Toward Electability

Public Office and the Arab Vote

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Both Arab and Muslim Americans have a visible social presence in Michigan and the greater Detroit area, but they are considerably underrepresented at all levels of elected office, including in electoral districts where they are concentrated. In this chapter, we quantify and attempt to explain patterns of political representation in elected office among Arabs and Muslims of the greater Detroit area. To do so, we evaluate the different factors that we suspect may influence the persistent underrepresentation of Muslim and Arab Americans in elected office by collecting election data and by interviewing politicians, party activists, community leaders, and other key players in metropolitan Detroit.

We decided to simultaneously explore the representation of Arab, Chaldean, and Muslim Americans because there is substantial demographic overlap among these populations in greater Detroit—42 percent of Arab Americans identify as Muslims (Howell and Jamal 2008) and almost half of Detroit's Muslims have Middle Eastern ancestry(Shryock 2004). And members of all three groups have been targets of ethnic profiling and voters' fears after 9/11. We even find opponents of a non-Muslim Chaldean American candidate trying to frame him as Muslim to achieve electoral gains. The dynamics affecting these groups' representation are therefore generally similar. Differences do exist, however, and they are instructive (e.g., how the electorate and opponents react to a candidate's obviously Muslim name). We therefore discuss the representation of all three groups simultaneously unless there is a reason to think that belonging to one minority but not another affects the ability of a candidate to successfully run for office.

We find that Arab and Muslim cultures in metro Detroit have no effect on the supply of Arab and Muslim American candidates and that the communities

are well organized and fairly well integrated.[1] And there is no obvious discrimination against Arab and Muslim candidates within the political parties at the state and local level, at least not within the Democratic Party, which has attracted most Arab and Muslim voters and activists since 9/11.

Instead, three factors, two of which come together in a potent combination, explain Arab and Muslim American underrepresentation in elected office. The first is the effective representation of Arab and Muslim American interests by elected officials who are not from these communities. These enduring alliances between community leaders and elected officials who are not from the community limit the potential for Arab and Muslim American candidates to get elected by depriving them of community support. In addition, and more important, we found that the combination of single-district city elections, Muslim and Arab demographic minority status, and hostile attitudes by non-Arab and non-Muslim voters make it challenging for candidates from these communities to get elected. We also find mixed support for the hypothesis that divisions within Arab and Muslim communities hinder the electability of officials from within their ranks.

The State of Arab and Muslim American Representation

Table 1 summarizes the representation of Arab and Muslim Americans in elected office in metropolitan Detroit and the legislature of the state of Michigan.[2] As of November 2009, there were nine elected Arab Americans and seven Muslim Americans (including four of the Arab Americans) in nine city governments, three county governments, and the Michigan House and Senate.[3]

Most elected Arab Americans serve in city governments. Dearborn Heights, whose population is at least 8.8 percent Arab American according to the 2000 U.S. census, but possibly twice as many today, has one Arab American elected official, Thomas Berry, in the council. His is one of ten elected city government positions (mayor, city clerk, treasurer, and seven city councilors). Berry is a Shi'a Muslim Arab from a politically active family who ran successfully for his second term in the November 2009 elections.

Three of Dearborn's (at least 33.4 percent Arab American) seven current councilors, and nine elected officials, are of Arab origin. Two of the three, Robert Abraham and George Darany, are heavily assimilated third-generation Americans who are not active in Arab American organizations and do not attend predominantly Arab American churches.[4] The third, Suzanne Sareini, was both the first Muslim and the first Arab elected to office in Dearborn, and the first Muslim and Arab woman elected to office in the state of Michigan in

Table 1. Arab Populations and Number of Elected Arab and Muslim Americans

	Arab American Population (percent)[a]	Elected Positions Available[b]	Arab Americans Elected (2009 elections)	Muslim Americans Elected (2009 elections)
City of Dearborn Heights	5,127 (8.8%)	10 (7)	1 councilor (T. Berry)	1 councilor (T. Berry)
City of Dearborn	29,181 (33.4%)	9 (7)	3 councilors (R. Abraham, G. Darany, and S. Sareini)	1 councilor (S. Sareini)
City of Hamtramck	2,160 (9.4%)	7 (6)	—	3 councilors (S. Ahmed, K. Miah, and M. Hassan)
City of Detroit	8,287 (0.9%)	11 (9)	—	—
City of Highland Park	687 (4.1%)	8 (5)	—	—
City of Sterling Heights	4,598 (3.7%)	9 (7)	—	—
City of Warren	3,470 (2.5%)	12 (9)	—	—
City of Livonia	1,953 (1.9%)	10 (7)	—	—
City of Wayne	— (~0%)	7 (6)	1 mayor (A. Al-Haidous)	1 mayor (A. Al-Haidous)
Oakland County	27,500 (2.3%)	31[c]	1 sheriff (M. Bouchard)	—
Macomb County	17,300 (2.2%)	57[d]	1 treasurer (T. Wahby)	—
Wayne County	55,650 (2.7%)	21[e]	—	—
State of Michigan	138,269 (1.2%)	110 representatives, 38 senators	2 representatives (J. Amash, R. Tlaib)	1 representative (R. Tlaib)

[a]Figures are from the 2000 U.S. Census. They represent the greater of the sum of Arabic and Assyrian speakers (first language) and those who declare being of Arab ancestry. Odds are that these proportions are both outdated and that they underestimate the numbers of those of Arabic and Chaldean ancestry. Of course, the U.S. census does not ask respondents about their religious affiliation. Some data on the Arab American population can be found in G. Patricia de la Cruz and Angela Brittingham, "The Arab Population: 2000," Census 2000 Brief, December 2003, http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/c2kbr-23.pdf.

[b]Number of city councilors is provided in parentheses.

[c]Oakland County elected officials: County Executive, Prosecuting Attorney, Clerk/Registrar of Deeds, Sheriff, Treasurer, Water Resources Commissioners, County Commissioners (25). In addition, there are 65 elected and appointed judges.

[d]Macomb County elected officials: County Executive, Sheriff, Clerk/Registrar of Deeds, Treasurer, Public Works Commissioner, County Commission (26), Charter Commission (26). In addition, there are 12 Circuit Court and 2 Probate Court judges.

[e]Wayne County elected officials: County Executive, Prosecuting Attorney, Sheriff, County Clerk, County Treasurer, Register of Deeds, County Board of Commissioners (15). In addition, there are 61 judges in the Third Circuit Court and 8 judges in the Probate Court.

Source: Compiled by authors.

