# Losing Muslim Hearts and Minds: Religiosity, Elite Competition, and Anti-Americanism in the Islamic World

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## Abstract

The battle for public opinion in the Islamic world is an ongoing priority for U.S. diplomacy. The current debate over *why* many Muslims hold anti-American views centers around whether individuals dislike "who Americans are" with respect to fundamental aspects of culture and government, or "what Americans do" policy-wise in international affairs. We propose, instead, that Muslim anti-Americanism is predominantly a domestic, elite-led phenomenon that intensifies when there is greater competition between Islamist and secular-nationalist political factions within a country. While more observant Muslims tend to be more anti-American, paradoxically the most anti-American countries are those with Muslim populations that are less religious overall, and thus more divided on the religious-secular issue dimension. We provide case study evidence consistent with this explanation, as well as an in-depth multilevel statistical analysis of public opinion data from over 12,000 Muslim respondents in 21 countries.

# Introduction

Since September 2001, survey researchers have questioned citizens of the Islamic world about how they view Americans, U.S. policy, and American values and culture. Where public sentiment runs against the United States, it does so strongly. According to surveys conducted as part of the Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project, in the spring of 2003, just one percent of Jordanian respondents and fewer than one percent of Palestinian respondents gave a favorable rating to the United States. Between 2002 and 2008, only 20 percent of Turkish and Pakistani Muslims viewed the United States favorably. The consequences of such anti-American sentiment among Muslims abroad are seen to delegitimize American values, increase sympathy for America's enemies, and weaken America's influence in foreign affairs (Naím, 2003; Shore, 2005; Keohane and Katzenstein, 2007; Kull, 2007).

The depths of anti-Americanism in the Islamic world—and the Arab world in particular— have been much remarked upon (e.g., Parker, 1988; Ajami, 2001; Fuller, 2002; Abdallah, 2003; Gentzkow and Shapiro, 2004; Kohut, 2007). Less noticed is that in many countries, Muslims actually tend to view the United States quite favorably. Even within the Arab world, there is a considerable amount of cross-national variation in levels of anti-Americanism. Why, then, do some Muslims harbor such intense dislike for America, while others are more neutral or even supportive of the United States as a global actor?

One would be hard pressed to think of a time when Muslim attitudes toward the U.S. carried greater political import. As Arab citizenries across the Middle East have engaged in both peaceful and more violent protest against dictators—some of whom enjoyed close ties to the United States—a reassessment of U.S.-Arab and U.S.-Muslim relations is underway, with the potential to critically reshape America's ability to promote its values and interests in the region.

Anti-Americanism has been defined as "any hostile act or expression that becomes part and parcel of an undifferentiated attack on the foreign policy, society, culture and values of the United States" (Rubinstein and Smith, 1988, 36) and more recently as "a psychological tendency to hold negative views of the United States and of American society in general" (Katzenstein and Keohane, 2007, 12). Research scholars and commentators have argued at length over why Muslims in particular might adopt such a stance, with most explanations settling into one of two categories. The first is that Muslims who dislike the United States do so on the basis of cultural differences and fundamental disagreements over societal norms and values. Paz (2003), for example, writes that Islamists—those who advocate the formal integration of Muslim social and religious precepts into government—view conflict with the United States as a "war of cultures" and that "the nature of Islamist anti-Americanism is cultural rather than military or political." A consequence of such reasoning is that there is not much the United States can do to remedy anti-American sentiment, short of making (impossible) fundamental changes in the American way of life.

The second hypothesis counters that Muslims dislike America not for "who Americans are," but rather "what Americans do." Proponents of this argument dominate the academic and public opinion literature on anti-Americanism (Telhami, 2002; Tessler, 2003; Cole, 2006; Esposito, 2007; Kull, 2007; Esposito and Mogahed, 2008). Writes Makdisi (2002, 538): "Anti-Americanism is a recent phenomenon fueled by American foreign policy, not an epochal confrontation of civilizations." Likewise, Shore (2005, 481): "Most pious Muslims do not dislike

the United States because of its freedoms. What they find repellent is the perceived inconsistent application of our values;" Fuller (2002, 57): "Muslim societies may have multiple problems, but hating American political values is not among them. U.S. policymakers would be wise to drop this simplistic, inaccurate, and self-serving description of the problem;" and Abdallah (2003, 70): "Arab hostility is primarily directed at specific U.S. policies, not at America or the American people."

Despite their conflicting perspectives on the causes of anti-Americanism, both explanations share a presumption that individuals form their opinions about the United States primarily as a *direct* reaction to what the U.S. is or does. While this may be true in part, it neglects the important intermediary role played by political elites in determining what information about the United States individuals hear, how they interpret this information, and how they incorporate it into their perspectives on their political environment (Zaller, 1992). As Gentzkow and Shapiro (2004) demonstrate, Muslims who get their news only from Al Jazeera are significantly more anti-American than those who watch only CNN. Like people everywhere, Muslims are open to persuasion on the issue of anti-Americanism and susceptible to elite influence through the mass media (e.g., Lynch, 2007).

In this paper, we propose a theory of anti-Americanism that transcends the conventional "what America does" versus "who America is" debate. Instead, we submit that observed levels of anti-Americanism among Muslims in a given country depend primarily on the intensity of anti-American messages being voiced by prominent political elites within that country. Simply put, the reason many Muslims tell public opinion researchers that they hold an unfavorable opinion of the United States is because trusted political leaders tell them so. What is especially important about this association is that it is predominantly *domestic* forces that determine the strength with which elites press anti-American claims—not American policies, values, or actions. When competition between a country's Islamist and secular-national political factions is great, political leaders from both sides have strong incentives to use anti-American rhetoric to boost mass support. Less intense conflict between these two groups dampens those incentives. Under such conditions, religious leaders may remain sympathetic to anti-American claims, but there is less reason to promote these attitudes publicly, thus leading to less anti-American sentiment in the minds of individual Muslims.

This logic explains why—seemingly paradoxically—while religious Muslims are more anti-American than their secular compatriots, anti-American attitudes are most prevalent in more *secular* countries where the political division between religious and non-religious individuals is the greatest. As the split between religious and secular-nationalist "types" in a society changes slowly over time, our theory accounts for why Muslim countries tend to return to a steady-state level of anti-American sentiment even after political shocks to public opinion; as well as why far greater variation exists across Muslim communities than within Muslim communities over time. It also highlights how little the United States may actually be able to do to reduce anti-Americanism, as long as the U.S. remains a convenient target for opportunistic political leaders in parts of the Muslim world.

Scholars have termed domestic sources of anti-American attitudes "instrumental" anti-Americanism, reflecting the efforts of a Muslim political elite which "instigates and manipulates hostility toward the United States in order to mobilize domestic support" (Rubinstein and Smith, 1988, 41). As Rubin (2002, 73) writes, "such animus is largely the product of self-interested manipulation by various groups within Arab society, groups that use anti-

Americanism as a foil to distract public attention from other, far more serious problems within those societies." While scholars such as Rubin (2002) and Lynch (2007) focus on the way that Arab authoritarians use anti-American rhetoric as a diversionary tactic, the broader question remains of why Muslim elites in some countries would see more or less value in promoting anti-American attitudes—and why, even within countries, certain Muslim elites would be stronger advocates than others of anti-American sentiment. Our theory offers an explanation for the conditions under which such instrumental anti-Americanism is more or less likely to be found; and, applying a multilevel statistical model to public opinion survey data from nearly thirteen thousand Muslim respondents in 21 countries, we are the first to systematically test for—and find empirical evidence of—instrumental anti-Americanism at work.

Any attempt to account for the variation in anti-American sentiment across the Muslim world faces the challenge of explaining highly complex processes and relationships that have come about as a result of multiple causes. Although systematic cross-national research into the causes of Muslim anti-Americanism is rare, the most prominent examples of such studies (e.g., Chiozza, 2009) have made clear the difficulty of the task. The intensity of political competition along religious-secular lines—the key explanatory variable that we propose—explains a substantively large amount of the cross-country variation in anti-American sentiment across the Islamic world.

Increasing scholarly understanding of the roots of anti-American sentiment in the Muslim world has important and far-reaching political implications. One and a half billion Muslims make up one-fifth of the total world population, and favorable attitudes toward the U.S. are rarer in the Muslim world than anywhere else (Kohut and Stokes, 2006). Many of the world's most intractable conflicts involve Muslim-majority countries, and the ability of the U.S. to exercise "soft power" to influence the trajectories and outcomes of these disputes is of considerable importance.[1] Our research into the basis for and rigidity of anti-American sentiment makes the externalities associated with certain aspects of U.S. foreign policy both tangible and explicit. Is it true that changes in attitudes towards the United States must come from within the Muslim world, "through social and cultural developments" as claimed by Paz (2003)? Or can changing American economic and policy choices make a sustained difference? To the extent that American economic and political policymakers are concerned with the public opinion "costs" of their actions abroad, the analyses we present can be used to inform those decisions which affect not only the status, but also the security, of the United States with respect to the rest of the world.[2]

## Sources of Muslim opposition to the U.S.

The grievances that motivate many Muslims to express anti-American sentiments have been linked to specific actions taken by the United States in foreign political and economic affairs, as well as America's growing global cultural influence since the end of the Second World War

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[1]Nye (1990, 2004) describes soft power as the ability to attain policy objectives through cooptation, persuasion and attraction rather than coercion or through the use of side payments.

[2]See also Gerges (1999) for discussion of how various perspectives towards Islamic politics shape American foreign policy decisions.

(Rubinstein and Smith, 1988).[3] The question that contemporary scholars continue to debate is which among this "amalgam of discontents" (Kohut and Stokes, 2006, 23) matters most for explaining anti-American attitudes, with implications for what policy changes the United States might feasibly and productively pursue—and at what cost—if American leaders choose to seek to ameliorate anti-American sentiment.

