

**A Muslim President?**

**Assessing the Causes and Consequences of Misperceptions about Barack Obama's Faith in  
the 2008 Presidential Election**

Geoffrey C. Layman  
University of Notre Dame  
glayman@nd.edu

Kerem Ozan Kalkan  
University of Oxford  
ozankalkan@gmail.com

John C. Green  
University of Akron  
green@uakron.edu

Prepared for presentation at for the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Toronto, Canada, September 3-6, 2009



There was a great irony to the 2008 election of Barack Obama as the nation's first African American President: In a nation long divided and defined by its struggle with race, Obama's race may not have been the most controversial and consequential aspect of his socio-demographic profile. Rather, as *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristoff argued in 2008, "the most monstrous bigotry in this election isn't about . . . race . . . . It's about religion" (Kristoff 2008a: 13), or, more specifically, the belief by a considerable number of Americans that Obama was, either secretly or openly, a Muslim. Despite his longstanding membership in the United Church of Christ, Obama's unique background—his foreign-sounding name and distinctively Muslim middle name, his African father's and Indonesian stepfather's ties to Islam, and his childhood spent partly outside of the United States—provided fodder for his political opponents to insinuate—through e-mail chains, media accounts, and at campaign rallies—that he was a Muslim (Bacon 2007; Beinart 2008; Manjoo 2008). Such efforts were met with some success. Surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center between March and mid-October of 2008 showed that the percentage of Americans believing Obama to be a Muslim consistently hovered very close to 12, while only 55 percent correctly identified him as a Christian in mid-October. Remarkably, the percentage of Pew respondents identifying Obama as Muslim had fallen only to 11 by March 2009, nearly two months into his presidency.<sup>1</sup>

As some journalists noted, raising doubts about Obama's faith was part of a larger strategy by his political foes to call his American-ness into question. Hillary Clinton's campaign operatives, for example, urged her "to exploit Obama's 'lack of American roots' and 'limited'

---

<sup>1</sup> The Pew surveys were conducted in March, June, September, and October of 2008 and in March 2009. The specific question asked was "Do you happen to know what Barack Obama's religion is? Is he Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, atheist, agnostic, or something else?" The lowest percentage choosing Muslim was 11.6 in June 2008 and the highest was 12.2 in September 2008. Between March 2008 and March 2009, identification of Obama as Muslim became associated increasingly with partisanship. In March 2008, 14 percent of Democrats and 10 percent of Republicans said that Obama was Muslim. By March 2009, this belief was held by 17 percent of Republicans, but only 7 percent of Democrats.

connection to “basic American values and culture,”” while Republican vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin lamented that Obama “is not a man who sees America the way that you and I see America” (quoted in Beinart 2008). From that perspective, connecting Obama to Islam might have been quite effective. As other research shows, Americans feel more negatively about Muslims than all but a handful of other social groups, and their views of Muslims are intimately connected to their attitudes toward other societal “outgroups” such as illegal immigrants, welfare recipients, and gays and lesbians (Kalkan, Layman, and Uslaner 2009). Thus, just as Democratic candidate Al Smith’s opponents linked his Catholicism to questions about his patriotism in 1928 and as Thomas Jefferson’s and Abraham Lincoln’s rivals used rumors about their racial heritage to raise doubts about their ties to mainstream society (Freedman 2008; Kristoff 2008a), Obama’s adversaries—particularly those not affiliated with any presidential campaign—used his supposed Muslim faith “to de-Americanize him” (Kristoff 2008b).

In this paper, we examine the factors that led some Americans to mistakenly identify Barack Obama as a Muslim and the consequences such misperceptions had for the 2008 presidential vote. Our focus is principally on the former, and we employ an original survey experiment conducted as part of the 2008 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) to assess the role that cues about Obama’s middle name, his time outside of the U.S. as a child, and his father’s and stepfather’s religions played in encouraging individuals to view him as a Muslim. In keeping with the literature on elite-level political persuasion and framing, we find that these cues were most likely to encourage identification of Obama as Muslim among individuals with low levels of political awareness and with political and social orientations that predisposed them toward negative evaluations of Obama and of Muslims. In contrast, the cues actually made individuals with high levels of awareness and with the opposite set of

predispositions less likely to believe that Obama was Muslim. We then assess the impact that believing Obama to be Muslim had on vote choice in 2008, finding that it had a significant negative effect on the likelihood of voting for Obama—one that was especially strong for individuals with unfavorable views of Muslims and Arabs.

### **Predispositions, Political Awareness, and the Impact of Political Communications**

A large body of research on public opinion shows that, due to the limited cognitive capacity and levels of political knowledge possessed by most citizens (Converse 1964; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996), their political orientations and behavior are highly susceptible to the effects of the frames and persuasive cues that are contained within political communications (e.g. Zaller 1992; Chong and Druckman 2007; Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Haider-Markel and Joslyn 2001; Nelson, Oxley, and Clawson 1997). While persuasive messages and efforts to frame political issues in certain ways generally are provided by political or media elites, they also may be found in communications between ordinary citizens (e.g. Gamson 1992), much like the e-mail chains designed to raise awareness of Barack Obama's supposed ties to Islam.

According to this literature, the two factors that are most important for conditioning the effects of frames and persuasive cues on individuals' opinions and behavior are their predispositions and their levels of political awareness. There is widespread agreement that citizens are more likely to accept a political message or respond to a political frame if its source is a person or a group that shares their political or social values and affiliations or if the content of the communication concurs with their predispositions (Zaller 1992; Haider-Markel and Joslyn 2001; Druckman 2001a, 2001b, 2001c; Brewer 2003; Barker 2005; Chong and Druckman 2007). In fact, when people perceive messages or messengers to be in conflict with their interests or

values, there may be negative persuasion effects, with the individuals believing or doing just the opposite of what the message suggests (Lupia 2002).

The predispositions most likely to have moderated the effects of messages suggesting that Barack Obama was a Muslim were partisan and ideological identification and affect toward Muslims and people of Arab ethnicity. Obama was the Democratic candidate for president, was clearly the more liberal of the two major candidates, and the messages linking him to the Muslim faith generally came from Republican and conservative sources.<sup>2</sup> Thus, Republican and conservative identifiers should have been more likely than Democrats and liberals to respond to such communications in a positive way by growing more likely to view Obama as a Muslim.