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1990. In the August 2009 primaries, eight of the twenty-five candidates were of Arab descent (Darany, Abraham, David Bazzy, Sareini, Ali Sayed, Khalil Dakhlallah, Rabih Hammoud, and Hussein Sobh), out of whom five (Darany, Abraham, Bazzy, Sareini, and Sayed) made it to the final fourteen. However, only the three incumbent Arab Americans were reelected in the November 3, 2009 election.[5]

The city of Hamtramck (at least 9.4 percent Arab American and perhaps 50 percent mostly non-Arab Muslim minorities, such as Bengali) currently has no Arab Americans but three non-Arab Muslims serving on its six-seat council. Complaints about discrimination against minorities in the 1999 elections led the Justice Department to send staff to monitor the 2003 elections. Shahab Ahmed, a Bengali immigrant, became the first minority candidate elected to the Hamramck city government in 2003, to be followed by Abdul Al-Ghazali, a Yemeni immigrant. Al-Ghazali came in second in the mayoral primary for the 2009 elections, losing by only 123 votes to the incumbent Mayor Karen Majewski. Four of the twelve city council candidates who made the 2009 primaries were Muslims—three of Bengali origin (Kazi Miah, Mohammed Hassan, and Anam Ahmed Miah), and one from Bosnia (Arif Huskic). Miah and Hassan were elected on November 3 to join Ahmed, whose seat was not up for election in 2009.

Close to 1 percent of Detroit's population is Arab American, and there are currently no Arabs or Muslims in the city's government. Adam Shakoor has served as deputy mayor of Detroit and was the first Muslim African American judge in the state of Michigan. Out of 169 candidates running in Detroit's city council primaries in 2009, there were four Muslims—Abdullah El-Amin, T. Pharaoh Mohammad, Mohamed Okdie, and Raphael B. Johnson (a member of the Nation of Islam). The last two made it to the list of eighteen who ran for the nine council seats, but neither was elected. Okdie is of Arab heritage and is the vice chair of the Thirteenth Congressional District's Democratic Party. Al-Amin, who is the assistant imam of the Muslim Center of Detroit and co-owner of a funeral home for Muslims, and Johnson are both African American Muslims.

Both Highland Park and Sterling Heights are close to 4 percent Arab or Muslim American, but neither has Arab Americans in elected office. Ameenah Omar, sister-in-law of Malcolm X and a member of the Nation of Islam, served as city councilwoman in Highland Park from 1995 to January 2009, when she resigned because of health problems. None of Warren's (whose population is at least 2.5 percent Arab American) twelve city council seats are currently held by Arab Americans. Richard Sulaka, an Arab American Christian of Lebanese descent, served as Warren city councilman for eight years

(1991–1999) and as city clerk for eight years (1999–2007). He unsuccessfully ran for mayor in 2007. None of Livonia's Arab Americans (comprising 2 percent of the population) have been elected to its city government.

The city of Wayne has few Arab Americans, but Abdul Al-Haidous, a Lebanese-born Shi'a Muslim, was elected mayor on November 26, 2001, soon after the attacks of 9/11, with 54 percent of the vote and has been reelected four times since. He previously served as a Wayne city councilor between 1993 and 2001.

In Wayne County (2.7 percent Arab American), Arab and Muslim Americans are much better represented in appointed positions than in elected office. None of the county's twenty-one elected officials and sixty-nine elected judges is Arab American. However, there are high-ranking Arab and Muslim Americans in Robert Ficano's County Executive cabinet. Three of the seven appointed cabinet members are Arab Americans. Azzam Elder is deputy CEO, Nader Fakhouri serves as an assistant CEO, and Turkia Awada Mullin is both an assistant CEO and chief development officer for Wayne County.

Oakland County, which is at least 2.3 percent Arab American, has an elected Arab American sheriff but no other Arab or Muslim Americans among its twenty-five commissioners and other elected officers. Sheriff Michael Bouchard (in office since 1999) is a politically active Arab American of Christian background who also served in the Michigan State House of Representatives (1990–1991) and in the Michigan State Senate (1991–1999). His bid to become the Republican candidate for governor of Michigan in the 2010 elections was unsuccessful.

Macomb County, 2.2 percent Arab American, has one Arab American among its fifty-seven elected officials and fourteen judges. Ted Wahby was elected as treasurer of Macomb County in 1995 and has been serving in this position since then. Before that, he served as a councilman (1981–1983) and as mayor (1983–1995) in the city of St. Clair Shores.

At the state level, at least 1.2 percent of Michigan's population was Arab American in 2000. Currently, two Arab Americans serve in Michigan's House of Representatives out of 110 members—Rashida Tlaib and Justin Amash. Tlaib is a Muslim woman of Palestinian origin, and Amash is a Christian Arab. Tlaib is the first Muslim woman to serve in the Michigan state legislature, and only the second in the United States (after Jamilah Nasheed, an African American Democrat who got elected to the Missouri House of Representatives in November 2006). She represents the twelfth district, which is predominantly Hispanic (40 percent), 25 percent African American, 30 percent white and only 2 percent Arab American. Amash represents the seventy-second district, city of Kentwood and the townships of Caledonia, Cascade,

and Gaines, all of which have very small Arab American populations. James H. Karoub (1961–1963 and 1965–1968) was the first known Arab American and Muslim Michigan State Representative, after serving as the police and fire commissioner in Highland Park from 1959 to 1964. Michael Bouchard served from 1990 to 1991. No Arab Americans currently serve in the elected thirty-eight-member Michigan State Senate, though Michael Bouchard served previously (1991–1999). Hansen Clarke, who is of Bangladeshi Muslim and African American heritage, also served as a state representative (1990–2002) and senator (2002–2009) from a district in Detroit before being elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2010.

In addition, there are several elected and appointed judges of Arab American origin or Muslim faith in Michigan.[6] Some are highly active in the Arab American community (e.g., David Allen), and a few are practicing Muslims (e.g., David Turfe and Charlene Mekled-Elder). Their appointment by the governor is generally viewed as a major accomplishment for Arab Americans because the process is elaborate and requires the acquiescence or support of a number of officials.

Table 2 lists all the Arab and Muslim candidates who ran for city government or whose seats were not contested in greater Detroit during the 2009 elections. The twenty candidates include twelve Arabs (eleven Lebanese and one Yemeni), three of whom are Christian and nine Muslim. The seventeen Muslims include eight of Lebanese descent, four Bengalis, three African Americans, one Yemeni and one Bosnian.

Of the twenty candidates, eight were elected or continued to serve in office. Five of the twelve Arabs, two of the three Christian Arabs, and six of the seventeen Muslims were elected. Only four out of the thirteen with Arab- or Muslim-sounding names were elected as opposed to four out of seven candidates with Anglicized names. Four of twelve U.S.-born candidates succeeded as opposed to four out of eight who were born out of the country.