In this section, we review the two sets of factors generally accepted as the primary basis for Muslim anti-Americanism. Yet although anti-American attitudes are prevalent in the Islamic world, they are not universal. As such, the problem with each of these sets of explanations is not that they fail to capture legitimate grievances; but rather that they fail to predict why *some* Muslims are motivated by these (or other) grievances to express an unfavorable attitude towards the United States, while others hold a more positive view. In the following section, therefore, we propose an alternative hypothesis: that it is largely the influence of domestic elites, exploiting these potential grievances for political gain, that predicts whether individuals adopt anti-American attitudes.

## U.S. policy and the foreign backlash

A number of key U.S. foreign policy developments in the second half of the twentieth century have provided fodder for the spread of anti-American sentiment in the Islamic world. The first is related to America's involvement in the internal political and economic affairs of a number of countries with large Muslim populations. During the Cold War, America propped up dictators seen as friendly to the U.S., and worked to topple regimes with leanings toward the Soviet Union. American "overidentification" with unpopular local dictators like the Shah of Iran or Sadat in Egypt was one factor contributing to mass anti-American sentiment (Parker, 1988, 53).

American government agencies, such as USAID, also intervened in the economic planning of a number of developing Muslim countries (Thornton, 1988, 10). As aid was disbursed conditionally, a perception emerged that foreign assistance assistance was used politically by the U.S. to "enslave" a country. American involvement in Pakistani political and economic life, for example, is widely deplored, and secular elites tend to describe their ill feelings toward the U.S. in terms of "capitalist or imperialist exploitation" (Kizilbash, 1988, 59, 63). Muslim leftists, such as Egyptian economist Samir Amin, have argued that American economic intervention in the Middle East is part of a global imperialist strategy on the part of the United States.

Another key U.S. foreign policy development in the post-World War II era is related to American support for the state of of Israel. There is widespread anger on the part of many Muslims towards the U.S. for political support of Israel, which is invariably seen as coming at the expense of Palestinian interests. The fate of Jerusalem—the third most holy city in Islam and the location of important Muslim holy sites—is also of importance to Muslims around the world. Describing the Arab world, Hammond (2007, 57) writes that, "views of the United States today are first and foremost conditioned by American policy vis-à-vis the

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[3]In fact, during the first half of the twentieth century, the image of the United States in the Arab world—a key constituency in the broader set of Islamic countries—was generally positive, as Arabs saw Americans less as imperialists and more as liberal, benevolent educators and missionaries (Makdisi, 2002).

Israel-Palestinian conflict and the degree to which the United States is seen backing Israel to the detriment of the Palestinians."

## Islamism and cultural anti-Americanism

One of the most important political developments to emerge in the Muslim world over the last four decades has been the growth of support for what many term Islamism—the idea that both society and politics should be infused with a greater religious sensibility. This has been coupled with the rise of the so-called "mosque movement." According to Mahmood (2004, 44-47), this movement "emerged in response to the perception that religious knowledge, as a means for organizing daily life, had become increasingly marginalized under modern structures of secular governance... Piety activists [sought] to imbue each of the various spheres of contemporary life with a regulative sensibility that takes its cue from the Islamic theological corpus rather than from modern secular ethics."

Within the Muslim world, some of the strongest proponents of anti-American attitudes are found in Islamist political circles (Faath and Mattes, 2006). Fuller (2002, 54-55) comments that "most in the Muslim world feel themselves besieged by the West... Islamist movements today provide a key source of identity to peoples intent on strengthening their social cohesion against Western cultural assault." According to the Islamist vision, the United States represents a primary threat to Muslim society and is to blame for a variety of domestic and international political problems (Ajami, 2003). In Arab countries, Islamists promote the idea of a "global Western conspiracy against the Arabs and the Arab and Muslim world," which "provides the Islamists with their main justification and motive for developing the image of the 'American enemy' " (Paz, 2003). Many Islamists view the United States in particular as the "neo-Mongol power lurking behind the apostate governments that they seek to topple" (Doran, 2002, 183).

In Yemen, Islamist groups and their supporters are "among the main bearers of anti-Americanism" (Münzner, 2006, 111). Hizballah—the popular political and paramilitary Shi'a organization in Lebanon—regularly expresses anti-American sentiment (Vogt, 2006, 147-8). The same pattern is evident in Jordan, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Morocco (Reetz, 2006; Ufen, 2006; Vogt, 2006; Zeghal, 2008). In sub-Saharan Africa, Seesemann (2006, 202) observes that criticism of the U.S. has emerged as part of the "standard verbal repertoire" of African Islamic preachers. Yet here Seesemann highlights one key distinction. Although Islamic elites in sub-Saharan Africa may possess anti-American attitudes, they have not made promoting such objections a top priority. Instead, they tend to focus their attention on "local and national problems," which makes "broad anti-American radicalization... rather unlikely" in this segment of the Muslim world.

# Explaining anti-Americanism

The unpopularity of certain U.S. policies and negative reaction to the spread of American culture both represent plausible reasons why Muslims around the world might hold anti-American attitudes. Nevertheless, many do not. In 2007, the Pew Global Attitudes Project (GAP), a cross-national opinion poll sponsored and directed by the nonpartisan Pew Re-
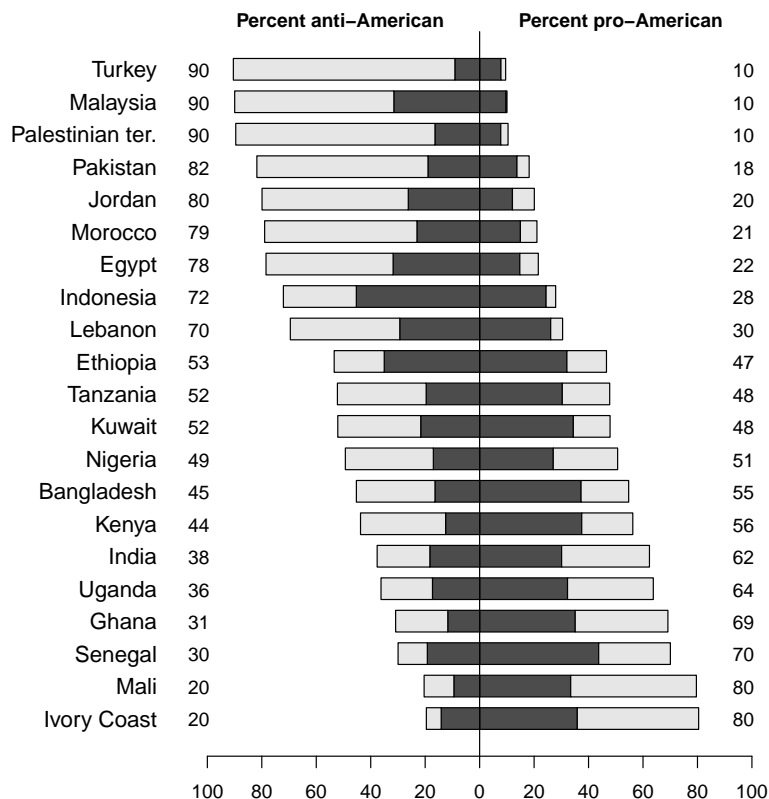
Figure 1: *Distribution of favorable and unfavorable opinions towards America among Muslims in 21 Pew GAP study countries in 2007. Light gray bars denote more extreme opinions on either side. Percentages exclude respondents with no opinion.*

search Center in Washington, DC, asked respondents in 46 countries if they had a "a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of the United States." Large proportions of Muslims around the world told researchers that they in fact had a *favorable* view of the United States (Figure 1). To explain anti-Americanism, it is not enough to demonstrate that potential grievances *exist*—a valid theory must also account for the observed variation in anti-American sentiment not only across Muslim individuals, but even more strikingly across Muslim countries.

We provide such an explanation. Consistent with the logic of mainstream theories of elite-led opinion formation, we propose that anti-Americanism arises primarily as a byproduct of political competition between Islamist and secular-reformist groups, and therefore depends little on the particular policy choices or economic or cultural practices of the United States. A division between Islamist and secular ideologies dominates much of political debate in the Muslim world. When political struggles between Islamists and secularists intensify, both sides have incentives to invoke grievances against the United States to help win supporters. The consequence of this is a rise in observed levels of anti-Americanism among the mass public. To the extent that Islamist leaders are more anti-American than their secular counterparts, religious individuals should also be more likely to report anti-American attitudes.

## Elite-led opinion formation

Muslim anti-Americanism reflects a number of basic economic and political realities. Many Muslims object to a variety of American actions and perceived cultural infringements. Across the Islamic world, there are also fundamental differences in countries' level of development and political and economic relationship with the United States. Poorer countries, such as those in sub-Saharan Africa, receive significantly larger amounts of U.S. foreign economic aid, making citizens of those countries potentially more sympathetic towards the United States. Wealthier countries import greater amounts of merchandise from the United States, increasing their exposure to American cultural products. Countries in the Middle East are more geographically proximate to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

But in addition to this, in many countries, Muslim political elites have taken the lead in inflaming anti-American sentiment for their own political gain. As a phenomenon of public opinion, anti-Americanism does not simply emerge organically in direct response to U.S. actions. Rather, people's attitudes are shaped by what their political leaders say about the United States. The more insistently elites promote anti-Americanism, the more individuals tend to adopt anti-American attitudes. In countries where political elites project a neutral or positive stance towards the United States, individuals should be relatively more pro-American as well.

That such influences matter is not a novel claim; indeed, the idea that individuals are susceptible to elite persuasion when forming their political attitudes is a key component of most leading theories of mass opinion formation.[4] As Zaller (1992) describes, the opinions people express are a combination of their own personal experiences and the balance and intensity of the elite attitudes to which they are exposed and predisposed to accept. Individuals who identify with particular partisan or ideological opinion leaders will tend to align their political viewpoints with those elites. For those without strong political attachments, what matters is the prevalence of different political arguments in the individual's social or mass media environment. To understand how elite-led attitudes enter into mass opinion, it is necessary to thus identify 1) the dominant political cleavages in Muslim society, which affect how individuals choose to align with competing elites; 2) the positions held by elites in each competing bloc, and whether they are in agreement or opposition; and 3) the intensity with which elites promote pro- or anti-American attitudes. In countries where elites are unified and vocal in their opposition to the United States, we would expect mass anti-American sentiment to be greatest.