Moreover, as we argued above, the point of tying Obama to Islam was not to extol him as a follower of one of the great Abrahamic faiths. Rather, it was to cast doubt about his candidacy by linking him to a religion that was either assumed to be or explicitly described as fundamentally un-American and threatening to American values and security (Beinart 2008; Mosk 2008; Kristoff 2008b).<sup>3</sup> In other words, the messages insinuating that Obama was Muslim came from sources highly critical of Islam and offered clear anti-Muslim and anti-Arab perspectives. Thus, such messages should have been more successful in creating a perception

---

<sup>2</sup> For example, several journalists identified Andy Martin, a sometime Republican candidate for state office in Illinois, as the originator of the internet and e-mail rumor that Obama secretly is a Muslim (Manjoo 2008; Rutenberg 2008; Mosk 2008). The first web site to report the rumor apparently was a conservative site, FreeRepublic.com (Mosk 2008; Rutenberg 2008). The original report that Obama attended a madrassa (an Islamic religious school) came from *Insight*, a conservative online magazine, and the first television news network to reference the report was conservative-leaning Fox News (Bacon 2007; Carter 2007; Freedman 2008). Referencing Obama by his full name, including his middle name, Hussein, was most common among conservative radio and television commentators and Republican activists and political operatives (Bacon 2007; Beinart 2008; Cose 2008).

<sup>3</sup> For example, one of the e-mail messages spreading the rumor that Obama was Muslim said “The Muslims have said they plan on destroying the U.S. from the inside out. What better way to start than at the highest level, through the President of the United States, one of their own!” (quoted in Bacon 2007). Meanwhile, Andy Martin, who was reported to be the originator of the rumor that Obama was concealing his Muslim faith said that “it may well be that his concealment is meant to endanger Israel” (quoted in Rutenberg 2008).

that Obama was Muslim among individuals with negative views of Muslims and Arabs than among people with positive orientations toward those groups.

There is less scholarly agreement about the conditional effect of political sophistication on the influence of frames or persuasive cues. Some scholars suggest that these things work precisely because of citizens' low levels of substantive and contextual knowledge about politics, and they show that efforts at persuasion, framing, or priming particular considerations are most successful with individuals who are less politically sophisticated (Krosnick and Kinder 1990; Haider-Markel and Joslyn 2001; Campbell, Green, and Monson 2009). Other work contends that political frames and cues alter attitudes and behavior by shifting the types of underlying considerations used in individuals' political evaluations. Thus, the effects of cues and frames grow stronger as political awareness increases because the considerations emphasized in them are more likely to be available or comprehensible for more-sophisticated individuals (Zaller 1992; Druckman and Nelson 2003; Nelson, Oxley, and Clawson 1997).

In the case of messages highlighting Obama's ties to Islam, we suspect that their impact will be greatest for individuals with lower levels of political sophistication. One reason why is that such communications and media coverage of them were pervasive during the 2008 presidential campaign. Thus, more-sophisticated individuals should be more likely than their less-sophisticated peers to have formed prior opinions about Obama's faith so that any particular cue should be less likely to shape those perceptions. The other reason, of course, is that the claim that Obama is Muslim is not true, and that was widely documented not only by the Obama campaign, but also by more-objective media sources. More politically-aware people should be more likely than less-aware people to know that Obama really was not a Muslim and thus less likely to have been moved by messages claiming that he was.

While the effects of predispositions and political sophistication on political attitudes and behavior generally have been gauged separately, some researchers point to an interaction between political awareness and predispositions. Zaller (1992), in particular, argues that individuals with low awareness levels generally do not possess contextual information about the political biases of the sources of persuasive messages and thus are unable to resist messages that run counter to their political predispositions. In contrast, highly-aware individuals do tend to recognize the biases of message sources and thus generally accept only messages that support their own predispositions, rejecting those that do not. Other work also finds that the connection between predispositions and political attitudes grows stronger with political awareness (Dalton, Beck and Huckfeldt 1998; Brewer 2003; Carsey and Layman 2006; but see Goren 2004).

From this perspective, effective political cues and frames should influence the views of less-sophisticated people, regardless of their predispositions.<sup>4</sup> However, among more-sophisticated people, they should only affect the perspectives of individuals whose predispositions are supported by the messages. In fact, as Lupia (2002) argues, people who are sophisticated enough to recognize that the political bias of a particular message runs counter to their values actually may move their own views or behavior in just the opposite direction of what the message suggests or intends.

For messages highlighting Obama's ties to Islam, we expect to see a slightly modified version of this interaction between political sophistication and predispositions. Their impact

---

<sup>4</sup> Zaller (1992) actually suggests a curvilinear relationship between political awareness and the acceptance of political cues that run counter to individuals' political predispositions. The people most likely to be moved by such cues are those with moderate levels of awareness. People with the lowest awareness levels are unlikely to receive the cues at all and thus are largely unaffected by them, while the most-aware people receive the cues but understand that they are antithetical to their predispositions and reject them. In contrast, moderately-aware people are more likely than the least aware to receive the cues, but are less likely than the most aware to recognize that the sources or content of the cues are not in keeping with their predispositions. We do not expect such a curvilinear relationship in our analysis because our experimental treatments provide people with the cues. Since everyone receives the cues, our focus is not on reception, but just on acceptance, which we expect to decrease (for cues running counter to individuals' predispositions) as political sophistication increases.

should be relatively strong and positive—increasing the likelihood of viewing Obama as Muslim—for less-sophisticated individuals, regardless of whether they lean liberal and Democratic or conservative and Republican and whether they view Muslims and Arabs positively or negatively. Among more-sophisticated Democrats, liberals, and people with warm feelings about Muslims and Arabs, communications pointing out Obama’s Muslim ties should not have a positive effect, and might have a negative effect. Recognizing such communications as probably coming from Republican, conservative, or anti-Muslim sources, these individuals may grow more resolute in their conviction that Obama is not Muslim.

Where we alter our expectations from Zaller’s model is for more-sophisticated people with the opposite predispositions. The model expects the acceptance of a message to increase with awareness for people who share the predispositions of its source. However, messages linking Obama to Islam imply something that is not true. So, while increased sophistication should make Republicans, conservatives, and people with negative views of Muslims more likely to recognize that such messages originated from sources sharing their predispositions, it also should make them more aware that Obama is not really a Muslim. Thus, we do not expect these communications to increase the likelihood that more-aware individuals with Republican, conservative, and anti-Muslim orientations will identify Obama as Muslim.