Methodology

We conducted semistructured interviews with nineteen Arab, Chaldean, and Muslim Americans in metropolitan Detroit and in Lansing, Michigan's capital. We interviewed leaders of Arab and Muslim civic, business, religious, and advocacy organizations; Arab and Muslim elected officials and unsuccessful candidates; and Arab and Muslim appointees and party officials. We identified the Arab and Muslim elected and appointed officials through lists maintained by the Arab American Institute and media searches and verified this information during interviews. Out of nineteen interviewees, there were sixteen Arab, one Chaldean, and two African Americans. Thirteen of the in-

Table 2. Arab and Muslim American Candidates for City Government in the 2009 Elections in Greater Detroit (including positions that were not contested)

Candidate	Office	Ethnicity	Religion	Born in United States?	Elected?
Robert Abraham	Dearborn City Council	Lebanese	Christian	Yes	Yes
George Darany	Dearborn City Council	Syrian/ Lebanese	Christian	Yes	Yes
David Bazzy	Dearborn City Council	Lebanese	Christian	Yes	No
Suzanne Sareini	Dearborn City Council	Lebanese	Muslim	Yes	Yes
Khalil Dakhlallah	Dearborn City Council	Lebanese	Muslim	Yes	No
Rabih Hammoud	Dearborn City Council	Lebanese	Muslim	Yes	No
Ali Sayed	Dearborn City Council	Lebanese	Muslim	Yes	No
Hussein Sobh	Dearborn City Council	Lebanese	Muslim	No	No
Thomas Berry	Dearborn Heights City Council	Lebanese	Muslim	Yes	Yes
Kazi Miah	Hamtramck City Council	Bengali	Muslim	No	Yes
Mohammad Hassan	Hamtramck City Council	Bengali	Muslim	No	Yes
Anam Ahmed Miah	Hamtramck City Council	Bengali	Muslim	No	No
Arif Huskic	Hamtramck City Council	Bosnian	Muslim	No	No
Shahab Ahmed	Hamtramck City Council	Bengali	Muslim	No	Yes (not contested)
Abdul Al-Ghazali	Hamtramck Mayor	Yemeni	Muslim	No	No
Abdullah Al-Amin	Detroit City Council	African American	Muslim	Yes	No
T. Pharoh Mohammad	Detroit City Council	African American	Muslim	Yes	No
Mohamed Okdie	Detroit City Council	Lebanese	Muslim	Yes	No
Raphael B. Johnson	Detroit City Council	African American	Muslim[a]	Yes	No
Abdul Al-Haidous	City of Wayne Mayor	Lebanese	Muslim	No	Yes

[a]Raphael B. Johnson is associated with the Nation of Islam.
Source: Compiled by authors.

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terviewees were Muslims—six Sunni and seven Shi'a. The remaining six interviewees were Christian. We obtained demographic data from the 2000 U.S. census and compared it with estimates from the Arab American Institute and the Immigration Policy Center.

Explaining Patterns of Arab American and Muslim American Representation

We test nine hypotheses to explain patterns of Arab American and Muslim American representation in greater Detroit by considering relevant quantitative and qualitative evidence.

Arab and Muslim Culture in the Area Discourages Civic and Political Participation

Yvonne Haddad (2001) has argued that most Arab and Muslim Americans had little interest in political participation before community organizations emerged in the 1980s for Arabs and the 1990s for Muslims. A few of our interviewees agreed that residual resistance to participation in the American electoral process continued until recently and that as recently as ten years ago a few local religious leaders argued that participation was in fact *haram* (prohibited in Islamic law). Yet other religious leaders were active themselves in politics and encouraged the political participation of their congregants (Howell 2009). Any resistance to political engagement has petered out since then, and the overwhelming majority of religious and community leaders fully support Muslim engagement and candidates today. Every community leader we interviewed was either actively engaged in politics or supportive of political participation. No interviewee thought that there is meaningful resistance to political participation in Arab and Muslim American communities today.

The vibrant civic and political culture of the Arab community in greater Detroit is reflected in the number and level of activity of its organizations. Politically active Arab American organizations include the Arab American Political Action Committee (AAPAC) and the Yemeni American Political Action Committee (YAPAC). Others, like the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS), and the Arab American Chamber of Commerce, do not work directly on increasing Arab American political representation but are very active in empowering the Arab American community in general and have strong connections with elected and appointed politicians.

And many Arab Americans in the area participate in these organizations' activities. Howell and Jamal (2008) mention that 39 percent of respondents

in the 2003 Detroit Arab American Study reported being involved in an Arab ethnic association such as ADC, the Yemeni Benevolent Association, or the Chaldean Federation. The Detroit Arab American Study (DAAS) (Baker et al. 2004, 32) finds that:

> A large majority of Arabs and Chaldeans believe that their local organizations are effective. Over 70 percent say that their business and professional organizations, civil liberties and anti-discrimination groups, and local Arab media are very or somewhat effective. Arab and Chaldean social service agencies top this list, with 40 percent saying that they are very effective, and another 45 percent saying they are somewhat effective.

The political engagement of Arab and Muslim Americans in the Detroit area is part of a nationwide trend. Ayers and Hofstetter (2008) analyzed the nationwide 2004 Muslim Americans in the Public Square (MAPS) survey of Muslim American attitudes, for example, and found that American Muslims have a very high rate of political participation compared with other Americans. They also report that political resources and awareness, particularly post-9/11anxiety, were all positively related to participation. Gimpel, Cho, and Wu (2007) examined Arab American voter registration in the months following September 11, 2001, and also found that "9/11 has acted as an accelerant to Arab American political incorporation." And Jen'nan Read (2007) dispels gender-centered notions of cultural inhibition in her analysis of the MAPS datasets. She argues that Arab Muslim women and men both have high levels of political engagement, with men slightly more involved than women because of their greater participation in religious activities and higher levels of religiosity. She also finds that subjective dimensions of religiosity have no effect on political engagement.

Still, there appear to be issues. Ramzi Dalloo, president of the Democratic Chaldean Caucus, told us that Chaldeans are politically inactive in spite of their socioeconomic success in America because they have been conditioned to be passive as a persecuted group in their country of emigration, Iraq. Still, Dalloo, and the few active Chaldeans in the caucus, do lobby the federal government to help fellow Chaldeans and other Christians in Iraq (see Hanoosh, "Fighting Our Own Battles," this volume).

Arab and Muslim Americans Are So Poorly Organized That They Cannot Effectively Support Candidates from the Community

Again, the high density of Arab and Muslim American organizations implies that this is not the case. Of these organizations, AAPAC is the most

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influential in shaping the Arab vote in the area. It endorses candidates through campaigning, mailers, volunteering, and fund-raising. It also conducts large voter registration drives. Many Arabs vote the AAPAC list on Election Day. Although AAPAC's endorsement process is cumbersome, many candidates seek it in the hope of getting the Arab American vote. AAPAC has managed to become influential in spite of divisions within the Arab American community. Government officials at all levels and community leaders use AAPAC as an interlocutor for the Arab American community. AAPAC leaders feel that the organization's ability to muster support among Arab Americans in the area and to be recognized by others as representing Arab American preferences has helped the Arab American community to be seen as an active and influential minority group in electoral politics, and has led candidates to take the Arab vote, and Arab issues, more seriously.[7] Several candidates we interviewed confirmed the importance of AAPAC's and YAPAC's endorsement.[8]

In addition to ad hoc civic and political organizations, the Arab American community in metropolitan Detroit benefits from the high concentration of mosques and churches. As Jamal (2005) argues, the mosque "takes on the multifaceted role of mobilization vehicle and school of civic participation" and promotes group consciousness among Arab and black Muslims. Ethnic churches have played a similar role historically. The DAAS survey (Baker et al. 2004) finds that 93 percent of Christians say churches are very effective or somewhat effective in meeting community needs and that 84 percent of Muslims agree that mosques meet the same standard. And Judge David Turfe explained how mosques encourage political engagement: "The churches [and mosques], in all the functions that they have, in *'ashura* [a Shi'a commemoration] programs, Ramadan programs, they have tables to register people to vote and even imams are telling people to get out and vote."[9]Arab and Muslim Americans in metro Detroit have a high organizational density, the kind that galvanizes mobilization and interest in political involvement. Although these organizations and their leaders do not always agree on whom to endorse, this does not necessarily explain underrepresentation in elected office. In fact, competition may increase the supply of candidates and their effectiveness.