## The religious-secular cleavage

In large parts of the Islamic world, the substance of political debate surrounds a secular-religious issue cleavage akin to the left-right ideological dimension that describes policy preferences in most Western democracies. Debate concerning the nature of the governing regime and the role of the state in society is central to the secular-religious divide. Policies such as the promotion of family planning practices and the use of interest in banking would be considered relatively "secular" policies. A ban on female drivers, censorship of books

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[4]See Converse (1964); Zaller (1992); Kinder (1998); Druckman and Lupia (2000); and Gabel and Scheve (2007a,b).

and films that contain "un-Islamic content," and the introduction of an Islamic penal code would fall on the religious side of the spectrum. Roy (1994, 23) writes that despite the protests of some political actors, "any political action amounts to the automatic creation of a secular space or a return to traditional segmentation" where a more traditional space refers to one with a greater religious sensibility. Hunter (1995, 327) argues that Muslim-majority countries are characterized by a "rift between the more Westernized and the more traditional segments" and that this division has important political implications.

The modern historical basis for this cleavage dates to the mid-19th century. Hunter (1998, 75-76) explains that as European powers increasingly gained in economic and political prominence with respect to the Muslim world, Muslim-Western relations that had previously been characterized as competition between "equals" evolved into "that between the dominating and the dominated." Within Muslim societies, a debate arose as to whether stricter adherence to religious principles was the "culprit" or the "solution." From the 1920s until the 1970s, proponents of the former argument dominated positions of political power, as "most Muslim societies underwent a process of state-directed secularization and cultural and political nationalization" (Hunter, 1998, 85). Since then, however, Islamism has emerged as the primary ideological rival to secular nationalism—though the pace at which secular nationalism has given way to Islamism varies considerably across states. Fuller (2002, 50) goes so far as to call Islamism the "primary vehicle and vocabulary of most political discourse throughout the Muslim world... No other ideology has remotely comparable sway."

A range of explanations for the rise of Islamism have been proposed. Some argue that secular nationalism failed to successfully incorporate dissatisfied social groups and classes (Sutton and Vertigans, 2005). In the Arab states, increasing support for Islamism has also been associated with the Arab defeat in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War (e.g., Ajami, 1992; Salem, 1994), where, according to Hammond (2007), Islamists and secular nationalists continue to "argue vociferously" about how best to respond to that defeat. Murphy (2002) argues that for Muslim individuals, identification with Islam counteracts feelings of inferiority towards the West, providing a renewed sense of cultural dignity. Others such as Wickham (2002, 6), see the growth of Islamism as due more to the successful "mobilizing efforts of opposition [Islamic] elites" than as a "natural result of accumulated grievances." Whatever the exact cause, Browers (2009, 1) observes that even when secular nationalists and Islamists confront a common opponent in the form of corrupt, authoritarian regimes, they have still shown themselves to be "each other's worst enemy."

Importantly, the political division between Islamist and secular ideologies does not only apply to political elites. Individuals who are more religiously observant are more exposed to, as well as more predisposed to listen to and adopt, the political ideas of the Islamist political elite. Muslims who are comparatively more secular will tend to take their cues from the secular elite.

## Elite competition and the value of anti-American rhetoric

Islamism and secular nationalism represent the two dominant political-intellectual trends in the Muslim world. Yet although contemporary anti-Americanism is primarily associated with Islamism, in fact proponents of *both* ideologies have been known to publicly criticize the United States. For secular leaders, who historically positioned themselves as anti-colonial

and anti-imperialist, anti-American attitudes tend to reflect a perception of America as encroaching on the independence and sovereignty of countries in the Muslim world. Reetz (2006, 186) writes of Pakistan that "left-leaning anti-American arguments play a central role in the public debate, especially in the largely independent print media." In the Arab world, where anti-American attitudes are widespread, Hammond (2007, 205) describes both camps as "virulently anti-American."

Because of the long-standing political and cultural grievances directed towards the United States, large segments of Muslim society are receptive to this anti-American rhetoric—from whichever side it is received. Opinion surveys indicate that most Muslims believe Americans are not religious enough, and that the religious beliefs that they do hold drive the U.S. to make bad decisions in the world (Kohut and Stokes, 2006, 93). Although many individuals across the Muslim world enjoy American movies, television, and music, they also view globalization and the spreading influence of American culture as potential threats to local beliefs and traditional ways of life (Faath and Mattes, 2006; Kohut and Stokes, 2006; Hammond, 2007; Esposito and Mogahed, 2008). During the Cold War, the association between anti-Americanism and communism gave anti-American rhetoric a certain strength, but at the same time placed limits on its ability to appeal broadly. More recently, however, anti-Americanism has become what Krastev (2004, 6) calls an "all-purpose ideology;" compelling yet vague enough to be harnessed by any number of political groups for "cynically designed political strategies" seeking to mobilize supporters for political gain.[5] Similarly, Schatz (2008, 12-13) views anti-Americanism as a "symbolic resource" used by political activists to link their "on-the-ground... goals to larger-scale (even global) imperatives," thereby legitimizing and enhancing the significance of their political movements.

That being the case, not all Muslim political leaders engage in anti-American rhetoric. For many, there is little to be gained by doing so. In Muslim communities where religious leaders already monopolize local political control, competition for "converts" is no longer as fierce. In such cases, the battle for local supremacy has already been won by those who are more religious, leaving neither side with strong incentives to recruit supporters. In highly religious Muslim countries, there is also less to be gained for religious leaders by disparaging America and its (democratic) political values, as free elections are likely to bring them to or allow them to maintain their hold on power. Indeed, Lynch (2007, 207) describes cases in which Islamists have actively promoted democratic reforms, encouraging peaceful coexistence with Western countries like the U.S. Likewise, secular leaders—vulnerable to Islamist electoral victories, revolution, or loss of influence on an existing authoritarian regime—may see the U.S. as an ally in the protection of civil liberties from policies of Islamists in power.

This contrasts with more competitive political environments in which local political dominance has not yet been established and there is greater incentive to ramp up anti-American dialogue. The intensity of competition between secular-nationalist and Islamist parties, both in terms of levels of mass support and actual political influence, varies considerably across the Muslim world. In Mali, for example, explicitly religious parties are prohibited and "extremist" ideologies are opposed by most Malians (Brulliard, 2009). In Lebanon, the Islamist political organization Hizballah won 11% of legislative seats in the 2005 elections,

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[5]Krastev (2004) also sees anti-corruption and anti-terrorism rhetoric as having many of the same properties as the instrumental use of anti-Americanism to mobilize supporters.

as one of over a dozen primary Muslim, Christian, and Druze parties. Among those they opposed was the more secular Sunni Future Movement. In Egypt, candidates backed by the Muslim Brotherhood have found moderate electoral success, winning approximately 20% of the seats in the 2005 parliamentary election. Anti-American demonstrations there have been orchestrated by both the secularists and the Muslim Brotherhood (Mitchell, 2004, 98). In the Palestinian territories, Hamas won a majority of parliamentary seats in 2006. Similarly intense secular-Islamist political conflict is evident in Turkey, where there is vigorous multi-party competition between Islamist parties such as the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and other more moderate factions; and in Bangladesh, where the two major parties are the secular Awami League and the BNP, which allies with more explicitly Islamist groups. In Indonesia, anti-American sentiment is found in the pronouncements of both Islamists and non-Islamists, who tend to focus on what they see as America's neo-Imperialist economic ambitions (Bowen, 2007, 245).

There are clear parallels between this logic and current research into the notion of "issue ownership" more generally. Under conditions of intense competition, both Islamists and secularists will seek to lay claim to anti-Americanism, given its salience in the Muslim world. For one side to unilaterally cede its association with this issue would prove too politically costly. By comparison, in the American context, Grimmer (2010) finds that Senators from both parties engage on many of the same topics when these issues become salient. He argues that politicians pay a price for not engaging at all on a politically salient issue even when the opposing party "owns" that issue. This contrasts with previous expectations suggesting that Democrats and Republicans should emphasize different topics, each favoring the issues on which they are advantaged but their opponents are less well regarded (Petrocik, 1996). While one party may enjoy an advantage over the other on a particular dimension, neither side can afford to abandon any of these salient, all-purpose issues altogether. In the context of the Muslim world, even if neither side gains much political capital by invoking anti-Americanism, allowing the other side to enjoy a dominant association with the issue would be a strategic blunder. The U.S., through its activities overseas, provides a generalized environment of grievance which allows for political mobilization against America to take place.

One factor contributing to the intensity of elite competition along secular-religious lines is the baseline level of religiosity in a country's Muslim population. In countries with fewer religious individuals, there is less mass support for Islamist elites, which leads to a more competitive political environment. A second factor is the size of a country's Muslim population as a share of the total population. As Muslims increasingly dominate domestic politics, the potential stakes of secular-Islamist competition increase, leading anti-American messages voiced by Muslim leaders to be more prevalent in political discourse. In countries with relatively smaller Muslim populations, there may be less diversity of opinion within the Muslim community as a result of the ease of communicating ideas within a smaller group, or pressure to conform politically in the face of competition with another religious group. Countries with fewer Muslims are also less anti-American overall, which may affect the opinions of Muslims in those countries.

### Implications for observed levels of anti-Americanism

Our theory offers an explanation for the variation across countries in observed levels of Muslim anti-Americanism. If anti-Americanism is a manifestation of elite opinion leadership, then anti-American attitudes should be most widespread in countries where elites from across the political spectrum have incentives to promote grievances against the United States. Intense competition between political elites along Islamist-secular lines provides these incentives, making it advantageous for elites to foment anti-American sentiment for their own political gain. The outcome of this elite-led process is what we contend survey researchers are largely detecting when they ask individual Muslims their opinion of the United States.