### **Candidate Characteristics and Voting Behavior**

The impact of messages highlighting Obama’s Muslim connections is important not just from the standpoint of understanding the dynamics of political communications and opinion formation, but also because the belief that Obama was Muslim should have had a significant impact on presidential vote choice in 2008. The reason why is that citizens, lacking much interest in or information about politics, tend to make their voting decisions on the basis of

information short cuts, or heuristics (Downs 1957; Campbell et al. 1960; Popkin 1991; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1993), and a heuristic that is particularly ubiquitous is the voter's perception of the socio-demographic characteristics of the candidate. Candidate characteristics such as race (Citrin, Green, and Sears 1990; Sigelman et al. 1995), gender (McDermott 1997; Sanbonmatsu 2002), and religion (McDermott 2007, 2009; Campbell, Green, and Layman 2009) have a noticeable impact on voters' choices, and reliance on socio-demographic heuristics is especially likely when candidates are from highly stereotyped minority or politically underrepresented groups (Hamilton 1981), such as Muslims (Kalkan, Layman, and Green 2008). Given that Americans' views of Muslims are generally quite negative (Kalkan, Layman, and Uslaner 2009), we expect the perception that Obama was Muslim to have had a strong, negative effect on the likelihood of voting for the current president. That negative impact, of course, should have been greatest among individuals whose opinions of Muslims were least favorable.

### **Data and Experiment**

In order to assess our expectations about the effect of messages highlighting Obama's ties to Islam on the likelihood of individuals perceiving Obama as a Muslim, we conducted a unique survey experiment within the 2008 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES). The CCES involved 30 different modules conducted by different academic research teams, each interviewing 1,000 respondents. Our experiment and related questions were included in two of those modules and we also employ questions included in the "common content" portion of the

CCES.<sup>5</sup> Our experiment was conducted among one-third of the respondents to the pre-election portions of these two modules, yielding a total of 675 observations.

Our experiment randomly varied the amount and type of information provided to respondents about the two presidential candidates' middle names and childhood religious backgrounds. Although our main focus was on perceptions about Barack Obama, we also provided biographical information about John McCain in order to make the cues about Obama more subtle and to replicate the conditions of information gathering about candidates in a two-candidate race as closely as possible. We randomly placed respondents into four experimental groups, provided each group with varied biographical information about the two candidates, and then asked them open-ended religious identification questions about Obama and McCain.<sup>6</sup>

The control group was not told the candidates' middle names and was not provided with any information about the candidates' religious backgrounds. Then, we provided one experimental group with the candidates' middle names, one with information about their childhood religious backgrounds, and one with both their middle names and their childhood religious backgrounds. The information provided to the control group was as follows:

*Democratic candidate Barack Obama, a Senator from Illinois, has served 4 years in the U.S. Senate. Before that, he served for 7 years in the Illinois state legislature. . . . Republican candidate John McCain, a Senator from Arizona, has served 20 years in the U.S. Senate. Before that, he served for 4 years in the U.S. House of Representatives.*

---

<sup>5</sup> The CCES was administered on-line by YouGov/Polimetrix, using a method of sample matching respondents to produce a representative sample of the American population. A comparison of these samples to other data reveals that they are a reasonably accurate reflection of the American electorate, although somewhat more politically knowledgeable than the population as a whole. For more details on the 2008 CCES, see [http://web.mit.edu/polisci/portl/cces/material/CCES\\_Guide\\_2008\\_Rough\\_Draft\\_v2.pdf](http://web.mit.edu/polisci/portl/cces/material/CCES_Guide_2008_Rough_Draft_v2.pdf). Also see Rivers (2006) and Vavreck and Rivers (2008) for more details on the CCES methodology and sampling strategy.

<sup>6</sup> The exact wording of the open-ended questions was "There has been a lot of talk recently about the candidates' religious backgrounds. Do you happen to know what John McCain's current religious affiliation is? If you are not sure about his specific religious denomination, please give us your general sense of what McCain's religion is. . . . Do you happen to know what Barack Obama's current religious affiliation is? If you are not sure about his specific religious denomination, please give us your general sense of what Obama's religion is." The order of the question about McCain and the question about Obama was randomly varied across respondents.

The first treatment group received the same candidate biographies with their middle names:

*Democratic candidate Barack Hussein Obama II, a Senator from Illinois, has served 4 years in the U.S. Senate. Before that, he served for 7 years in the Illinois state legislature. . . . Republican candidate John Sidney McCain III, a Senator from Arizona, has served 20 years in the U.S. Senate. Before that, he served for 4 years in the U.S. House of Representatives.*

In the second treatment, we provided information about the candidates' religious backgrounds without mentioning their middle names:

*Democratic candidate Barack Obama, a Senator from Illinois, has served 4 years in the U.S. Senate. Before that, he served for 7 years in the Illinois state legislature. Obama lived in both Hawaii and Indonesia as a child. His father and step-father were both Muslims, and Obama received teaching in both the Muslim and Catholic faiths while in Indonesia. . . . Republican candidate John McCain, a Senator from Arizona, has served 20 years in the U.S. Senate. Before that, he served for 4 years in the U.S. House of Representatives. As a child, McCain, lived in many places where his Naval officer father was stationed in the U.S. and abroad. McCain was raised in the Episcopal Church.*

In the final group, we combined both of these treatments:

*Democratic candidate Barack Hussein Obama II, a Senator from Illinois, has served 4 years in the U.S. Senate. Before that, he served for 7 years in the Illinois state legislature. Obama lived in both Hawaii and Indonesia as a child. His father and step-father were both Muslims, and Obama received teaching in both the Muslim and Catholic faiths while in Indonesia. . . . Republican candidate John Sidney McCain III, a Senator from Arizona, has served 20 years in the U.S. Senate. Before that, he served for 4 years*  
*in*  
*the U.S. House of Representatives. As a child, McCain, lived in many places where his Naval officer father was stationed in the U.S. and abroad. McCain was raised in the Episcopal Church.*

Among all respondents, our treatments had rather little impact on the likelihood of identifying Obama as Muslim.<sup>7</sup> Exactly 14 percent of respondents in the control group provided such a classification, and the percentages were not significantly different in any of the three treatment groups. The percentage identifying Obama as Muslim was 15.6 in the group exposed

<sup>7</sup> In order to test whether the randomization worked, we conducted Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference test for multiple group comparison across age, education, income, race, gender, and region. The test results show that there are no systematic differences across control and treatment group respondents. The randomization worked as expected.

to only the candidates' middle names and 13.9 in the group exposed only to information about the candidates' religious backgrounds. The group given Obama's middle name and provided with information about his familial association with Islam did have the highest percentage (18.8) of respondents viewing him as Muslim. However, even the difference between that group and the control group was not statistically significant.<sup>8</sup> Because none of the three treatment groups differed significantly from the control group or from each other, we combined them into a single treatment group for all of the analyses presented here. As the first row of Table 1 shows, the belief that Obama was Muslim was slightly, but not significantly, more prevalent among the respondents receiving any of our treatments than it was in the control group.<sup>9</sup>