Few Arab and Muslim Americans Are Willing or Able to Compete for Elected Office Because They Suffer from Poor Integration (Low Familiarity with and Ability to Function in American Political Institutions)

This hypothesis is not particularly convincing either. Arabs, Chaldeans, and Muslims do as well as, or better than, other Americans on metrics of

socioeconomic integration. In contrast to African American Muslims, the immigrant segment among Arab American Muslims has higher levels of educational attainment and income than the general public.[10] Arab Americans of all religious backgrounds are even more ahead of the American public in education and income, according to data compiled by the Arab American Institute (AAI) based on a survey by the U.S. Census Bureau: "Arab Americans with at least a high school diploma number 85 percent. More than four out of ten Americans of Arab descent have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 24% of Americans at large. Seventeen percent of Arab Americans have a post-graduate degree, which is nearly twice the American average (9%)."[11]

Numbers seem comparable in metropolitan Detroit. Data from the DAAS (Baker et al. 2004) suggest that U.S.-born Arabs tend to be wealthier and more educated than the Detroit public, whereas immigrant Arabs tend to be, as one would expect from a population in transition, both less wealthy and less educated. The DAAS researchers also find that Arabs and Chaldeans in Detroit ranked quite high in 2003 on several measures of political integration: 79 percent were U.S. citizens, 80 percent spoke English well or very well, 86 percent said they feel at home in the United States, and 91 percent said they are proud to be American. The study also finds rates of political expression that are comparable with the Detroit public among Arab and Chaldeans who were born in the United States, but less involvement among immigrants, as one would expect.

Arab Americans in Dearborn have also considerably improved their registration rates from 8,800 registered voters out of 60,000 in 1998 to some 17,000 out of 54,000 today, according to AAPAC sources. However, evidence is mixed about turnout rates. AAPAC officers told us that very rarely do more than 30 percent of those registered vote, with the exception of the 2008 election when some two-thirds of Arab American registered voters exercised their right and overwhelmingly supported Barack Obama, in spite of the Obama campaign's slight of removing a Muslim woman wearing a scarf from camera range in a campaign rally in Detroit.[12] But the DAAS survey (Baker et al. 2004, 33) finds that 51 percent of Arab and Chaldean Americans in the region voted in the 2000 election, which is exactly the percentage for the national voting age population for this election.

In addition, Muslim and Arab Americans have been galvanized to become more active after the transgressions on civil rights and liberties that followed the attacks of 9/11. As Bakalian and Bozorgmehr (2009) argue, Muslim American community leaders felt the necessity to participate in American society and political life after 9/11. Many Muslim American organizations started teaching their members and communities the basics of

political engagement. And the 9/11 attacks have provided unexpected opportunities for Arab and Muslim American community leaders in terms of political empowerment because they are taken much more seriously by U.S. officials, law enforcement, and other community actors. This combination of internal motivation and external validation produced substantial mobilization among Muslim and Arab Americans around common interests.

Just as important, political candidates in Michigan recognize the importance of Arab and Muslim voters, particularly in tight races, and Arab and Muslim community leaders know this. They now realize their clout in local, state, and national elections, including the 2000 presidential election when Michigan was closely contested (Bakalian and Bozorgmehr 2009, 241–242). This feedback loop is likely to continue to motivate Michigan's Arabs and Muslims to mobilize effectively.

Yet, some of the Chaldean and Arab Americans we interviewed felt that their communities are less integrated than they should be. ADC's Imad Hamad believes that the biggest hurdle facing Arab American candidates is the community's inability to raise enough funds to support them.[13] He believes that there are not enough affluent Arab Americans who are willing to run for office or to financially support those who do and that fund-raising by Arab American organizations is still inadequate. Osama Siblani, publisher of the *Arab American News* and current president of AAPAC, argues that many Arab Americans are isolated and continue to cling to habits and attitudes from their countries of origin. Newcomers, he argues, suffer from poor fluency in English, do not have citizenship, and are too focused on bare survival to be involved politically.[14] And Ramzi Dalloo said that younger Chaldeans who enjoy comfortable lives because of their parents' hard work have little incentive to pay attention to politics.[15]

So what explains the divergence between the quantitative evidence and some of our knowledgeable interviewees' perceptions? It could be that our interviewees, who are motivated community activists, have high expectations that their communities have yet to meet and were expressing their views about why members of their communities have not met the threshold of their own aspirations instead of comparing them with other communities. Another possibility is that the complex Chaldean, Arab, and Muslim communities are polarized between those who can be galvanized to act (wealthy, U.S. born, educated) and those who are not empowered to act even if motivated to do so (poor, foreign born and uneducated). As Cho, Gimpel, and Wu (2006) tell us:

> Arab American participation patterns suggest that the effects of socioeconomic status are mediated by socialization experiences and policy threat. If

> the political learning process includes the apprehension of worrisome government policy actions, it may provide the motivation for participation from those who have the ability to participate, but heretofore have chosen not to do so.

In other words, those who don't think that members of their community are politically active enough probably interact with the segments of these very diverse communities that are indeed less active than they would hope for these or other reasons. Such diversity exists within many communities and does not explain underrepresentation in elected office.

And the best evidence that Muslim and Arab Americans are not particularly poorly integrated on the whole is that, in spite of their underrepresentation in elected office, they are fairly well represented in appointed positions that require involved contacts and sophistication in interacting with government institutions. The answer to Arab and Muslim underrepresentation in elected office is to be found elsewhere.

The Fragmentation of the Middle Eastern and Muslim Community along Ethnic, Religious and Sectarian Lines Makes It Difficult for an Arab or Muslim American Candidate to Receive Support from It

Evidence is mixed for this hypothesis. There is no doubt that Arab and Muslim Americans are quite diverse and that members of each group have subidentities that sometimes become political fault lines that hinder cooperation and generate conflict. Among immigrants from Arab countries, potential differences exist between Arabs and non-Arabs such as Chaldeans and Kurds, countries of origin,[16] Christians and Muslims, Christians of different denominations, Sunni and Shi'a Arab Muslims, those who are secular and religious within each religious tradition, regionalism and tribalism within countries of origins, and families (Haddad 2009).[17] Among Muslim Americans, potentially politicized differences include those between Sunnis and Shi'a, different ethnicities and regions of origin, immigrant versus African American identity, and degrees of religiosity. But every immigrant, ethnic, and religious population has many such potential fault lines and whether they are used politically depends in large part on leaders' choices, outside pressures, and organizational development.

