away from Islamophobia) but the narrative treatment failing to do so. This has potentially important impacts in the NPF for better understanding how narratives influence or do not influence individuals on issues that are sticky. These results are in accordance with Hibbing, et al.,[73] and basic prima facie logic, which would all suggest that moderates are more susceptible to political persuasion. Importantly this fits with Taber and Lodge[74] who showed that individuals who have the least knowledge are the ones most persuadable by facts. Ideologues engage in confirmation bias[75] while perhaps moderates do not have the knowledge base, or political identity need, to resist factual arguments. Kahan's work[76] can be used to reach similar conclusions (more knowledge just makes the most ideological people dig in and protect their identity). Our study supports that and suggests that even on an issue where crystallisation has made most people's views too sticky to change with facts or an individual level emotional appeal, moderates are somewhat up for grabs and that a fact-based narrative worked best. Just as the middle tends to determine elections when large pluralities are so partisan as to be largely straight-line party voters, crucially perhaps people in the middle can be moved to form majorities in support of better policies. The exploration of this would be beneficial to the NPF as the framework explores where and with whom

70 Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, *supra* note 37.

71 Haidt, *supra* note 43.

72 Slovic, *supra* note 27.

73 J.R. Hibbing, K.B. Smith and J.R. Alford, *Predisposed: Liberals, Conservatives, and the Biology of Political Differences* (Routledge, Abingdon, 2013).

74 Taber and Lodge, *supra* note 6.

75 *Ibid.*

76 Kahan, *supra* note 6.

narratives have power and where and with whom they do not. The finding from the current research would suggest that narrative influence is limited or non-existent in highly emotionally charged issues like Islamophobia.

Thirdly, in our analysis, the most notable finding relates to the lack of success in shifting attitudes on the Islamophobia scale. Overall, the two competing rhetorical styles (facts and narrative) had no impact at all, though this was not completely true for moderates. These null effects were not unexpected even in the face of strong stimuli – which is why we eschewed milder appeals when crafting the two narratives appeals. We also documented further the connection of ideology to Islamophobia, and that higher education does diminish it. Moreover, we were able to show a clear connection between public opinion (Islamophobia) and related policy positions, including one issue (border security) where the factual narrative did change people's policy positions, at least for moderates. As mentioned above, this initial result has important implications for the NPF, the power of narratives in issues such as Islamophobia, and suggests the need for further research (perhaps with a more detailed and less personal policy narrative).

Our analysis of the influence of Islamophobia on policy preferences modelled support for three policies (border control funding, the War on Terror, and immigration) with the affective-behavioural Islamophobia score as the independent variable. Each model controlled for race, gender, education, ideology, and partisanship. As discussed above and shown in Table 5, the most notable aspect of our results was the consistency of influence of Islamophobia even when controlling for partisanship and ideology. Islamophobia was significantly related to favouring decreased immigration. Further, it was also significantly related to favouring more funding for border security and the War on Terror. Another notable finding was that the treatments did not significantly influence many policy positions, however, individuals in the Facts Treatment group were less likely to support funding increases for border security than individuals in the Control Group. We suggest this issue, compared to the other two, is perceived less emotionally, and therefore can be affected by effectiveness arguments without people having to change their views of Islam or Muslims, thereby not challenging their identity.

6 Conclusion

Perhaps it is too late to significantly blunt Islamophobia's existence, but that public opinion reality is important to know. Perhaps Islamophobia has become

a settled issue, a question of tribal identity,[77] for all but ideological moderates. And, perhaps it is true that no set of facts or heart-rending story can alter these unfortunate and sticky attitudes and beliefs – at least not in the short run (though in the long run, education should be able to reduce it). Certainly, these null results appear to argue that public opinion for those with a strong sense of political identity and beliefs, at least toward Islam and American Muslims, seems to be largely immune to either a fact or humanising story-based narrative. Islamophobia appears overwhelmingly resistant to change whether confronted by an appeal wrapped up in a powerful emotional and individual narrative (story) designed to make the perceived out-group seem less a them than an us, or an exhaustive listing of stereotype busting facts.

The disclaimer that must be attached is that our study is examining the problem with a narrow research design and only one sample. However, the topic clearly is salient, and relevant, and our findings important both inside and outside of academe. Though intrigued by our findings about moderates, our central point is that neither a narrative nor facts moved ideologues (on the left and right) in terms of Islamophobia. This is a potentially significant contribution to the NPF in exploring the role that congruent narratives play (or in this case do not play) in impacting individual attitudes in policy issues. We hope future NPF research will continue to explore this phenomenon in relation to 'sticky beliefs' and add to the scaffolding of the framework; and additionally hope that our study will lead to dialogue about Islamophobia and identity, and possibly even the discovery of how to soundly create non-null results when dealing with a sticky issue such as this.