### **Political Predispositions, Sophistication, and Perceptions of Obama's Faith**

Of course, we do not expect our treatments to increase the likelihood of viewing Obama as Muslim among all respondents, just those with particular predispositions and levels of political sophistication. The two predispositions on which we focus are partisan and ideological identification and affect toward Muslims and Arabs.<sup>10</sup> Because the CCES included a very

---

<sup>8</sup> To determine whether the differences in perceiving Obama as Muslim between the individual treatment groups and the control group and, in Tables 1 and 2, between the three treatment groups combined and the control group were statistically significant, we simply conducted t-tests of the difference between the mean of the treatment group(s) and the mean of the control group on a dichotomous variable coded one for individuals who identified Obama as Muslim and zero for individuals who did not. The one-tailed level of significance of the difference between the mean of the treatment group receiving both the middle name and religious background cues and the mean of the control group was .12. The differences between the group exposed only to middle names and the control group and between the group exposed only to religious backgrounds had even higher significance levels.

<sup>9</sup> Because nearly all of the African Americans in our sample (and, in fact, in the electorate) voted for Obama and because black respondents were far less likely to identify Obama as Muslim than other racial groups (five percent of blacks as opposed to nearly 16 percent of non-blacks), all of the analyses in the paper were conducted only among non-black respondents.

<sup>10</sup> In the 2008 CCES data, party identification is measured as a seven-point scale ranging from strong Democrat to strong liberal and ideology is measured as a five-point scale ranging from very liberal to very conservative. We combined the two variables into a single measure for three reasons. First, they are highly correlated ( $r=.66$ ). Second, our expectations about each variable's role in conditioning the effect of messages linking Obama to Islam are the same. Because there is virtually no line of demarcation between Republicans and conservatives in contemporary American politics (e.g. Layman and Carsey 2002), the sources of these messages were nearly all tied to both the GOP and conservatism. Thus, we expect that Republicans should be more likely than Democrats to accept them and conservatives should be more likely than liberals to accept them. Finally, we performed our analyses separately for party identification and ideological identification, and the results for each variable were

limited number of political knowledge indicators, we measured political sophistication through a combination of individuals' levels of education and the number of media sources they used to follow the presidential campaign.<sup>11</sup>

In Table 1, we assess the conditional effect of sophistication, partisan and ideological identification, and affect toward Arabs and Muslims on the influence of our treatments on the likelihood of viewing Obama as Muslim. We do so simply by showing the percentage control group and treatment group respondents classifying Obama as Muslim by whether individuals had low or high levels of sophistication, whether they leaned toward the Democratic and liberal end of the political spectrum or in a Republican and conservative direction, and whether they had negative or positive feelings about Muslims and Arabs.<sup>12</sup> We assess whether the difference

---

virtually identical to those presented here. Our measure of party and ideological identification is simply the mean of each respondent's scores on the two variables, each ranging from zero to one. For respondents who had a missing value on one of the two variables, but not the other, the measure is simply the one non-missing value. Affect toward Arabs and Muslim affect are measured separately through feeling thermometers ranging from 0 to 100. The two variables are correlated at .76 among non-black respondents. Our measure of Arab and Muslim affect is the average of the ratings of the two groups for respondents who rated them both, but either just the Arab rating or just the Muslim rating for respondents who rated one group, but not the other.

<sup>11</sup> The CCES asked respondents whether they had obtained political information by reading blogs, watching TV news, reading a newspaper, or listening to the radio in the last 24 hours. Media exposure is simply a count, ranging from zero to four, of the number of media the respondent had used to follow politics. Education is a six-category variable ranging from less than high school to post graduate degree. After recoding both variables to range from zero to one, we formed our sophistication measure by taking each respondent's average score on the two variables. For respondents who had a missing value on one of the two variables, but not the other, the sophistication measure is simply the one non-missing value.

<sup>12</sup> These categories were created simply by placing respondents below each variable's median value in one category (low sophistication, Democrat/liberal, negative views of Arabs/Muslims) and respondents above the median in the other category (high sophistication, Republican/conservative, positive views of Arabs/Muslims). We split the variables into only two categories in order to maintain an adequate number of observations in all of the categories. We divide the categories into control and treatment groups in the analysis in Table 1. In the analysis in Table 2, we further divide the partisan and ideological categories and the categories of Arab/Muslim affect both by whether respondents were in the control and treatment groups and by whether they had low or high sophistication levels. Creating more than two categories of sophistication, partisan and ideological identification, or Arab/Muslim affect would have produced sample sizes that were too small for analysis after these further subdivisions.

To ensure that our results do not result from dichotomizing these variables, we replicated all of the analyses in Table 1 and Table 2 with a series of probit models in which respondents' perceptions of Obama's faith (coded one for Muslim and zero for non-Muslim) was the dependent variable and the independent variables were the full scales of sophistication, partisan and ideological identification, and affect toward Muslims and Arabs, and interactions between these variables and a dummy variable for treatment group respondents. In Appendix A, we present the estimates of these probit models and show that the patterns uncovered in tables 1 and 2 hold when the independent variables are allowed to vary across their full range.

between the treatment and control groups in each of these categories is statistically significant simply through a test of the difference between the treatment and control group means on a variable coded one if the respondent labeled Obama as Muslim and zero if he or she did not.

The results provide some measure of support for our expectations about the role of sophistication and predispositions in conditioning the impact of political cues. The treatments were more successful in producing associations of Obama with Islam among less-sophisticated respondents than among better-sophisticated respondents. The treatment group respondents were over eight percentage points more likely than the control group respondents to classify Obama as Muslim among less-sophisticated people, and the treatment-control difference was close to statistically significant. However, among more-sophisticated respondents, the treatment groups were actually less likely than the control group to see Obama as Muslim and that difference approached statistical significance. The prior opinions about and knowledge of Obama's faith likely possessed by sophisticated people appears to have made them immune from our cues about Obama's connections to Islam.

As we also expected, the treatments also were more likely to increase perceptions of Obama as Muslim among Republican and conservative respondents and among respondents with negative views of Arabs and Muslims than they were among Democrats and liberals and individuals with positive views of Arabs and Muslims. Republican and conservative respondents in the treatment groups were more than seven percentage points more likely than their control group counterparts to view Obama as Muslim, and the difference between the two groups approached statistical significance. In contrast, the treatments seemed to make Democrats and liberals slightly less likely to classify Obama as Muslim as the percentage for the treatment group was slightly lower than for the control group. The treatment had virtually no effect on the

perceptions that people with high regard for Arabs and Muslims held of Obama's faith, but they did produce a noticeable increase in classification of Obama as Muslim among respondents with negative feelings about these groups.