These differences could also become salient in one context and irrelevant in another. For example, meetings among Muslim activists and leaders regarding priorities often produce a substantial divide between African Americans,

who are more interested in inner-city development and reintegration programs, and "immigrant" Muslims, who have a greater interest in foreign policy matters. But these differences were meaningless when Keith Ellison, an African American Muslim, was campaigning for a congressional seat in 2006. American Muslims of Middle Eastern and South Asian origins provided a third of Ellison's campaign budget, helping him became the first Muslim congressman (Sinno 2009). This cross-ethnic support exists in Detroit as well. For example, Judge Adam Shakoor, who is an African American Muslim, told us that he receives very strong support from Muslims of South Asian, East Asian, and Arab ancestries.

We encountered some aspects of politicized differences.[18] Chaldeans seemed sensitive about their heritage and still harbored feelings of victimization at the hands of Arabs, and were therefore reluctant to be grouped with Arab Americans. Dawud Walid, Executive Director of CAIR-Michigan, an African American convert, emphasized the need to distinguish the African American Muslim community from the rest of the American Muslims of Michigan because they have been established much longer and were active in political life long before immigrant Muslims. He illustrated his point by saying that African American Muslims settled the question of whether political participation is *haram* well before immigrant Muslims did. He adds:

> There is some overlap, but there really are different issues. Palestine, for instance . . . all Muslims sympathize with Palestine, but non-Arab Muslims do not feel that Palestine is the number one issue or "the" issue that we as Muslims unite on, and everything else is secondary. This is the mentality of a lot of people, Arab Americans, in Dearborn. They do not care about Darfur, or what is going on in Kashmir, Muslims in the Democratic Republic of Congo or Burma. They only care about what is going on in Palestine or somewhere else in that region. So there is some tension or hostility in the Muslim community.[19]

Walid also suggested that there are tensions among Arab and Muslim community leaders, some of whom resent that CAIR attracted more religious Arab Muslims. In a similar vein, Abed Hammoud mentioned that prominent leaders of the community were against AAPAC and worked to undermine it.

Other interviewees suggested that intragroup fragmentation is an issue, though not necessarily a cause of underrepresentation. Most said that the Arab American community acts in cohesion but when probed further, mentioned that the religious, sectarian, and ethnic divisions are a serious problem.

Some (e.g., Imad Hamad) said that the divisions are no more problematic than in other communities but are exaggerated because of the intense focus on Arabs and Muslims.[20] James Allen, a former chairman of the Arab American Chamber of Commerce who comes from a politically active family, went further, arguing that the Arab American community is more united than many other minorities. He illustrated his point by referring to the Palestine issue and the march in Dearborn to protest the Israeli bombings of Lebanon, issues on which Muslim and Christian Arabs in the area act together. In addition, several interviewees mentioned ongoing cooperation among different community organizations, such as ADC and AAPAC.

Johnson (1991) once argued that "it is highly likely that the large congregational splits typifying Christian groups in America will become the rule for Islam in America, with each group politically lobbying for its own concerns." And Suleiman (2006) reports that many have argued that Arab American political participation is poor because of a lack of national group solidarity, weak communal solidarity, and an overemphasis on family, religious sect, and individualism. There are some signs of this, but a more powerful countertrend to Muslim fragmentation has surfaced—the development of a Muslim American macro-ethnicity (Sinno 2009). What is at work here is a process of generational change. As Khan (2000) argues, identity issues that prevent American Muslims (particularly immigrants) from collaborating across sectarian lines are less of a problem for U.S.-born Muslims because they did not grow up being affected by the identity politics of their countries of origin.

Arab and Muslim Organizations Are Not Motivated to Support Candidates from Their Communities Because They Feel Well Represented by Elected Officials Who Are Not Arab or Muslim

Arab and Muslim community leaders today feel that it is less urgent or necessary to support officials from within their ranks because some elected officials who are not of Arab background assist the Arab American community and address its concerns. Osama Siblani, for example, said that Dearborn's Mayor John (Jack) O'Reilly supports the community and that the city's Arabs therefore do not necessarily need an Arab American mayor "with the name Ali or Muhammad." He would rather have a non-Arab in office who is sympathetic to the Arab community than a poorly qualified Arab official.[21] Mayor O'Reilly has strategically appointed an Arab American, Joe Beydoun, to serve as the Mayor's Citizens' Liaison. Likewise, Imad Hamad from ADC said that his organization would not support candidates just because they

happen to be Arab, unless they are well qualified.[22] Ismael Ahmed and others explained that Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano, who is of Italian descent, has had very good relations with the Arab community for more than twenty years.[23] He has appointed three Arab Americans to his Wayne County cabinet (Azzam Elder, deputy CEO; Nader Fakhouri, assistant CEO; and Turkia Awada Mullin, assistant CEO and chief development officer of Economic Development Growth Engine). Dawud Walid confirmed that as the director of CAIR, he meets with local politicians when issues of concern come up, but not necessarily with Arab or Muslim ones.

James Allen explained the representation of the community in Wayne County government:

> Wayne County has a tradition of being very influenced by the high population of Arab Americans and that goes back to the 1950s when Michael Berry was the head of the Democratic congressional district here. . . . It was Mike Berry who blazed the trail for Arab Americans to enter to all of these offices. He made it easy for the mainstream to look at us as part of the mainstream. He also appointed a lot of people to positions who helped people, brought them into civil service.[24]

Another supportive elected official is Governor Jennifer Granholm. She appointed Lebanese American James Stokes, former deputy director of the Governor's Office for Southeast Michigan, as the state director of Appointments, and Arab and Muslim American Ismael Ahmed, a co-chair of the state's Democratic Party and a co-founder of ACCESS, as director of Human Services, overseeing the department with the second-largest budget in state government.

There even seems to be an implicit pact between Arab American organizations and non-Arab politicians—the politicians effectively advocate on behalf of the community in return for support—which inevitably weakens the prospects of Arab American candidates. The *Arab American News* and AAPAC endorse non-Arab candidates who have a proven or promised commitment to the issues of interest to the Arab American community, which shifts attention from Arab and Muslim American candidates or even discourages them from running in the first place.

Government funding for the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services and the establishment of the program Building Respect in Diverse Groups to Enhance Sensitivity (BRIDGES) are two examples of the benefits to the community that such a pact produces. With its $18 million annual budget, ACCESS is the most powerful Arab American organization in the area because it benefits from substantial funding, most of it from the

state of Michigan and other government sources. ACCESS focuses mostly on economic and social development, immigrant support, and outreach for Arab and Muslim Americans in the area.[25] ACCESS also provides active support to organizations that engage in lobbying and organizing voter registration drives. The Arab American and Chaldean Council plays a similar role for its own constituency.