The theory also makes predictions about individual-level differences in anti-Americanism *within* countries. If a country's Islamist leaders are especially anti-American in their rhetoric, then their religiously-observant followers will receive and internalize those considerations, and accordingly report stronger anti-American views to public opinion researchers. Where and when secular-nationalist elites follow suit in expressing anti-American sentiments, their followers will echo such attitudes. We hypothesize that the magnitude of the individual-level effect of religiosity will therefore depend on the context, with religiosity affecting opinions more strongly in less-competitive countries. In addition, if the underlying mechanism that we have proposed to link elite behavior to mass attitudes is correct, then we should find that depictions of the United States in the domestic mass media will be predominantly negative in highly competitive countries, but neutral or even positive in less competitive countries.

## Multilevel statistical analysis of Muslim public opinion

We begin our analysis by considering the determinants of anti-American attitudes at both the national and individual level using public opinion survey data collected by the Pew Global Attitudes Project (2007). The 2007 GAP study interviewed nearly 13,000 Muslim respondents in 21 countries with significant Muslim populations, spanning a geographically, economically, and culturally diverse range (Figure 1). Country-level sample sizes range from 34 in Kenya to 1,930 in Pakistan. Although individual attitudes are not the only way in which Muslim anti-Americanism can be expressed, and anti-Americanism itself may be difficult to isolate in a survey-based research (Katzenstein and Keohane, 2007), we consider responses to the GAP study to provide the most reliable cross-national measure of opinions about America at a single point in time. Public opinion survey research based on random sampling is a widely accepted approach to data collection in political science (Brady, 2000).

Pew has fielded a Global Attitudes survey in every year from 2002 to 2010, but the 2007 study that we analyze is the most comprehensive of the entire series.[6] Other than in 2003—coinciding with the United States' invasion of Iraq—levels of opposition to the United States in Muslim countries have proven to be extremely consistent from year to year (Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2009). The variation, instead, is found *across* countries in their long-term, baseline levels of anti-Americanism. As Chiozza (2007, 125) observes, the negative

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[6]For example, of our 21 study countries, only Jordan, Pakistan, and Turkey were surveyed in all nine years. Even when certain countries were surveyed in multiple years, the wording of the GAP questionnaire itself changed from year to year.

response among Muslims to the 2003 invasion was "a momentary reaction to the exceptional circumstances of the Iraq War rather than a structural shift in the popular perceptions of the United States." By 2004, Muslim perceptions of the United States had returned to pre-war, 2002 levels, and have remained mostly steady since that time. This empirical regularity is also consistent with Schatz (2008, 9) who observes that "attitudes about the United States do not change in lock-step with U.S. policies. Rather, they become sedimented in domestic cultures, institutions, and contexts."

## Measurement of political competition and religiosity

The intensity of conflict between Islamist and secular groups is difficult to operationalize in a consistent manner, cross-nationally—especially in countries that do not have traditionally consolidated democratic institutions.[7] We derive measures of secular-Islamist competitiveness and individual-level religiosity from responses to the 2007 GAP survey. In seventeen countries, Muslim respondents were asked if they perceived a "struggle in our country between groups who want to modernize the country and Islamic fundamentalists" (Q75).[8] We assume that such perceptions represent an accurate assessment of the actual level of struggle between the two groups. The primary country-level measure of competitiveness is taken to be the proportion of individuals in each country who respond affirmatively to this question.

To measure religiosity, we analyze three questions from the GAP survey that focus on Muslim respondents' level of religious commitment: whether they pray five times a day (Q114), fast on most or all days of Ramadan and other religious holidays (Q116), and view religion as very important in their lives (Q117).[9] From the responses to these questions, we create a dichotomous variable for piety, considering individuals who answer yes to all three questions to be the most highly religious. Five times a day prayer is a particularly good standard by which to judge an individual's level of religiosity because while the mid-day, afternoon, sunset and evening prayers tend to take place at times when most individuals are typically awake, the dawn, or *fajr*, prayer takes place at a time when most individuals are asleep.[10] Willingness to rise for the dawn prayer demonstrates a high level of religious commitment.

The overall level of religiosity in each country—which, as described above, represents a secondary measure of secular-religious competition—is calculated as the proportion of a country's Muslim respondents who are highly religious. More competitive countries are

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[7]Measuring political competition more directly, for example, with the number of Islamist versus secular politicians in parliament or their associated vote margins is not effective for two primary reasons. First, many of the countries being analyzed are not democracies so it is unclear if election results present a full picture of the relative balance of political power between secular and Islamist organizations. In addition, societal actors may not be seeking political office, *per se*, as an end goal. Indeed, Islamist activists frequently see their objectives as being much broader than political representation through existing institutions. Their goals often focus on a broader Islamization of society.

[8]The question was not asked in Ghana, India, Kenya, or Uganda.

[9]These questions were not asked in Ghana, India, Kenya, Morocco, or Uganda.

[10]Take for example prayer times in Cairo on October 23, 2009. The latter four prayers were to take place at 11:41 am, 2:59 pm, 5:28 pm and 6:45 pm—all times during the waking hours of most individuals. The dawn prayer, on the other hand, was scheduled to take place at 4:28 am.

those with lower average levels of religiosity. Values of this variable in our sample range from 36 percent in Turkey to 90 percent in Kuwait.

## A hierarchical model of anti-Americanism

To test both the individual- and country-level implications of our theory, we model responses to the dependent variable, attitude towards the United States, using a Bayesian hierarchical model containing individual-level and country-level components.[11] The structure of the survey data places individual respondents within countries. The hierarchical model simultaneously estimates the individual-level effects of religiosity on anti-American sentiment within each study country, as well as the country-level determinants of variation in the magnitude and level of this effect across countries. Hierarchical models are particularly well-suited to capturing such "causal heterogeneity" (Western, 1998). We prefer the hierarchical specification to alternative approaches to modeling multi-level data (e.g., the two-stage method described by Achen (2005) and Lewis and Linzer (2005)) because it represents a single, coherent model of the hypothesized data generating process, and has the further, practical advantage of being able to "borrow strength" from information contained in countries with large samples (such as Pakistan) to improve within-country estimates for countries with small samples (such as Kenya). The Bayesian specification of the model also enables us to retain in our analysis all countries and individuals for whom some (but not all) of the variables of interest are unobserved, by imputing missing observations as part of the estimation process (Jackman, 2000).

Responses to the four-category dependent variable are coded $y_i = 1$ for very favorable attitudes towards the U.S., through $y_i = 4$ for very unfavorable attitudes towards the U.S. Higher numbered responses thus reveal stronger anti-American sentiment. The probability that a respondent $i = 1 \ldots N$ living in country $j[i] = 1 \ldots J$ gives any of the four possible responses is a function of their underlying (unobserved) level of anti-Americanism, $\theta_i$, and can be represented using a four-category ordered multinomial logit,

$$
\begin{aligned}
\Pr(y_i = 1) &= \ \text{logit}^{-1}(c_{1j[i]} - \theta_i) \\
\Pr(y_i = 2) &= \ \text{logit}^{-1}(c_{2j[i]} - \theta_i) - \text{logit}^{-1}(c_{1j[i]} - \theta_i) \\
\Pr(y_i = 3) &= \ \text{logit}^{-1}(c_{3j[i]} - \theta_i) - \text{logit}^{-1}(c_{2j[i]} - \theta_i) \\
\Pr(y_i = 4) &= \ 1 - \text{logit}^{-1}(c_{3j[i]} - \theta_i).
\end{aligned}
$$

The parameters $c_{1j}$, $c_{2j}$, and $c_{3j}$ denote country-specific cutpoints separating the four observable $y$-outcomes along the underlying $\theta$-continuum. In substantive terms, the cutpoints reflect the distribution of the four responses to the anti-Americanism question within each country, $j$.

We specify the individual-level model for each respondent's underlying anti-Americanism $\theta_i$ as a function of whether the respondent is highly religious, $x_i$. The baseline level of anti-Americanism among non-religious individuals in the respondent's country is represented as

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[11]A reference for applications of Bayesian hierarchical models in social scientific research is Gelman and Hill (2007). Our particular model is related to approaches described by Albert and Chib (1993) and Hedeker and Gibbons (1994).

$\beta_{j[i]}^0$, and the added effect of religiosity in that country is denoted $\beta_{j[i]}^1$. Then,

$$\theta_i = \beta_{j[i]}^0 + \beta_{j[i]}^1 x_i.$$

As described above, the religiosity variable is coded such that $x_i = 1$ if the respondent prays five times daily, fasts on most or all religious holidays, and states that religion is very important; otherwise, $x_i = 0$. If an individual is not highly religious then $\theta_i = \beta_{j[i]}^0$; otherwise, $\theta_i = \beta_{j[i]}^0 + \beta_{j[i]}^1$. Larger estimated values of $\beta_j^0$ indicate higher overall levels of anti-Americanism in a country. Larger values of $\beta_j^1$ reveal a greater difference between the level of anti-Americanism among religious individuals and non-religious individuals in each country. We expect that in general, the estimated $\beta_j^1 > 0$, indicating that religious individuals are more anti-American than those who are non-religious.

At the country level, we model the $\beta_j$ parameters as a function of the intensity of reformer-Islamist struggle in a country, $z_{1j}$, the percentage of each country's population that is Muslim, $z_{2j}$, and, out of concern for potential confounding effects, the (logged) per capita GDP in each country, $z_{3j}$. In a series of robustness checks, we later consider a variety of alternative country-level confounders, described in greater detail below. We expect that, on average, wealthier countries will be more anti-American, as individuals in these countries are more directly exposed to American cultural exports while at the same time relying less on U.S. foreign aid.[12] Although we see no particular reason to expect wealth to be associated with the size of a country's Muslim population, it may be the case that political competition intensifies both as a direct result of countries becoming more rich, and as an indirect effect of economic development leading to lower levels of religiosity (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005). The upper-level (country) model is specified as

$$\beta_j^0 = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} z_{1j} + \gamma_{02} z_{2j} + \gamma_{03} z_{3j} + \varepsilon_0$$

and

$$\beta_j^1 = \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11} z_{1j} + \gamma_{12} z_{2j} + \gamma_{13} z_{3j} + \varepsilon_1,$$

with normally-distributed country-level error terms $\varepsilon_0 \sim N(0, \sigma_0^2)$ and $\varepsilon_1 \sim N(0, \sigma_1^2)$. The $\gamma$ coefficients are estimated by the model.