In Table 2, we assess our hypotheses about the interaction between political predispositions and sophistication in conditioning the influence of political cues. We do so by showing the percentages of control and treatment group respondents identifying Obama as Muslim for less-sophisticated respondents in the two partisan and ideological camps and for more-sophisticated respondents in these two camps. We then show the effects of the treatments for less-sophisticated people with low and high levels of affect toward Arabs and Muslims and for more-sophisticated people with low and high affect levels. The results provide a fair amount of support for our expectations about the predisposition-sophistication interaction.<sup>13</sup>

We hypothesized that communications highlighting Obama's connections to Islam would make less-sophisticated individuals more likely to view him as Muslim regardless of their predispositions, and that seems to be largely true. Among less-sophisticated respondents, treatment group members were more likely than the control group members to classify Obama as Muslim for all four predisposition groups—not only for Republicans and conservatives and people with negative views of Arabs and Muslims, but also for Democrats and liberals and individuals with warm feelings toward Arabs and Muslims. The effect of the treatments approaches statistical significance among the less-sophisticated members of both partisan-ideological groups and is even more significant among less-sophisticated respondents in both Arab-Muslim affect groups.

---

<sup>13</sup> In Appendix B, we replicate the analysis in Table 2 for each of our three treatment groups individually by showing the proportion of respondents in the control group and the three treatment groups identifying Obama as Muslim by predispositions and level of political sophistication. Tests of the difference between these proportions and those for the group comprised of all three treatment groups were not statistically significant in about 90 percent of the cases.

We also find support for our expectation that the treatments would not lead highly-sophisticated Republicans and conservatives or highly-sophisticated individuals with negative views of Muslims and Arabs more likely to label Obama as Muslim. The treatment group percentage is only slightly higher than the control percentage for sophisticates in the Republican and conservative camp and is just a bit lower than the control group percentage for those with low levels of Arab-Muslim affect.

Finally, the most striking evidence in the table confirms our hunch that the treatments not only would not increase the chances of more-sophisticated Democrats and liberals or more-sophisticated people with high regard for Arabs and Muslims identifying Obama as Muslim, but actually might make them less likely to put Obama in the Muslim category. Indeed, the treatments had a negative and highly significant effect on perceiving Obama as Muslim for both of these groups. In both groups, the percentage of control group respondents viewing Obama as Muslim was rather low (10 percent among Democrats and liberals and 7.5 percent among individuals with high thermometer ratings of Arabs and Muslims), but such a view was either nonexistent or very close to it among treatment group members. It seems likely to us that the more-sophisticated members of the Democratic and liberal camp and the group of people with positive feelings about Muslims and Arabs recognized our treatments as being similar to claims being made about Obama's faith by Republican, conservative, and anti-Muslim sources and became particularly committed to rejecting such claims—by classifying that faith as something other than Muslim.

### **The Electoral Consequences of Misperceptions about Obama's Faith**

We conclude our analysis by assessing the impact that believing Obama to be Muslim had on vote in the 2008 presidential election. At first glance, it appears that such a belief had a

extremely strong and negative impact on the Obama vote, as only 12 percent of CCES respondents who identified Obama as Muslim said after the election that they voted for him, whereas 62 percent of respondents who classified Obama's faith as something besides Muslim said that they cast their vote for him.

Of course, however, perceiving Obama as Muslim is also conflated with factors such as partisan and ideological identification, policy attitudes, socio-demographic characteristics that have quite strong effects on voting behavior themselves. So, to see if the view that Obama was Muslim had an independent electoral impact, we estimated a probit model of the two-party presidential vote (coded one for Obama supporters and zero for McCain supporters) in which the independent variables were a dummy variable for respondents believing Obama to be Muslim, Arab-Muslim thermometer ratings, thermometer ratings of blacks, partisan and ideological identification, retrospective evaluations of the national economy, attitudes on social welfare and economic issues, attitudes on non-economic issues, and a number of socio-demographic characteristics (a dummy variable for whites, education, income, gender, worship attendance, southern residence, and evangelical identification).<sup>14</sup> The results are shown in Table 3.

We first assessed the independent effect of viewing Obama as Muslim for the electorate as a whole by estimating an additive model of vote choice, with no multiplicative interaction terms. The first two columns of the table show the coefficients of this model and the effect of each variable in the model on the predicted probability of voting for Obama. The key finding from the additive model is that even when we control for a whole host of factors that are strongly and significantly related to vote choice, believing Obama to be Muslim has a sizeable and

---

<sup>14</sup> We conducted a factor analysis of attitudes toward a wide range of policy issues and it resulted in a two-factor solution, with social welfare preferences loading on one factor and attitudes toward all of the other (non-economic) issues loading on a second factor. Our measures of preferences on these issues are the (obliquely) rotated factor scores from this analysis. Details are provided in Appendix C. All of the independent variables in our model are coded to range from zero to one.

statistically significant negative effect on the likelihood of voting for the Democratic candidate. On average, those who identified Obama as Muslim were almost 10 percentage points less likely than those who did not to vote for him.

This effect, of course, pales in comparison to the impact of partisan and ideological identification and policy attitudes. However, it is stronger and more significant than the effects of all the sociodemographic variables (coefficients not shown). Moreover, it is quite striking that in a year in which a severe economic crisis dominated the campaign discussion, viewing Obama as Muslim had a stronger and far more statistically significant impact on vote choice than did evaluations of the national economy. Even more striking is that in a year in which the first African American to be nominated for President by a major political party was on the ballot, affect toward African Americans did not have a statistically significant effect on the vote, while both the view that Obama was Muslim and feelings about Muslims and Arabs had substantial and significant effects. It appears that the form of racial prejudice most pervasive and important throughout American history—namely anti-black prejudice—was not directly important to electoral behavior when the first black nominee was on the ballot. Instead, the form of prejudice that did have a direct electoral impact was the one tapped more directly into by political rhetoric and communications—that toward Muslims, Arabs, and “foreign” things in general.