Following 9/11, BRIDGES was established as a forum to facilitate sustained dialogue between government agencies and the community. The forum attempts to smooth tensions and address grievances, particularly over legal and law enforcement practices that transgress the civil rights and liberties of Muslim and Arab Americans and create resentment (see Howell, "Muslims as Moving Targets," this volume).

Community Leaders View Elected Officials as Rivals and Therefore Discourage Community Support for Such Candidates

Cooperation between community leaders and elected officials who are not from the community, however, does not seem to reflect a rivalry among Arab and Muslim organization leaders, candidates, and elected officials from these communities. Candidates and elected officials we interviewed mentioned that Arab and Muslim community leaders actively support them. Osama Siblani of AAPAC told us that he is mentoring promising Arab youths to become successful politicians. Suzanne Sareini said she has helped out young Arab hopefuls and taught them all she knew about the art of politics and getting elected. Ali Sayed, a young Muslim American candidate of Lebanese heritage who ran unsuccessfully for the Dearborn council in 2009, said he received "full backing" from Arab American leaders and that he consults with Rashida Tlaib, David Turfe, and Abdul Al-Haidous, a relative, who give him advice.[26] And different organizational leaders and Arab and Muslim elected officials mentioned that they consult with each other. Arab and Muslim organizations also facilitate communication among community-oriented candidates and elected officials by inviting them to the same activities and events. Also, most Arab and Muslim American candidates reported strong support from the community and its organizations.

But there were some exceptions, even if they belong to the past. Suzanne Sareini, who was elected to the Dearborn city council in 1990 on her second attempt, said that community organizations did not support her when she first ran in the 1980s, mostly because she was a woman.[27] Abed Hammoud stated that the Arab American leadership is made up of what he called "the old establishment." He explained that he worked hard to build up AAPAC

in spite of attempts by established community organizations to undermine him during the early years.[28]

Arab and Muslim Americans Suffer from Hurdles and Discrimination within the Democratic and Republican Parties

Barreto and Bozonelos (2009) argue that both major parties have done little to no outreach to Muslim Americans, and have instead regularly alienated Muslims. Thus, more religious Muslims might choose "none of the above" with respect to partisanship in America. That is quite correct on the national level, where Arab and Muslim Americans are diffuse and small minorities that are marginalized by core constituencies of both parties—pro-Israel liberals within the Democratic Party and evangelicals and conservatives in the Republican Party. The situation is a little different in metro Detroit, with its high concentration of Arabs and Muslims. The chokepoint of Arab and Muslim representation is not at the level of the parties, at least not the Democratic Party.

Some party officials may still be affected by a strong tradition of racism or hostility toward non-whites (see below), but such attitudes are definitely on the decline. The current president pro tem of the Dearborn council is Nancy Hubbard, daughter of the late Orville Hubbard, a Dearborn mayor who ran segregationist campaigns and nurtured a culture of ethnic hatred. Even though she attended a recent Arab Student Union event at the University of Michigan–Dearborn, her disconnect with the community was apparent because of her lack of knowledge about the issues of concern to Arab Americans. She referred to the community as "Arabic people," drawing laughter from the audience. The president of the Arab Student Union, Rashid Beydoun, mentioned that many non-Arab candidates decline the organization's invitations to attend their events.

Some of our interviewees have voiced their desire to see the two parties doing more to recruit talented Arab Americans. And Ramzi Dalloo lamented that, even though Chaldeans are very supportive of the Republican Party because many in the community have small businesses and a strong anti-abortion stance, the party still does not recruit from among them or co-opt them into its institutions.

And yet, almost all interviewees said that the parties encourage and support Arab American candidates at the local and state level. As early as 2000, there were twenty-eight Arab American delegates to the National Democratic Convention and four to the National Republican Convention (Nimer 2004). And Arab Americans are well represented within Democratic institutions. According to AAI figures, there are fifty precinct delegates in the

Michigan Democratic Party.[29] They are primarily concentrated in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Congressional Districts, with high percentages of Arab American residents. More important, the Michigan Democratic Party has high-ranking Arab American officials, including one of its three vice chairs (Ismael Ahmed) and several members of the Central and Executive committees.[30] The Democratic Party also has an Arab caucus, but the Republican Party does not. Most activists we interviewed report that the Democratic Party reaches out to them more than the Republican Party does.[31]

Arab and Muslim Americans are not particularly penalized by not being well represented in the Republican Party because Wayne County is overwhelmingly Democratic (69 percent voted Democratic in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections and 74 percent in the 2008 presidential elections). Voters in Macomb and Oakland counties are more evenly split. And Arab and Muslim Americans today strongly lean to the Democrats anyway. According to 2008 Zogby polls, more than twice as many Arab Americans identify as Democrat than as Republican.[32] And three surveys of Muslim Americans from 2007 and 2008 found 48 to 63 percent identifying as Democrat as opposed to just 7 to 11 percent identifying as Republican (Barreto and Bozonelos 2009). Also, campaigns for city government are not partisan in greater Detroit.

And the best evidence that the chokepoint of Arab and Muslim representation is not at the party level, at least not among Democrats and for local government, is that the number of candidates from these groups is substantial. The problem is that not enough of them get elected.

The two remaining hypotheses, in combination, provide a much more powerful explanation of Arab and Muslim underrepresentation in elected office.

The Electoral System Disadvantages Minority Candidates, including Arab and Muslim Americans

On the one hand, the electoral system for local government in Michigan disadvantages minority candidates, particularly Arab and Muslim Americans, who are subject to bias from others. Local elections in the cities of Dearborn Heights, Dearborn, Hamtramck, Detroit, Highland Park, Sterling Heights, Warren, Livonia, and Wayne are held every four years, with the entire city comprising a single district (at-large elections). Each city holds primary elections two to three months prior to the November general elections. Although Arab Americans in Dearborn number between 30 and 40 percent of the population, the number of registered Arab Americans who turn out to vote is not enough to elect Arab American candidates without support from non-Arab voters. Ethnic hostility (see below) therefore makes

—-1
—0
—+1

it difficult for Arab candidates to get elected. Dividing the cities into multiple single-member districts would have made it relatively easier for Arab and Muslim Americans to get elected from districts where their communities are heavily concentrated.