The final step is to select prior distributions for the unknown parameters. We employ non-informative priors in every instance. We place uniform prior distributions over $\sigma_0$ and $\sigma_1$, vague normal priors on the $\gamma$ coefficients, and fix the central cutpoint $c_{2j} = 0$ in each country for identifiability. This constrains country-specific cutpoints $c_{1j} < 0$ and $c_{3j} > 0$. We model both sets of cutpoints as random effects drawn from normal distributions truncated at zero, with vague prior distributions on the respective means $\mu_{c_1}$ and $\mu_{c_3}$ and standard deviations $\varsigma_{c_1}$ and $\varsigma_{c_3}$. Because $x$ contains missing values, we assume it Bernoulli distributed; likewise,

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[12]Data for countries' Muslim population share are obtained from the Pew Research Center (2009) *Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Muslim Population*. Measures of GDP are obtained from the World Bank's World Development Indicators database (The World Bank, 2008), in current U.S. dollars. We use 2005 data because measures of per capita GDP are unavailable for the Palestinian territories in 2006 and 2007. The correlations between logged per capita GDP in 2005, 2006 and 2007 for the remaining 20 countries are all greater than 0.99. The per capita dollar value of a country's imports of goods from the U.S. is highly correlated with levels of per capita GDP.
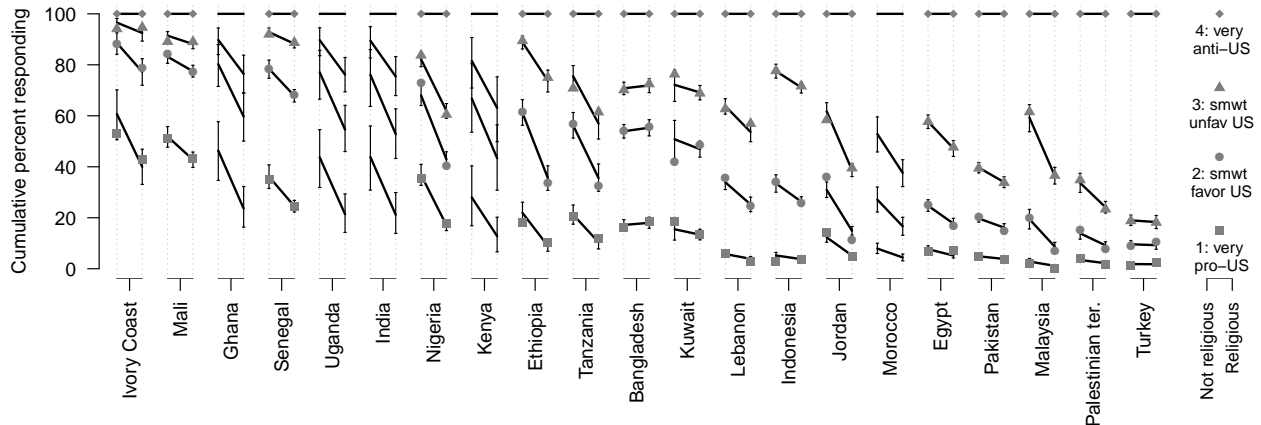
Figure 2: *Verifying the fit of the model to the data. Observed levels of anti-Americanism among religious and non-religious individuals in each country are plotted side-by-side as grey points. Fitted probabilities based on the multilevel model are indicated by black lines within each country. Error bars show 80% posterior credible intervals around each predicted probability.*

we model $z_1$ as beta distributed since it is missing for a subset of countries. The model is estimated using WinBUGS version 1.4.3 (Lunn et al., 2000) and the R package R2WinBUGS (Sturtz, Ligges and Gelman, 2005) implemented in R version 2.12.1 (R Development Core Team, 2009).[13]

## Data analysis and model results

In nearly every study country, anti-American attitudes are more prevalent among highly religious Muslims than among those who are more secular. The results of the multilevel model estimate by how much, at the individual level, religiosity increases anti-Americanism. Values of the mean posterior $\beta_j^1$ range from -0.1 in Bangladesh to 1.1 in India, generally consistent with our prediction that $\beta_j^1 > 0$. Bangladesh is the only country in which this estimate is less than zero; even so, zero is included in the 95% highest posterior density interval. We verify the close fit of the model to the data by plotting, for both religious and non-religious Muslims in each study country, the cumulative proportion of respondents holding each of the four possible attitudes towards the United States (Figure 2). Countries are sorted by increasing levels of anti-Americanism, captured by estimated values of $\beta_j^0$. The estimates from the fitted model, as well as measures of uncertainty, match the observed pattern in the data extremely well.[14] The consistent downward trends indicate that highly religious individuals are less likely to report pro-U.S. attitudes.

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[13]Posterior parameter densities are simulated using three parallel chains of 5,000 iterations each, discarding the first half. Convergence was achieved with $\hat{R} \approx 1$ for all parameters.

[14]Respondents in countries with missing data (for example, Ghana) were asked the anti-Americanism question but not the religiosity questions. Based on those countries' other observed country-level covariates, we are still able to estimate both $\beta_j^0$ and $\beta_j^1$, albeit with much greater uncertainty.

There are undoubtedly other predictors of anti-Americanism at the individual level that matter in addition to religiosity—and it is probable that, like religiosity, the effects of these variables vary by country. Our claim is not that religiosity is the *only* significant determinant of anti-American attitudes; rather, that its predicted effect is borne out by the available empirical evidence. If, in certain countries, the political alignments of individual Muslims coincide with other social or demographic characteristics, then to the extent that opposing political elites differ in their attitudes towards the United States, this divergence should appear in the attitudes of their respective supporters as well. The experience of Muslims in Lebanon demonstrates this point. In Lebanon, the Islamist bloc is strongly aligned with the Shi'a community, and the secular Muslim leadership is aligned with the Sunni community. Just as we would expect, in the 2007 GAP study, 93 percent of Lebanese Shi'a reported an unfavorable attitude towards the U.S., while only 52 percent of Lebanese Sunnis did the same.

At the country level, as the intensity of secular-Islamist conflict increases, the overall level of anti-Americanism among Muslims in a country also increases (Figure 3). This variable provides an explanation for the low levels of anti-Americanism observed in Ethiopia and West Africa, and is robust to alternative explanations discussed below. In our model, the country-level effect of competitiveness is captured by substantively large coefficients $\gamma_{01}$ (Table 1). The finding holds whether we use as our measure of competitiveness the perceived level of struggle between secular and Islamist elites (Model 1), or the total religiosity of the Muslim population (Model 2). Recall that more religious populations are associated with *less* intense secular-Islamist competition. The top part of Table 1 also confirms that anti-Americanism is more widespread among Muslims in countries where Muslims comprise a larger share of the population. Where Muslims represent a smaller proportion of the population, anti-Americanism is lower, on average. A country's level of per capita GDP does not confound either of these two predicted effects.

The cross-country variation in the individual-level *effect* of religiosity on anti-American attitudes, captured by the estimated $\beta_j^1$ parameters, is also associated with levels of secular-Islamist competition and Muslim population share. This can be seen in the coefficients in the bottom part of Table 1. Although religious Muslims are more likely to hold an unfavorable opinion of the U.S., this effect is smaller in countries that are both more competitive and more Muslim overall—precisely where the high level of anti-American rhetoric reaches both religious and secular individuals. In such countries, while the difference between the two groups is smaller, the overall level of anti-Americanism is higher.

To more fully interpret the results of Model 1, we calculate and plot the predicted probability that a religious versus non-religious individual will hold an anti-American attitude in countries characterized by different values of the independent variables. We vary the percentage of Muslims in each country who see a reformer-Islamist struggle from 10% to 80%, slightly greater than the observed range among our study countries. We then consider hypothetical countries in which Muslim population share is near its minimum (10%), mean (65%), and maximum (100%). Because logged per capita GDP has a relatively small effect, we hold it fixed at its mean value, approximately $1,000. At each combination of the country-level covariates, the probability of reporting a somewhat or very unfavorable attitude towards the United States is

$$\widehat{\Pr}(y_i = 3) + \widehat{\Pr}(y_i = 4) = 1 - \text{logit}^{-1}(-\hat{\theta}_i)$$