Of course, the electoral effects of viewing Obama as Muslim and Arab-Muslim affect were most likely not additive, but interactive. The negative effect of believing Obama to be Muslim should have been concentrated primarily among voters with negative reactions to Muslims. In other words, Arab and Muslim affect should have conditioned the effect of the perception of Obama as Muslim on vote choice. To see if that was true, we included an interaction between the dummy for respondents viewing Obama as Muslim and Arab-Muslim

affect in the model. The estimates are shown in the last column of Table 2, and they clearly support this hypothesis. The coefficient on the dummy variable is its effect on voting for Obama for individuals with very low ratings of Arabs and Muslims, and this effect is negative and highly significant. The interaction term indicates the change in the effect of viewing Obama as Muslim as Arab and Muslim ratings grow more positive. Its positive and statistically significant coefficient indicates that as feelings toward Arabs and Muslims grew warmer, the negative effect of the misperception of Obama's faith on the probability of voting for him was negated.

To see the substantive effect of this interaction, we computed predicted probabilities for four possible scenarios. Among people who rated Arabs and Muslims one standard deviation below their mean rating in the sample, the predicted probability of voting for Obama is .51 for people who did not identify Obama as Muslim, but only .29 for those who did. In contrast, among respondents who rated Arabs and Muslims one standard deviation above the mean ratings, the misperception has absolutely no effect on the likelihood of voting for Obama. The predicted probability of voting for Obama is .56 among those who viewed him as Muslim and .56 among those who did not.

### **Summary**

There is no question that racial and ethnic attitudes did matter in the 2008 presidential election. However, as the country elected its first black president, it was not feelings about African-Americans that were most important. Instead, it was attitudes toward Muslims, Arabs, and societal outgroups in general that seemed to be of greatest consequence. The belief that Obama was, in fact, a closet Muslim was held by a non-trivial percentage of people. As our candidate religion experiment showed, that belief seems to have been prompted by cues about Obama's middle name and his childhood religious background.

However, the effect of these cues was conditioned by individuals' levels of political sophistication and political predispositions. They had more success in producing the view that Obama was Muslim among less-sophisticated people, Republicans and conservatives, and individuals with negative views of Arabs and Muslims than they did among more-sophisticated people, Democrats and liberals, and individuals who felt warmly toward Arabs and Muslims. Moreover, the effect of the cues was conditioned by the interaction of sophistication with predispositions. The cues made less-sophisticated people more likely to view Obama as Muslim regardless of their predispositions. However, the cues' effects among more-sophisticated individuals were quite different. They had very little impact on the likelihood of identifying Obama as Muslim among more-sophisticated people with negative views of Muslims and Arab and in the Republican and conservative camp. Meanwhile, their effect on the perceptions that more-sophisticated Democrats, liberals, and people with positive views of Muslims and Arabs was actually negative—strengthening their convictions that Obama was not Muslim.

This misperception about Obama's faith then had a significant and relatively strong negative impact on the likelihood of voting for him. In models of 2008 vote choice that controlled for nearly all of the usual suspects in presidential vote models, we found that viewing Obama as Muslim had a strong and statistically significant negative effect on the likelihood of voting for Obama. That effect, not surprisingly, was concentrated primarily among individuals with negative opinions of Muslims and Arabs. Quite strikingly, the belief that Obama was Muslim and feelings about Muslims and Arabs had much stronger effects on vote choice in 2008 than did attitudes toward African Americans.

Table 1: The Effect of the Experimental Treatments on the Likelihood of Perceiving Obama as Muslim by Political Sophistication, Party and Ideological Identification, and Arab and Muslim Affect (Non-Blacks Only)

	Control Group (%)	Treatment Groups (%)	P-Value
All Respondents	14.00 (150)	16.14 (446)	.27
<i>Sophistication</i>			
Low	14.70 (68)	23.14 (229)	.06
High	13.41 (82)	8.76 (217)	.11
<i>Party /Ideological ID</i>			
Democratic/Liberal	7.81 (64)	4.88 (205)	.18
Republican/Conservative	18.06 (72)	25.54 (188)	.10
<i>Arab/Muslim Affect</i>			
Low	17.86 (56)	24.37 (197)	.15
High	6.45 (62)	8.28 (157)	.32

Source: 2008 Cooperative Congressional Election Study

Note: The number of observations for each group is in parentheses. P-values are one-tailed levels of significance from t-tests of the difference between the mean value of the treatment groups and the mean value of the control group on the variable coded 1 for respondents who identified Obama as Muslim and 0 for respondents who did not.

Table 2: The Effect of the Experimental Treatments on the Likelihood of Perceiving Obama as Muslim by the Combination of Predispositions (Party/Ideological Identification and Arab/Muslim Affect) and Political Sophistication (Non-Blacks Only)

	Control Group (%)	Treatment Groups (%)	P-Value
<u>Party /Ideological ID</u>			
<i>Low Sophistication</i>			
Democratic/Liberal	4.17 (24)	9.78 (92)	.19
Republican/Conservative	20.59 (34)	32.00 (100)	.10
<i>High Sophistication</i>			
Democratic/Liberal	10.00 (40)	.88 (113)	.003
Republican/Conservative	15.79 (38)	18.18 (88)	.37
<u>Arab/Muslim Affect</u>			
<i>Low Sophistication</i>			
Low Affect	16.67 (30)	28.70 (115)	.09
High Affect	4.54 (22)	22.03 (59)	.03
<i>High Sophistication</i>			
Low Affect	19.23 (26)	18.29 (82)	.54
High Affect	7.50 (40)	.00 (98)	.003

Source: 2008 Cooperative Congressional Election Study

Note: The number of observations for each group is in parentheses. P-values are one-tailed levels of significance from t-tests of the difference between the mean value of the treatment groups and the mean value of the control group on the variable coded 1 for respondents who identified Obama as Muslim and 0 for respondents who did not.

Table 3: The Impact of Perceiving Obama as Muslim on 2008 Presidential Vote Choice

	Additive Model		Interactive Model
	Coeff. Estimates <sup>1</sup> (SE)	$\Delta$ in Predicted Probability <sup>2</sup>	Coeff. Estimates <sup>1</sup> (SE)
Obama is Muslim	-.92** (.35)	-.09	-2.62** (.93)
Arab/Muslim Affect	1.48* (.75)	.14	1.13 (.78)
Obama Muslim X Arab/Muslim Affect	— —	—	3.64* (1.43)
Black Affect	.60 (.63)	.05	.61 (.62)
Party/Ideological ID	-3.78*** (.72)	-.59	-3.87*** (.71)
National Economy	-.66 (.82)	-.06	-.59 (.84)
Non-Economic Issue Attitudes	-2.52*** (.76)	-.30	-2.40** (.76)
Social Welfare Attitudes	-4.01*** (.76)	-.55	-4.05*** (.76)
Constant	3.44*** (.86)	—	3.53*** (.84)
N	376		376
pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.78		.78

Source: 2008 Cooperative Congressional Election Study.