On the other hand, Arab American voters can effectively keep a non-Arab candidate they boycott from getting elected. They are key swing voters in local elections, at least in Dearborn. As Suzanne Sareini told us, she needs the Arab vote on top of a substantial portion of the white vote to get elected. And Robert Abraham and George Darany, who are of Arab ancestry but have weak ties to the communities, appeal to Arab Americans around election time because of the same calculus. Osama Siblani also confirmed that a successful candidate in Dearborn must appeal to the Arab community.[33]

Unlike city elections, elections in the three counties with considerable Arab American populations (Wayne, Macomb, and Oakland) are held within districts.[34] Based on our argument, we would expect to find higher proportions of Arabs and Muslims elected to county government than to city government, but this is not the case. There are no Arab American elected officials in Wayne County, one out of fifty-seven in Macomb County, and another one out of thirty-one in Oakland County (see Table 1). This paltry level of representation does not necessarily weaken our argument because, as many of our interviewees indicated, Arab and Muslim politicians appear to have little interest in county government. Ismael Ahmed also explained that those who run for a county commission seat normally do so as part of a long-term political career and that most Arab and Muslim candidates do not engage in such patient and sophisticated planning.[35]

Bias by Non-Arab/Muslim Voters Reduces the Chance of an Arab or Muslim Candidate to Get Elected

Without bias, demographic distribution and electoral systems would not affect the odds of a minority candidate's getting elected if we assume that the supply of candidates from this minority is comparable with the supply from other groups. For Arab and Muslim American candidates, these factors combine to undermine their election prospects. And most of the exceptions confirm the rule.

Most of the candidates and elected officials we interviewed cited voter prejudice as a challenge. The only exceptions are Justin Amash, a first-term Michigan House Representative who is a third-generation American of Christian Arab heritage, and Abdul Al-Haidous, mayor of the city of Wayne. Amash is a young politician. He regularly attends an Arab American church,

but is difficult to identify as an Arab from his looks, behavior, or speech. He is elected from a district that does not have many Arab Americans, and he is not vocal and active on Arab American issues.

Abdul Al-Haidous is the mayor of the city of Wayne, a well-off city with hardly any Arab Americans. Higher income and education are normally negatively correlated with ethnic and religious bias. Al-Haidous was very active and widely recognized in the wider community prior to election, including as a Wayne city councilor between 1993 and 2001. He was elected mayor soon after 9/11 with a strong majority. He is open about his identity, but it rarely comes up as a political issue because too few Arab or Muslim Americans live in the city of Wayne to raise issues or make claims. He is also not involved with Arab and Muslim organizations—most Muslim and Arab American activists we talked to haven't heard of Mayor Al-Haidous and were surprised to learn that there is an Arab Muslim mayor in the region. Mayor Al-Haidous explains why ethnicity and religion did not affect his electoral prospects by referring to his long history of serving the community on committees and the city council before running for mayor. Once the people of the small township (population of 19,050 in 2000) became used to him and trusted him over his many years of service, his identity mattered little.

Three factors interact to increase bias against Arab and Muslim American candidates: the effect of 9/11 and ongoing conflicts in the Muslim world, a legacy of ethnic hostility, and the use of smear campaigns by opponents of Arab and Muslim candidates to undermine them. The effect of ongoing conflicts and media coverage, particularly religious and conservative media, on attitudes toward Arab and Muslim Americans has been well documented (e.g., Nisbet, Ostman, and Shanahan 2009). Data from the DAAS suggests that they affect attitudes toward Arabs and Muslims in the Detroit area in similar ways (Jamal 2009).

Dearborn politicians have traditionally resorted to crude ethnic attacks and to elevating ethnic fears. One prominent example is Orville Hubbard, who served as the mayor of Dearborn for thirty-six years (1942–1978). He was known as an outspoken segregationist who consistently used the campaign slogan "Keep Dearborn Clean," which was widely understood to mean keeping it white. Although Hubbard's distaste was mostly focused on blacks, he disparaged within his influential circle many minorities, including Arabs (Good 1989). His successor, Michael Guido (Dearborn mayor, 1986–2006), used a similar approach toward minorities until late in his political career.

This tradition of leveraging and aggravating ethnic and religious hostility for electoral purposes continues today. Most Arab and Muslim American candidates have faced harsh smear campaigns directed at their ethnic and

religious background. Following the election of Ahmed and Al-Ghazali to Hamtramck's city council in 2003, for example, an online media campaign claimed that the city council has been "hijacked by Muslims." Such charges continued when in April 2004, with a unanimous vote by the city council, Hamtramck amended the city noise ordinance to allow the broadcast of the Islamic call to prayer from mosques. Many of the online attacks were directed by aggressively anti-Muslim activists who do not live in Hamtramck, such as David Horowitz, Robert Spencer, and Debbie Schlussel, who focuses much of her energy on lamenting the growth of the Muslim population in the area and attacking its leaders and institutions by using innuendo and other dubious methods.[36]

Opponents of Rashida Tlaib told voters "if you cannot pronounce her name, you should not vote for her."[37] David Turfe unsuccessfully ran for a seat on the Dearborn Heights council twice, in November 2001 and 2005 after serving for one year as an appointed councilor. Supporters of his opponents called voters and said, "How would you like it if you had a Muslim on your city council?"[38] Turfe, however, was elected to serve as the Twentieth District Court Judge on November 2006. James Allen provided other examples of smear campaigns against Arab and Chaldean American candidates, including Richard Sulaka, the Chaldean city clerk who ran in 2007 against the then city council president James R. Fouts for the post of mayor of Warren:

> Jim Fouts employed a Lebanese American political consultant who very publicly said that his job was to make Richard Sulaka the first cousin of Osama Bin Laden and Saddam Hussein. It was a whisper campaign waged against Richard, who is a very good man. And in the end, Fouts won out because he was able to convince people that Richard was not going to be a mayor for all of Warren but just for its Arab population. [In the] Dearborn Heights city council race in 2001, a couple of Arab American candidates, David Turfe and Jumana Judeh, both lost in very close races. Whether the [opposing] candidates themselves were involved in the whisper campaigns or not, there was little doubt in my mind after that race that those people's elections were affected by their ethnic background. . . . A lot of people are turned off by that, quite frankly, and it is difficult to get people to stand up and run because they know that smear is going to happen.[39]

With few exceptions, those who are spared the attacks tend to be highly assimilated Christian Arab Americans who are not recognized by voters, and probably not by opponents, as being Arab. Those who seem Arab even if they are not (e.g., the Chaldean Richard Sulaka) or have a Muslim-

sounding name even if they are not Muslim could be just as vulnerable as Muslim candidates because of political expediency. Conversely, it helps an Arab or a Muslim candidate not to be easily recognizable as such.

All three Arab American councilors in Dearborn, for example, have names that do not appear Arab or Muslim (Robert Abraham, George Darany, and Suzanne Sareini). Abraham and Darany are third-generation Arab American Christians who are not active in Arab American organizations and do not attend predominantly Arab American churches. The only Muslim to be elected to Dearborn's council as of today is Sareini, who owns a bar, is U.S.-born, is extremely outgoing, and does not convey in her demeanor that she is of Lebanese Arab and Shi'a Muslim background. Several people we spoke to told us they thought she was of Italian ancestry or Christian Arab, even though Sareini does not try to hide her ethnic and religious background, is proud of it, and actively helps the Arab American community. To our surprise, even a Muslim staffer at the Dearborn council did not know that Darany and Abraham were Arab Americans and that Sareini was Muslim. As Ismael Ahmed told us based on his long experience to explain the success of the three Arab Americans in Dearborn, "there is still too much division between whites and Arabs . . . the more they blend, the more likely they would get elected."