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| Country effect ($\beta^0$) | | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 | Model 6 | Model 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | $\hat{\gamma}_{00}$ | -3.2 (1.4) | -2.3 (1.4) | -2.7 (0.7) | -2.6 (0.9) | -1.9 (0.9) | -2.6 (0.8) | -3.2 (1.0) |
| Reformer-Islamist struggle | $\hat{\gamma}_{01}$ | 2.5 (1.5) | | 2.4 (1.3) | 2.8 (1.5) | 2.5 (1.4) | 2.8 (1.4) | 2.8 (1.3) |
| Total religiosity | $\hat{\gamma}_{01}$ | | -2.7 (1.2) | | | | | |
| Proportion Muslim | $\hat{\gamma}_{02}$ | 1.8 (0.8) | 1.7 (0.8) | 1.8 (0.8) | 2.0 (0.8) | 1.9 (0.8) | 1.9 (0.8) | 2.0 (0.8) |
| GDP per capita, log | $\hat{\gamma}_{03}$ | 0.2 (0.2) | 0.4 (0.2) | | | | | |
| U.S. imports per capita, log | $\hat{\gamma}_{03}$ | | | 0.2 (0.1) | | | | |
| U.S. foreign economic aid | $\hat{\gamma}_{03}$ | | | | 0.5 (1.2) | | | |
| Proximity to Jerusalem | $\hat{\gamma}_{03}$ | | | | | -0.2 (0.2) | | |
| Military expenditure, % of GDP | $\hat{\gamma}_{03}$ | | | | | | 0.1 (0.2) | |
| Level of political rights | $\hat{\gamma}_{03}$ | | | | | | | 0.2 (0.2) |
| | | | | | | | | |
| **Piety effect ($\beta^1$)** | | | | | | | | |
| Constant | $\hat{\gamma}_{10}$ | 1.3 (0.6) | 1.1 (0.7) | 1.6 (0.4) | 1.6 (0.4) | 1.8 (0.4) | 1.6 (0.4) | 1.5 (0.5) |
| Reformer-Islamist struggle | $\hat{\gamma}_{11}$ | -1.4 (0.6) | | -1.3 (0.5) | -1.2 (0.6) | -1.2 (0.6) | -1.1 (0.6) | -1.1 (0.6) |
| Total religiosity | $\hat{\gamma}_{11}$ | | 0.9 (0.6) | | | | | |
| Proportion Muslim | $\hat{\gamma}_{12}$ | -0.9 (0.4) | -1.0 (0.4) | -0.8 (0.4) | -0.7 (0.4) | -0.8 (0.4) | -0.8 (0.4) | -0.8 (0.4) |
| GDP per capita, log | $\hat{\gamma}_{13}$ | 0.1 (0.1) | 0.0 (0.1) | | | | | |
| U.S. imports per capita, log | $\hat{\gamma}_{13}$ | | | 0.1 (0.1) | | | | |
| U.S. foreign economic aid | $\hat{\gamma}_{13}$ | | | | 0.1 (0.4) | | | |
| Proximity to Jerusalem | $\hat{\gamma}_{13}$ | | | | | 0.0 (0.1) | | |
| Military expenditure, % of GDP | $\hat{\gamma}_{13}$ | | | | | | 0.0 (0.1) | |
| Level of political rights | $\hat{\gamma}_{13}$ | | | | | | | 0.0 (0.1) |
| | | | | | | | | |
| **Cutpoint means** | $\hat{\mu}_{c_1}$ | -1.7 | -1.7 | -1.7 | -1.7 | -1.7 | -1.7 | -1.7 |
| | $\hat{\mu}_{c_3}$ | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.1 |
| **Country-level error terms** | $\hat{\sigma}_0$ | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| | $\hat{\sigma}_1$ | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 |

Table 1: *Hierarchical model coefficient estimates and posterior standard deviations, in parentheses. Dataset includes 12,831 respondents in 21 countries. Positive coefficients indicate variables that have an increasing effect on levels of anti-Americanism.*
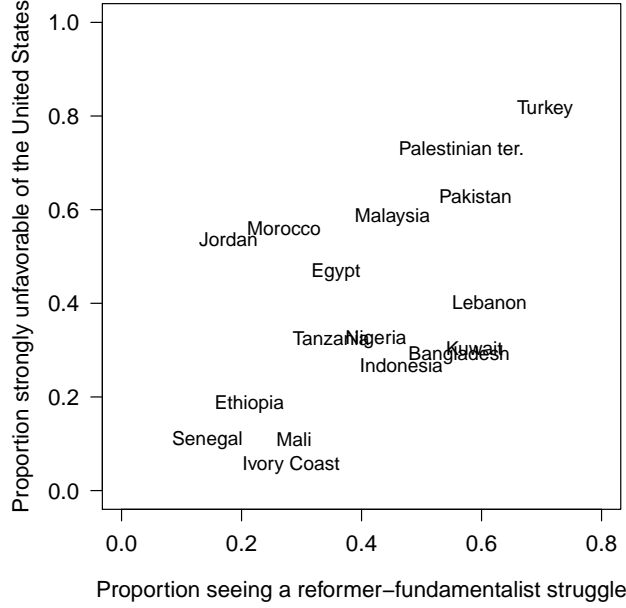
Figure 3: *Proportion of Muslims in each country reporting a "very unfavorable" opinion of the United States, versus proportion seeing a struggle between "groups who want to modernize the country and Islamic fundamentalists."*

where, for secular individuals ($x_i = 0$),

$$\hat{\theta}_i = \hat{\gamma}_{00} + \hat{\gamma}_{01} z_{1j[i]} + \hat{\gamma}_{02} z_{2j[i]} + \hat{\gamma}_{03} z_{3j[i]},$$

and for highly religious individuals ($x_i = 1$),

$$\hat{\theta}_i = (\hat{\gamma}_{00} + \hat{\gamma}_{10}) + (\hat{\gamma}_{01} + \hat{\gamma}_{11}) z_{1j[i]} + (\hat{\gamma}_{02} + \hat{\gamma}_{12}) z_{2j[i]} + (\hat{\gamma}_{03} + \hat{\gamma}_{13}) z_{3j[i]}.$$

These values are displayed in Figure 4. Anti-American attitudes are most prevalent when reformers and Islamists are most competitive and in countries that are predominantly Muslim.

For both religious and non-religious individuals, as the level of competition between secular and Islamist groups increases, so does the probability of reporting an unfavorable attitude of the United States. This is consistent with our assertion that the causes of Muslim anti-Americanism are primarily "instrumental" and have more to do with countries' domestic politics than with American culture or policy. From left to right, the combined effects of reformer-Islamist struggle and Muslim population share can explain variation of over *sixty percentage points* in the probability that a secular Muslim will hold an unfavorable attitude towards America. The effect of national context is smaller for religious Muslims, who are more anti-American regardless of circumstance.

Within countries, religious Muslims are consistently more anti-American than their less observant compatriots, although the magnitude of the individual-level piety effect varies by context. Religiosity matters less for explaining anti-Americanism when anti-Americanism is already high; in such locales, both secular and religious elites are expected to exploit anti-American grievances, and thus more- and less-religious Muslims both tend to share
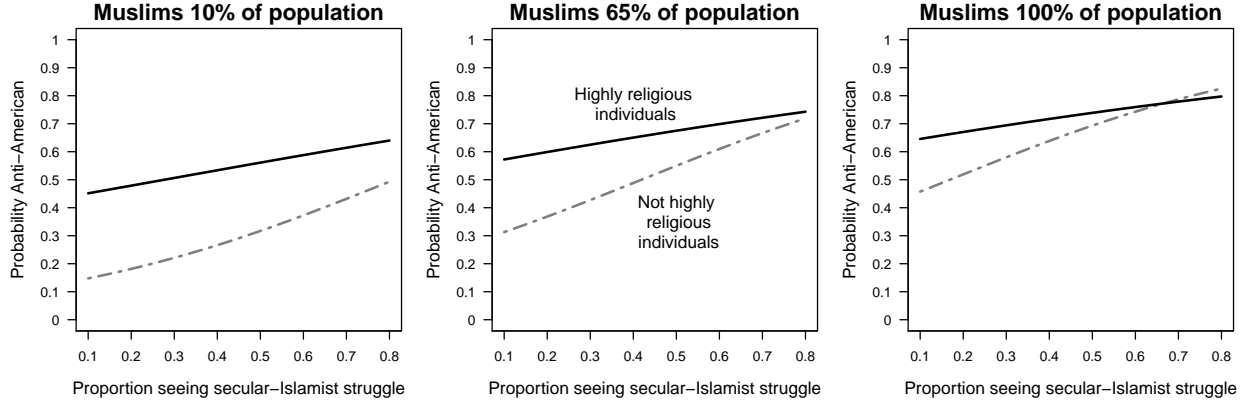
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Figure 4: *Predicted probabilities that religious and non-religious individuals will express anti-American sentiments, by national context: level of conflict between secular and Islamist elites, and percentage of the country's population that is Muslim. Muslims who are highly religious (solid line) are more anti-American than those who are less religious (dashed line).*

anti-American attitudes. As overall levels of anti-Americanism decrease, however, religious Muslims remain relatively anti-American, whereas more secular Muslims become increasingly favorable towards the United States. The gap between predicted levels of anti-Americanism for pious and secular individuals is greatest when competition is lowest. Because low overall levels of religiosity are associated with more intense secular-Islamist competition, Figure 4 illustrates exactly how more religious countries are less anti-American even though more religious individuals are more anti-American.

We perform a series of robustness checks to rule out other potential sources of confounding in the country-level model. Instead of per capita GDP, we substitute into the model as $z_{3j}$ a measure of the "direct" exposure of Muslims in each country to the United States, calculated as the (logged) per capita dollar value of a country's imports of goods from the U.S. in 2007. In our sample, wealthy countries import much more on a per capita basis from the U.S., and our expectation is that anti-American sentiment will increase with greater U.S. cultural and economic presence. Another potential confounding factor is the amount of U.S. foreign economic aid received by a country. We further investigate the effect of a country's geographic proximity to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, operationalized as the distance in thousands of miles from each country's capital to Jerusalem. The increased salience of this conflict may begin to explain the high levels of anti-Americanism observed in Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, and, of course, the Palestinian territories. It might also partially explain the low levels of anti-Americanism observed among Muslims in sub-Saharan Africa. Finally, we test for any effects on a country's level of anti-Americanism associated with domestic military expenditure and level of political rights.[15] We considered the number of active duty U.S. troops stationed in

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[15]Data on the total dollar value of imports from the United States in 2007 are available from the Foreign Trade Division, U.S. Census Bureau; http://tse.export.gov. Population data and military expenditures as a percent of GDP are obtained from The World Bank (2008) World Development Indicators for the year 2007. U.S. foreign economic aid in 2007 is measured in historical dollars in units of billions, and is taken from the U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants Obligations and Loan Authorizations (Greenbook) database, U.S.

each country—which might theoretically increase *or* decrease anti-Americanism—but this variable exhibited almost no cross-national variation in our sample in 2006-2007.[16]

In each of these alternative model specifications, the country-level effect of secular-Islamist competition on anti-Americanism is robust. Redrawing Figure 4 replacing the perceived level of struggle in a country with that country's total level of religiosity does not significantly affect the overall pattern; nor does substituting in any of the other country-level control variables for per capita GDP. We note that in Models 2 and 3, the specification leads to large effects associated with wealth and imports from the U.S., in the predicted directions. The quantitative evidence matches our theoretical expectations if it is the case that competition between Islamists and moderates intensifies anti-American rhetoric; and individuals follow elite cues, leading religious Muslims to be more anti-American.