\*p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001.

Notes: The dependent variable was taken from the post-election survey and is coded one for respondents who voted for Obama and zero for those who voted for McCain. The model included controls for race, region, gender, education, income, and church attendance. None of those variables had statistically significant effects, and a likelihood ratio test showed that their joint effect was not different from zero (p = .62).

<sup>1</sup> Entries are probit coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses.

<sup>2</sup> Change in predicted probabilities as the independent variables change from their minimum to maximum values while holding all other independent variables at their observed values.

## Appendix A

Table A1 shows the results of probit models in which the dependent variable is whether or not respondents identified Obama as Muslim and the independent variables are a dummy variable for respondents in our treatment groups and continuous measures of political sophistication, partisan and ideological identification, affect toward Arabs and Muslims, and the interactions between those variables and the treatment dummy. All of these variables have been coded to range from zero to one.

The coefficients for the treatment dummy indicate the effect of the experimental cues on the likelihood of identifying Obama as Muslim among individuals at the lowest level of sophistication (second column), strong Democrats and liberals (third, fifth, and seventh columns), and people who are very hostile toward Arabs and Muslims (fourth, sixth, and eighth columns). The coefficients on sophistication, party and ideological identification, and Arab/Muslim affect indicate their impact on the likelihood of calling Obama Muslim for the control group. The interaction term coefficients indicate how the treatment's effect on the likelihood of viewing Obama as Muslim changes as sophistication increases, or partisanship and ideology grow more Republican and conservative, or Arab and Muslim affect grows.

The second, third, and fourth columns show the conditional effects of sophistication, party and ideological identification, and views of Arabs and Muslims for all respondents. Among control group respondents, political sophistication decreases the probability of viewing Obama as Muslim, but its effect is not statistically significant. Meanwhile, increases in Republican and conservative identification significantly boost that probability, while increases in positive feelings about Arabs and Muslims diminish it. The effect of our treatments is positive—increasing the chances of identifying Obama as Muslim—and nearly significant for the least

sophisticated people, but grows less positive as sophistication increases. Their effect is negative—decreasing the likelihood of placing Obama in the Muslim category—but nowhere near statistically significant for strong Democrats and liberals, and grows more positive (but not significantly so) as partisanship and ideology grow more Republican and conservative. The treatments have virtually no effect on perceptions of Obama’s faith among people who have highly negative feelings about Muslims and Arabs, and their effect does not change noticeably as those feelings grow more positive.

The last four columns show the interactions between partisan and ideological identification and Arab/Muslim affect, respectively, and the treatment variable for respondents with low and high levels of political sophistication. The treatments have a non-significant positive effect on the odds of believing Obama to be Muslim among strong Democrats and liberals with low sophistication levels, but a negative and statistically significant effect for highly sophisticated strong Democrats and liberals. As partisanship and ideology grow more Republican and conservative, the effect of the treatments grows less positive, but not significantly so, for less-sophisticated respondents and significantly more positive for more-sophisticated people.

Increases in affect toward Arabs and Muslims decrease the likelihood of classifying Obama as Muslims, and the effect approaches significance for low-sophistication respondents and is significant for the high-sophistication group. Our treatments had virtually no effect on perceptions of Obama’s faith among people with highly negative views of Arabs and Muslims. That effect does not change significantly among less-sophisticated respondents. In the high-sophistication group, it grows more negative as affect toward Muslims and Arabs increases, and that change approaches statistical significance.

Table A1: Probit Models of the Conditional Effect of Political Sophistication and Predispositions on the Impact of the Experimental Treatments on the Likelihood of Perceiving Obama as Muslim

Independent Variables	Sophistication Level and Variable Interacted with the Treatment Variable						
	All Respondents			Low Sophistication		High Sophistication	
	Sophistication	Party/ Ideology	Arab/Muslim Affect	Party/ Ideology	Arab/Muslim Affect	Party ID	Arab/Muslim Affect
Treatment	.60 (.37)	-.30 (.35)	.15 (.31)	.98 (.66)	.20 (.44)	-1.47 (.49)	.09 (.44)
Sophistication	-.48 (.59)	—	—	—	—	—	—
Party ID/Ideology	—	.94 (.44)	—	2.18 (.83)	—	.39 (.52)	—
Arab/Muslim Affect	—	—	-1.47 (.54)	—	-1.46 (.92)	—	-1.49 (.66)
Treatment X Sophistication	-1.09 (.68)	—	—	—	—	—	—
Treatment X Party ID	—	.72 (.52)	—	-.68 (.90)	—	1.86 (.73)	—
Treatment X Arab/Muslim Affect	—	—	-.05 (.65)	—	.59 (1.04)	—	-1.14 (.87)
Intercept	-.83 (.33)	-1.64 (.29)	-.54 (.26)	-2.55 (.62)	-.57 (.40)	-1.30 (.32)	-.51 (.36)
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.04	.09	.07	.10	.04	.12	.14
N	596	588	504	290	241	298	263

Source: 2008 CCES.

Notes: Cell entries are probit coefficient estimates with robust standard errors in parentheses. All models were estimated among non-black respondents only.

**Appendix B:** Proportion of Respondents Identifying Obama as Muslim by Experimental Group, Sophistication Level, and Predispositions

Predispositions	Sophistication Level and Experimental Group							
	Low Sophistication				High Sophistication			
	Control	Middle Name	Muslim Background	Both Cues	Control	Middle Name	Muslim Background	Both Cues
<i>Arab/Muslim Affect</i>								
Low	.17	.20	.31	.36	.19	.25	.12	.16
High	.04	.07	.27	.26	.08	0	0	0
<i>Party/Ideological Identification</i>								
Democrat/Liberal	.04	.03	.09	.19	.10	0	0	.02
Republican/Conservative	.21	.27	.31	.36	.16	.33	.12	.08

Source: 2008 Cooperative Congressional Election Study

**Appendix C: Factor Structure of Issue/Policy Preferences in 2008**

Variables	Loadings	
	Factor 1	Factor 2
Abortion	.85	-.12
Gay Marriage	.83	-.08
Stem cell Research	.71	.04
Environment/Jobs	.54	.13
Withdraw Troops from Iraq	.44	.46
Eavesdropping	.54	.13
View on Iraq War	.55	.35
Minimum Wage	.03	.72
Health Insurance	.10	.74
Federal Housing	-.20	.83
Affirmative Action	.04	.71
Explained variance	.38	.35
Eigenvalue	4.18	3.9
N	1914	

Source: 2008 CCES

Notes: The factors are retained via principal component factor method with oblique rotation.