77 Haidt, *supra* note 43.

Appendix

Descriptive Statistics for Anti-Muslim Sentiment and Islamophobia in the Sample

Summary Statistics (*overall*)

	Mean	S.D.	Min	Max
Muslim Stereotypes	4.04	1.48	1	7
Middle Eastern Stereotypes	4.13	1.44	1	7
Islamophobia (Affective)	2.44	0.95	1	5
Islamophobia (Behavioural)	2.61	1.05	1	5
Islamophobia (Combined)	3.74	1.4	1.5	7.5

Note: Islamophobia (combined) is an additive index of the affective-behavioural and cognitive components of Islamophobia from Lee et al (2013).

Islamophobia Scale

Affective-Behavioural Factor

1. I would support any policy that would stop the building of new mosques (Muslim place of worship) in the US.
2. I would become extremely uncomfortable speaking with a Muslim.
3. Just to be safe, it is important to stay away from places where Muslims could be.
4. I dread the thought of having a professor that is Muslim.

Cognitive Factor

1. The religion of Islam supports acts of violence.
2. Islam is anti-American.
3. I believe that Muslims support the killings of all non-Muslims.
4. Muslims want to take over the world.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Policy Items

1. Do you think the number of immigrants from foreign countries who are permitted to come to the United States should be increased, decreased, or kept the same?
2. Do you believe our efforts to control our border should be increased, decreased, or kept the same?
3. Do you believe that our spending on the War on Terror should be increased, decreased, or kept the same?

1	2	3
Increased	Decreased	Kept the same

Conditions

Facts Treatment

Four Facts About Terrorism and Islam

Our government spends a fortune dealing with Islamic terrorism, and presidential candidates campaign on the issue, but what are the central facts about Islam and terrorism?

1 *Islam and the US Military.*
The US Department of Defense reports approximately 6,000 self-identified Muslims are currently serving in the military. Muslims have fought for the US in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Gulf War, Vietnam, both World Wars II, & I and even in the Civil War. Worldwide, hundreds of thousands of Muslims are fighting against ISIS and other terrorist organisations.

2 *Islam and America.*
Practicing Muslims constitute about 1% of our population. While 63% are first generation immigrants, some 25-33% of slaves brought here were believed to have been Muslims. Currently, the Arab American Chamber of Commerce has over 1,200 member companies, and 90% of Muslims agree women should be allowed to work out of the home. Plus, law enforcement has been alerted to more terror suspects by American Muslims than by US intelligence agencies.

3 *Is there a Domestic Threat from Overseas?*
Evidence about the quality of our opponents has been somewhat comforting. Bin Laden's computers showed they were short on money, busy staying alive

and dodging drones, and watching porn. While the threat is real, our 'official and popular reaction' to terrorism since 9/11 has been 'massively disproportionate to the threat' and explain that the odds of an American perishing at the hands of a terrorist is roughly only one in 3.5 million. Since 9/11, foreign inspired terrorism has claimed only 25 lives in the United States. You are much, much more likely to die from cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's asthma, or by being hit by lightning (451 deaths since 9/11), floods or tornadoes, or even by falling out of bed, or having heavy furniture land on you. The threat exists, but is not a major threat.

4 *Is There a Connection?*

Islam has not been behind most domestic terrorism. The Charleston shooter was a racist. The attack on a Planned Parenthood facility in Colorado was a form of Christian misogynist terrorism. The Sikh temple shooting in Wisconsin was done by a white supremacist. Most importantly, the deadliest domestic terror attack ever in the US was done in Oklahoma City by Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols, killing 168 people. None of these had anything to do with Islamic extremism.

Stories/Narrative Treatment

A Proud Citizen's Request

My father grew up in western Pennsylvania, working summers in a hot steel mill, until he turned 18 and joined the army. He served three tours in Vietnam, and met my mom on R&R in Indonesia in-between the first two tours. They married and he converted to Islam before bringing her home. Mom got a job working in the local bank and I was born three months before he was scheduled to return home. Instead, he died a hero fighting to cover his platoon as they retreated under ambush. Today, I feel as if I am under ambush.

I've lived my whole life in mid-America. I graduated from a private Catholic grade school, a public high school, got my Associate Degree at a local community college; but instead of going on for a four-year degree, after my Mom died of cancer, I joined the National Guard and am one of the few citizens who served in Iraq. As a woman, that service is even rarer.

I pay taxes, serve as a volunteer firefighter, am a Registered Republican, am proud to say I voted against Obama twice. I now own a small business I started, and employ six neighbors (four Christians, one Mormon, and my Assistant Manager is Jewish).

My son is a budding athletic star; his Dad (my husband) is Catholic, but the NFL seems his priority most Sundays, and my daughter loves Elmo and the color pink. My own color is such that you would never think I was anything but white, and you'd never know I was Muslim – except for my frequent use of a headscarf.

Why should I be a target of hatred in my own country? Why do I have to fear for my children's future? Why did someone paint hateful graffiti on my business window? I've never done anything illegal except get a parking ticket. I love and served my country and the Constitution. But the other day my daughter and I were yelled at; obscenities and threats. My daughter started crying, and her tears and fears broke my heart.

I love my country. I am proud to be part of the red, white, and blue. But this has to stop. Don't let the terrorists and hate mongers divide our family. Stand up for your fellow citizen and veteran. Stand up for my family. Stand up for my daughter.