## Comparative case study evidence

We now turn to comparative case studies and media content analysis of news reports and editorials about the United States in three predominantly Muslim countries: Turkey, Morocco, and Senegal. To establish that the causal mechanism we have described is consistent with the experiences of these countries, we assess both 1) the nature and intensity of secular-Islamist political competition in each country; and 2) the public portrayal of the U.S. by local leaders and other political elites. In choosing these three countries for in-depth analysis, we follow the guidance of King, Keohane and Verba (1994, 140) that "the best 'intentional' design selects observations to ensure variation in the explanatory variable... without regard to the values of the dependent variable." Turkey and Senegal are among the most dissimilar countries in the Muslim world with respect to their level of contestation between secular and Islamist political groups: Turkey is highly competitive along that dimension; Senegal is not (Figure 3). In the 2007 GAP study, 71 percent of Turkish Muslims saw a struggle between modernizers and Islamic fundamentalists, while only 36 percent were highly religiously observant. In Senegal, by contrast, only 14 percent of Muslims observed a reformer-fundamentalist struggle, and 83 percent were highly religious. Morocco is an intermediate case. The population of all three countries is nearly entirely Muslim.

We expect that depictions of the United States in the Turkish press will be overwhelmingly negative, whereas the United States will receive a more balanced treatment in the Moroccan press, and relatively positive treatment in the Senegalese mass media. Preliminarily, we observe that in line with this expectation, levels of anti-American sentiment are extremely high in Turkey, quite low in Senegal, with Morocco falling in between (Figure 1). We do not deny that mass opinion about the U.S. most likely impacts elite opinion, as well as being impacted by it in return. That said, if our analysis did *not* find elite opinion patterns in the manner we have described, we would count this as evidence against our theory.

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Agency for International Development; http://gbk.eads.usaidallnet.gov. Our measure of political rights is the 2007 Freedom House score; http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=372&year=2007.

[16]According to the military personnel statistics of the U.S. Department of Defense Information Analysis Division, no more than a few dozen U.S. troops were stationed in countries other than Egypt, Kuwait, and Turkey.

## Senegal: Religious but not Islamist, and pro-American

Sanneh (1997, 183) calls secularism and religiosity the two "massive but uneven influences" on West African politics during the post-colonial period. Like many African countries that gained independence in the 1950s and 1960s, Senegal inherited a secular state structure following its period of colonial rule by France. The governing apparatus in the newly independent Senegalese state came to be dominated by a narrow elite of Francophone technocrats and intellectuals. Nominally Muslim but secular in their outlook and orientation, this elite was bound together by what O'Brien (2003, 53) calls the powerful "secularizing" influence of French language, culture and education. A university education in French became a prerequisite for employment in the state bureaucracy though less than twenty percent of the population spoke French with any degree of fluency and less than one percent used French exclusively.

The vast majority of Senegalese themselves tend to be highly religious, identifying with one of a handful of Islamic Sufi brotherhoods. Sufism is generally described as mystical Islamic belief and practice. The system of political compromise that emerged in Senegal brought together the secular Francophone elite with the leaders of the Sufi brotherhoods. Recognizing the need for an intermediary between the state and the masses, the secular elite worked closely with these Islamic leaders (e.g., Haynes, 1996; Villalón, 1995), frequently demonstrating their acquiescence and, in some cases, submission (Dieye, 2009). The leaders of the Sufi orders, by allowing the secular elite to run the state, created a system of coexistence for the religious brotherhoods that obviated the need for political competition within the set of Sufi groups. This is not to say that there does not exist tension between the secular elite and the Sufi Brotherhoods. Forms of "symbolic confrontation" (O'Brien, 2003) over issues like family law and the inclusion of religious instruction in education continue to demonstrate the relevance of the secular-religious conflict in Senegalese daily life (Mbow, 2009). Despite this, the citizens of Senegal are overwhelmingly pious Muslims living in a country whose political system is dominated by a narrow, secular bureaucratic elite.

In recent years, an Islamist movement has emerged that has called for the adoption of Islamic law in Senegal (Loimeier, 1996). These individuals have been described as "urban fundamentalists" (O'Brien, 2003, 58) for whom criticism of secular values is a "favorite sport" (Mbow, 2009). The influence of these groups is fairly limited, however, as the Sufi brotherhoods continue to dominate Senegalese associational life (Clark, 1999). Senegalese citizens, then, can be broadly thought of as belonging to one of three groupings: a very small minority of well-educated Francophone secularists, a nascent urban-based fundamentalist Islamist movement, and an overwhelming majority of individuals belonging to one of a small set of Sufi brotherhoods.[17] A high level of religious observance characterizes the latter two groups, which represent the vast majority of Senegalese.

Internationally, Senegal has cultivated and currently enjoys a very strong relationship with the United States. Over the past decade, numerous American politicians and dignitaries have visited Senegal, and have been received favorably. There is little to be gained in the context of Senegalese politics by criticizing the United States; as such, Muslims in Senegal are among the most pro-American in the world.

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[17]Villalón (1995, 238) points out that there are no clearly distinguishable boundaries between Sufi and and reformist Islamist organizations in Senegal but rather that these groups exist on a continuum.

## Turkey: The most anti-American country in the world

Turkey is a relatively wealthy yet secular Muslim nation with an intensely competitive multi-party democratic political system, that, since at least 2005, has been among the most anti-American countries in the world (Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2009). How did this come to be, especially in light of the fact that Turkey and the U.S. have enjoyed cooperative political and security ties? The modern history of Turkey begins with Mustapha Kemal Ataturk's extensive secularization of the nation as it transitioned from the failed Ottoman Empire to the contemporary Turkish nation-state (Hunter, 1998, 85). Mainstream anti-American attitudes first began to emerge early in the Cold War, but were largely confined to the Turkish left, who strongly opposed the nature and extent of U.S. involvement in Turkish political affairs. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Turkish right aligned itself with the United States against international Communism (Criss, 2002).

With the decline of Cold War bipolarity, however, the salience of the religious-secular issue dimension intensified in Turkey, starting in the 1980s and continuing through the present (Criss, 2002; Taspinar, 2005). According to Hale (2002, 178), the political poles in contemporary Turkey are Kemalist secularism and political Islamism, and this cleavage has superseded the traditional left-right socioeconomic divide. Kalaycioglu (1999), using public opinion data from the World Values Survey, found that in the 1990s, individuals' religiosity corresponded closely with party preferences, whereas social class and economic satisfaction mattered little. The intensity of the religious-secular cleavage in Turkey is reflected not only in Turkey's formal party organizations, but also in the substance of a number of highly prominent national debates about the role of religion in Turkish public and political life—for example, concerning state policies prohibiting women from attending schools or universities while wearing the Islamic headscarf.

Anti-Americanism in Turkey is now embraced by all segments of Turkish society, and both secular nationalists and Islamists engage in stridently anti-American rhetoric (Taspinar, 2005; Cohen, 2007; Guney, 2008). Pollock (2005) describes anti-Americanism in Turkey as a "combination of old leftism and new Islamism" where "just about every politician and media outlet (secular and religious) preaches an extreme combination of America- and Jew-hatred that... voluntarily goes far further than anything found in most of the Arab world." Islamists, such as the elite associated with the Justice and Development Party, have been relentlessly and publicly negative in their portrayal of the U.S. (Cagaptay, 2008). Likewise, anti-imperialist rhetoric is a main theme of secular-nationalists, who argue that Turkey is under a "lethal threat" from both the U.S. and religious Muslims (Akyol, 2008).[18] Secularist rallies, some of which draw millions of supporters, frequently feature demonstrators carrying anti-American placards (Somer, 2007; Zaman, 2007). Secular nationalist intellectuals also argue that American policies in the Middle East are part of a "neo-colonial" effort to establish hegemony in the region: for example, that a U.S. bombing in Iraq triggered a major earthquake in Turkey in 2003; that the U.S. is keeping Turkey out of Iraq to ensure Turkey is not able to exploit Iraq's oil resources; and that Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein

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[18]This is not to say that there is a single form of secularism in Turkey. See Yavuz (2009, 153) for more on these important distinctions.

were both on the American payroll (Cagaptay, 2004).[19] Pollock (2005) similarly relates that the Islamist newspaper *Yeni Şafak*, and the mainstream secular paper *Hürriyet*, are both rife with conspiracy theories, including how U.S. forces in Iraq have been harvesting the organs of dead Iraqis for sale in the U.S.; and how secret American nuclear testing was actually responsible for the Southeast Asian tsunami.

## Morocco: Muslim consensus, continued secular influence

Religious and secular political organizations exist simultaneously in contemporary Morocco. The dominant religiously-oriented trends include both militant and moderate Islamist groups as well as a broad-based Sufi movement that mirrors the "vocabulary and structures" of Morocco's monarchy (Zeghal, 2008, xix). Secular Moroccans—many of whom graduated from a parallel Francophone educational system and are associated with left-leaning political organizations—are politically influential but fewer in number than Moroccans with a more religious worldview (Zeghal, 2008, 61;80).