## References

- Bacon, Perry, Jr. 2007. "Foes Use Obama's Muslim Ties to Fuel Rumors About Him." *Washington Post* November 29:A1.
- Barker, David C. 2005. "Values, Frames, and Persuasion in Presidential Nomination Campaigns." *Political Behavior* 27:375-94
- Beinart, Peter. 2008. "Is Barack Obama American Enough?" *Time* October 9. <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1848755,00.html>.
- Brewer, Paul R. 2003. "Values, Political Knowledge, and Public Opinion about Gay Rights: A Framing-based Account." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 67:173-201
- Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter*. New York: Wiley.
- Campbell, David, John Green and Goffrey C. Layman. 2009. "Partisan Hearts, Minds, and Souls: Candidate Religion and Partisan Voting" *unpublished manuscript*.
- Campbell, David., John Green, and Quin Monson. 2008.. "Framing Faith: How Voters Responded to Candidates' Religions in the 2008 Presidential Campaign" *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association 67th Annual National Conference, Chicago, IL*.
- Carter, Bill. 2007. "Rivals CNN and Fox News Spar Over Obama Report." *New York Times* January 24. <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/24/us/politics/24obama.html>.
- Carsey, Thomas M. and Geoffrey C. Layman. 2006. "Changing Sides or Changing Minds? Party Identification and Policy Preferences in the American Electorate." *American Journal of Political Science* 50(2):464-477.
- Chong, Dennis, and James N. Druckman. 2007. "Framing Theory". *Annual Review of Political Science* 10: 103-26.
- Citrin Jack, Donald P. Green and David O. Sears. 1990. "White Reactions to Black Candidates: When Does Race Matter?" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 54:74-96
- Converse, Philip E. 1964. *The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics*. In *Ideology and Discontent*, ed. David E. Apter. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Cose, Ellis. 2008. "So What if He Were Muslim?" *Newsweek* September 1:37.
- Dalton, Russell J., Paul A. Beck, and Robert Huckfeldt. 1998. "Partisan Cues and the Media: Information Flows in the 1992 Presidential Election." *American Political Science Review* 92(1):111-126.

- Delli Carpini, Michael X. and Scott Keeter. 1996. *What Americans Know About Politics and Why it Matters*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Druckman, James N. 2001a. "Evaluating Framing Effects." *Journal of Economic Psychology* 22:91–101.
- Druckman, James N. 2001b. "On the Limits of Framing Effects: Who can Frame?" *Journal of Politics* 63:1041–66
- Druckman, James N. 2001c. The implications of framing effects for citizen competence. *Polit. Behav.* 23:225–56.
- Druckman, James and Kjersten J. Nelson. 2003. "Framing and Deliberation: How Citizens' Conversations Limit Elite Influence." *American Journal of Political Science* 47: 729-45.
- Freedman, Samuel G. 2008. "In Untruths about Obama, Echoes of a Distant Time." *New York Times* November 1:A21.
- Gamson, William A. 1992. *Talking Politics*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press
- Goren, Paul. 2004. "Political Sophistication and Policy Reasoning: A Reconsideration." *American Journal of Political Science* 48 (3): 462–78.
- Haider-Markel, Donald P. and Mark R. Joslyn. 2001. "Gun Policy, Opinion, Tragedy, and Blame Attribution: The Conditional Influence of Issue Frames." *Journal of Politics* 63(2): 520-543.
- Hamilton, David L. 1981. *Cognitive processes in stereotyping and intergroup behavior*. L. Erlbaum Associates Hillsdale.
- Iyengar, Shanto, and Donald R. Kinder. 1987. *News That Matters: Television and American Opinion*. Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press
- Kalkan, Kerem Ozan, Geoffrey C. Layman, and Eric M. Uslander. 2009. " 'Bands of Others?' Attitudes Toward Muslims in Contemporary American Society." *Journal of Politics* 71(3): 847-862.
- Kristoff, Nicholas D. 2008a. "Obama and the Bigots." *New York Times* March 9:WK13.
- Kristoff, Nicholas D. 2008b. "The Push to 'Otherize' Obama." *New York Times* September 21:WK9.

- Krosnick, Jon A, and Donald R. Kinder 1990. "Altering the Foundations of Support for the President through Priming." *APSR* 84:497-512.
- Layman, Geoffrey C. and Thomas M. Carsey. 2002. "Party Polarization and 'Conflict Extension' in the American Electorate." *American Journal of Political Science* 46:786-802
- Lupia, Arthur. 2002. "Who Can Persuade Whom? Implications from the Nexus of Psychology and Rational Choice Theory." In James H. Kuklinski (ed.) *Thinking About Political Psychology*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 51-88.
- Manjoo, Farhad. 2008. "Rumor's Reasons." *New York Times* March 16:MM22.
- McDermott, Monika L. 1997. "Voting Cues in Low-Information Elections: Candidate Gender as a Social Information Variable in Contemporary United States Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 41(1):270-283.
- McDermott, Monika L. 2007. "Voting for Catholic Candidates: The Evolution of a Stereotype." *Social Science Quarterly* 88 (4): 953-969.
- McDermott, Monika L. 2009. "Religious Stereotyping and Voter Support for Evangelical Candidates." *Political Research Quarterly*, 62(2): 340-354
- Mosk, Matthew. 2008. "An Attack that Came Out of the Ether." *Washington Post* June 28:C1.
- Nelson, Thomas E., Zoe M. Oxley, and Rosalee A. Clawson. 1997. "Toward a Psychology of Framing Effects." *Political Behavior* 19 (3): 221-246.
- Popkin, Samuel L. 1994. *The Reasoning Voter: Communication and Persuasion in Presidential Campaigns*. Second ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Rutenberg, Jim. 2008. "The Man Behind the Whispers About Obama." *New York Times* October 13:A1.
- Sanbonmatsu, Kira. 2002. "Gender Stereotypes and Vote Choice." *American Journal of Political Science* 46 (1): 20-34.
- Sigelman, Carol K., Lee Sigelman, Barbara J. Walkosz and Michael Nitz. 1995. "Black Candidates, White Voters: Understanding Racial Bias in Political Perceptions." *American Journal of Political Science* 39(1):243-265.
- Sniderman, Paul M., Richard A. Brody and Philip E. Tetlock. 1991. *Reasoning and Choice: Explorations in Political Psychology*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Zaller, John R. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. New York: Cambridge University Press.