The relative balance between secular and religious trends has led scholars to argue that there exists a "Muslim consensus" in Morocco where Islam "animates the nation's spiritual life and anchors its social existence" (Entelis, 1989, 11-12). At least three significant political groups exist within this consensus: moderate Islamists, radical Islamists and individuals associated with local Sufi movements (Zeghal, 2008, xix). According to one analyst of Moroccan politics, supporters of a moderate interpretation of Islam—associated with the Justice and Development Party (PJD)—enjoy a near majority of supporters, as evidenced by public opinion polling (Sater, 2010, 1). Islamic moderates associated with the PJD use parliament as a platform for opposing symbols of Morocco's declining moral values, such as participation in the Miss World contest (Zeghal, 2008, 201). Radical Islamists disagree with their more moderate counterparts primarily on a tactical dimension. These individuals see PJD activity in parliament, for example, as an exercise in futility, and prefer to directly attack what they perceive to be a secular state and political society (Zeghal, 2008, 201). Islamist activists of both types have been sharply critical of Western-influenced elites who are believed to be "steering the country toward secular values and Westernization that distance it from Arab and Islamic roots" (Shahin, 1994, 169).[20]

In Morocco, there exists a complex—and some might argue uniquely Moroccan[21]— relationship between religion and political authority. Morocco's king, who claims descendence from the prophet, is the "commander of the faithful;" and although state institutions have a secular quality, the monarchy itself remains a key religious institution in the country (Munson, 1993, 121). Political authority in Morocco also reflects what Hammoudi (1997, 42) calls a powerful "structural schema," whereby the Moroccan king is the master-patron

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[19]Turkey's media environment has also changed in the last twenty years, affecting how elites influence public opinion. While in the past, the Turkish citizenry was largely rural with a single television channel and few media outlets, increasingly Turkish citizens are subject to a variety of elite perspectives (Taspinar, 2005). New media outlets and particularly the popularity of television have emerged as tremendously important in shaping opinion (Gunes-Ayata and Ayata, 2001, 105).

[20]This position is seen clearly in the rhetoric of influential Shaykh 'Abd al-Salam Yassin who has argued that the Moroccan nation is "torn between two worlds," the religious and the secular (Shahin, 1994, 170).

[21]See Munson (1993, 53) for one perspective.

of the community. According to Hammoudi (1997), this schema bears important similarities to the submissive relationship which characterizes Sufi religious masters' interactions with their disciples. Thus, while the Moroccan state may be viewed as not sufficiently religious by the Islamist right, supporters of the monarchy associate the religious authority of the king with the Sufi-style power relationships that have developed around monarchial institutions.

While the majority of Moroccans have converged in their support of religion in one form or another, there nonetheless exists a politically influential secular-minded minority of Moroccan political elite. In addition, there appears to exist significant social distance between religious and secular types in Moroccan society (Wilcox, 2008). Secular forces have historically identified with leftist political organizations that have their roots in the Arab socialist tradition (Zeghal, 2008, 63).[22] Moroccan socialist parties have typically drawn support from organized laborers, urban migrants, bureaucrats and university students (Waterbury, 1970, 196-7), though are increasingly losing ground to Islamist political organizations on university campuses and in urban areas (Boukhars, 2011, 92). Secular forces associated with Morocco's Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP) performed poorly, for example, in the 2007 parliamentary elections (Boukhars, 2011, 85; 90). Despite the recent decline in popularity of the secular left, elites associated with this trend continue to enjoy considerable influence both in media and government.

How do these political cleavages relate to the intensity of anti-American sentiment? According to one journalist, anti-Americanism in Morocco is espoused by everyone "from Islamist traditionalists to urban sophisticates" (Charney, 2005). This trend is evidenced by both large anti-U.S. protests organized by Islamic activists as well as strong anti-American sentiment expressed by alcohol-drinking elites. Public opinion data also suggests that college-educated Moroccans are cynical about the U.S. and its activities overseas. In this context "Moroccans echo their media's sentiments about the United States," suggesting elites have a particularly important role to play in influencing public opinion. The existence of a broad, religious Muslim consensus with a politically significant secularist presence in Morocco should—according to our theory—translate into lower levels of anti-American than observed in Turkey but higher levels than seen in Senegal.

## Comparative media content analysis

The balance between positive and negative portrayals of the United States by political elites in the domestic mass media is crucial to the process of mass opinion formation. We examine two leading national newspapers in each study country for mentions of the United States over a period of two to five months in advance of the 2007 GAP study. This interval was long enough to produce samples containing approximately 50 to 100 articles from each of the six sources.[23] Newspapers were chosen based upon the size of their circulation, and the condition that they be domestically produced. Each of the six newspapers were major enough to offer fully searchable online archives for the period under study. In Turkey, we examined *Zaman*, a moderate-conservative Islamist daily that is generally sympathetic to

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[22]Indeed, during the 1960s the most serious opposition faced by the Moroccan monarchy came from secular leftists (Munson, 1993, 149).

[23]The study period for each country was Turkey: January 1–March 31, 2007 (151 articles); Morocco: April 1–May 31, 2007 (182 articles); Senegal: January 1–May 31, 2007 (109 articles).
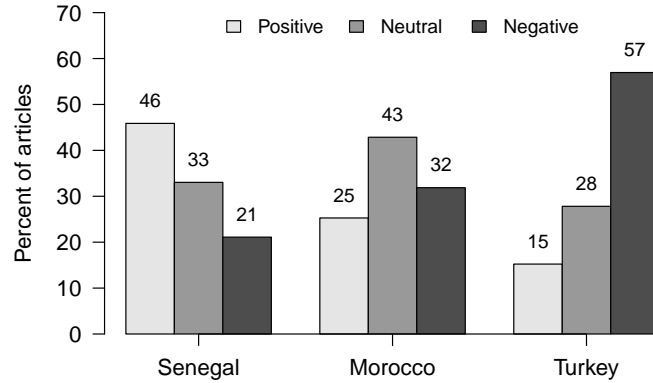
Figure 5: *Balance in the tone of media mentions (positive versus negative) of the United States in political and economic affairs in Senegal, Morocco, and Turkey.*

the policies of the AKP, and its primary competitor, the Kemalist-secularist *Hürriyet*. In Morocco, we searched *Aujourd'hui le Maroc* and *Le Matin du Sahara et du Maghreb*; both widely-circulated Francophone dailies. In Senegal, we examined issues of the government-owned *Le Soleil* and the independent *Sud Quotidien*, the two largest Francophone dailies in 2007 (Banks, Muller and Overstreet, 2007).

For articles discussing the role of the United States in either international or domestic political or economic affairs, we recorded whether the tone of the article was predominantly positive, negative, or neutral. This included both straight news items and editorials. The most common positive mentions of the United States referred to American-backed development programs, trade, or the role of the United States in international diplomacy. Negative mentions tended to focus on objections surrounding the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, or other criticisms of U.S. foreign policy. Cases in which America was referenced in a neither critical nor laudatory manner (for example, announcements of meetings between Senegalese leaders and U.S. officials) were coded as neutral.[24]

We tabulate the percentage of news articles in each country describing the United States in a positive, negative, or neutral manner (Figure 5). In Turkey, where secular-Islamist competition is most intense, more than *half* of the articles referenced the United States in an unfavorable manner. If anything, the tone of articles in the moderate *Hürriyet* (61% negative) was more critical than those in *Zaman* (52%). The opposite is the case in Senegal, where nearly half of the articles portrayed the U.S. in a favorable light. The content of *Le Soleil*, which we might expect to be more closely attuned to elite attitudes, was far more positive towards the U.S. (54%) than the independent *Sud Quotidien* (34%). Although this differing balance should affect mass attitudes—after all, nearly one-third of Senegalese Muslims do hold an unfavorable opinion of the United States—it also matches our expectation that Senegalese political elites are not predominantly anti-American in their public pronouncements. Finally, we find a balanced set of perspectives towards the United States in the major Moroccan press, with a tilt in the anti-American direction. Morocco is situated between Senegal and Turkey, with little difference in tone between *Le Matin* and *Aujourd'hui le Maroc*. Con-

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[24]A complete coding protocol and dataset including the names, dates, topics, and perspectives of coded articles is available from the authors upon request.

sistent with our expectations in countries with low secular-Islamist competition, people are exposed to one type of media environment, and in places with high competition people are exposed to a very different type of media environment. While our analysis does not address the issue of causal direction, a different pattern of evidence might have falsified our theory.

## Conclusion

Katzenstein and Keohane (2007, 12-13) describe anti-Americanism as a cognitive structure, or schema, that helps individuals to make sense of the world by creating a coherent narrative of historical and contemporary events. While anti-American attitudes are widely held by Muslims worldwide, the strength of those sentiments vary both at the individual level and at the country level. Under what conditions, then, are anti-American schemas more or less likely to arise?

We have argued that in Muslim communities around the world, a tendency to view the United States negatively is associated with the degree of political competition between secular and religious groups. The competitiveness of a country's political environment motivates elites to pursue anti-American rhetoric as a tactic to win political support. As Muslim societies are increasingly divided along secular-religious lines, competition between secular and Islamist elites intensifies. Much of the the anti-Americanism that opinion researchers find among Muslims around the world, arises, then, in response to the messages individuals hear from the Islamist or secular-nationalist political elites with whom they identify. In the Muslim world, Islamist leaders have taken the lead on fomenting anti-American sentiment to gain political advantage, which explains why pious Muslims tend to be more anti-American. Paz (2003) writes that anti-Americanism "has been a means to mobilize the Muslim world within the culture of global Jihad." But in many cases, secular nationalist segments of the Muslim elite follow suit. Empirical examination of attitudes toward the United States demonstrates that even though at the individual level, religiosity is associated with greater anti-Americanism, at the country level, the most anti-American countries are those in which the Muslim population is less religious (more divided) overall.

Explaining why many Muslims dislike America can offer perspective on the utility of the policy options available to the United States in mitigating American unpopularity abroad. Previous scholarly work has suggested that anti-Americanism based on attributes of America and Americans is less likely to moderate over time as it is based on deep-seated attitudes, in contrast to concerns about American policies which may be more mutable (Thornton, 1988, 13). As the Muslim reaction to the events of 2003 makes clear, the actions of the United States in the Islamic world do affect perceptions of and support for the U.S. as a global actor.

That said, it is extremely unclear how far a more balanced approach to American foreign policy-making would go towards eradicating anti-Americanism in the Islamic world. As Ajami (2003, 61) argues, "the United States need not worry about hearts and minds in foreign lands... If Muslims truly believe that their long winter of decline is the fault of the United States, no campaign of public diplomacy shall deliver them from that incoherence." Crockatt (2007, 94) similarly makes the case that anti-Americanism tells us more about those voicing such sentiment than it does about America. Our results indicate that to the extent Muslim anti-Americanism is an elite-led phenomenon, a certain degree of pessimism

is warranted towards the potential of American actions to lessen negative perceptions of the United States in the Islamic world.

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