Muslims, whether Arabs or not, are considerably less well represented in elected office than Christian Arabs with English-sounding names. Four of the nine Arabs who serve in the elected bodies we are considering are Muslim, but only two have easily distinguishable Muslim names (Abdul Al-Haidous and Rashida Tlaib). Three additional Muslims, Bengali Americans, serve in Hamtramck where a high concentration of Muslims in the electorate has made such a shift in electoral fortunes possible—perhaps half of Hamtramck's population is Muslim today (mostly Bengalis, Bosnians, Albanians, and African Americans), and the small township and surrounding neighborhoods are home to ten mosques.

The Arab and Muslim penalty does not afflict highly assimilated Christian Arabs like George Darany, Robert Abraham, and Justin Amash—they do not need to address Arab or Muslim issues, they are accepted more easily by the non-Arab majority, they are not subject to attacks based on their ethnicity or religion, and they do not necessarily work on issues of concern to the Arab American community once elected. From an electoral perspective, they are white.[40] Even if Arab and Muslim candidates' perception of the attacks they faced are exaggerated, wide acceptance within these communities that their candidates face smear campaigns deters Arab and Muslim Americans who are considering becoming politicians from doing so.

Many therefore attempt instead to serve their communities through appointed positions or social activism.[41] Some even see a common thread linking all the smear campaigns and ascribe them to interest groups who are trying to undermine Arab and Muslim Americans because of Zionist, evangelical, or ultra-conservative beliefs.[42]

Multiple minority identities can mitigate the penalty for being a Muslim. One case in point is Adam Shakoor, a 62-year-old African American attorney who once was the deputy mayor of Detroit and chief judge. Judge Shakoor believes that Muslims are underrepresented because qualified Muslims avoid politics.[43] He also faults Muslim candidates for not appealing to voters from other communities. He does not believe that voters in Detroit would discriminate against a capable Muslim candidate.

Shakoor is widely known to be Muslim. He became a Muslim in college and participates in the activities of W. D. Muhammad's mainstream Sunni institutions. In the late 1970s, he successfully brought a case against the city of Detroit to allow the Islamic call to prayer in the city and another against the Michigan correctional system to provide *halal* food, Muslim chaplains, and Friday prayer facilities to Muslim inmates. He has good relations with Muslims from all ethnicities and is active in Muslim causes. This would be an electorally fatal personal history in most districts, but Detroit is about 82 percent black, and being black mitigates being Muslim within this population. Indeed, Judge Shakoor mentioned a long list of African American churches that supported him in his election campaigns.

The Future of Arab and Muslim Representation in Metro Detroit

To sum up, we find that three factors, two of which come together in a potent combination, jointly explain Arab and Muslim American underrepresentation in elected office. The first is the effective representation of Arab and Muslim American interests by elected officials who are not from these communities. In addition, and more important, we found that the combination of single-district city elections, Muslim and Arab demographic minority status, and hostile and wary attitudes by non-Arab and non-Muslim voters make it very difficult for candidates from these communities to get elected. It is also possible that divisions within Arab and Muslim communities hinder the electability of officials from within their ranks.

Most of our interviewees were very optimistic about the future of Arab American representation. Imad Hamad, Abdul Al-Haidous, and Osama Siblani, for example, were confident that the Arab American community will

have a much greater presence and impact on politics in the near future. A minority was not sure that the transition to more representation is coming soon. Based on our findings, we believe that several processes will be at work simultaneously in coming years to shape the future of Arab and Muslim representation.

Continuing Christian Arab Assimilation Will Lead to Increased Representation from This Population

We expect rates of representation of Christian Arabs to increase over time as continuing assimilation makes them indistinguishable from non-Arab whites for electoral purposes. Ajrouch and Jamal (2007) find that Christian Arabs are more likely than Muslim Arabs to identify as white and this trend is likely to continue. There will likely be more elected officials like Councilors Abraham and Darany and Sheriff Bouchard, or even former Senator Spencer Abraham, with hardly any links to Arab American communities, organizations, or causes, and some like Representative Amash with ties to their Arab American ancestry that are mostly limited to their Arab American church and family.

The Development of a Muslim Macro-ethnicity Will Improve the Ability of Muslims of All Ethnicities to Be Elected

A Muslim American identity that makes ethnic, sectarian, and other subidentities less important will probably continue to develop. Although some secular Arab Muslims may choose to assimilate into "white" culture and others may identify more as Arabs than Muslims, the majority will probably develop a greater sense of community with other Muslims because of the integrative role of mosques, Islamic schools, and outside pressures on Muslims. This may create a greater sense of difference between Muslim and Christian Arabs. The Muslim American community may gain in clout, influence, and representation over time as it expands demographically, develops its organizations further, and a new generation of American Muslims asserts itself and replaces older leaders for whom subidentities are important.

One example of the younger group of political activists is 34-year-old Representative Rashida Tlaib, a second-generation Palestinian American who is open and proud about being Muslim but refuses to be identified as Sunni or Shi'a. She worked with ACCESS for several years as a community activist. She received extensive support for her campaign across the board from Arab (particularly from those sharing her Palestinian heritage) and Muslim communities of many ethnicities. Her district is mostly Latino

and black—only 2 percent are Arab (primarily Yemeni), but she won the Democratic primaries against seven Latino and African American opponents with 44 percent of the vote and the general election with 90 percent of the vote. In addition to serving her district, she advocates for Arab and Muslim American issues such as having an Arab American heritage day in Lansing, the state capital.

Another example is Ali Sayed, an ambitious 28-year-old third-generation American Muslim of Lebanese heritage who ran unsuccessfully for the Dearborn city council in 2009. He is very active in the community and established a nonprofit organization to bring youths of all backgrounds together to lessen tensions and promote positive values. Many in the community predict a promising future for him. He is very open about his Muslim identity, but sees no reason to identify with a sect: "I know who I am but it's not productive to society or Islam to be recognized as Shi'a or Sunni . . . we are all Muslims, we are all practicing, and there is only one God who will judge." In addition to his broader mission to serve his city in general, he wants to help the integration of Arab and Muslim communities and reduce intercommunal tensions, to act as liaison between people and government to facilitate their interaction, and to provide positive representation for Muslims that improves how they are perceived.

Almost all other younger candidates and elected officials we interviewed, from both Sunni and Shi'a backgrounds, also self-identify as religious and refuse to adopt a sectarian identity. Judge David Turfe (45 years old) said, "We are all Muslims . . . we will all die someday and, *inshallah* [God willing], will go to heaven with our deeds, not our designations".[44] This contrasts with older elected officials such as Suzanne Sareini and Abdul al-Haidous (in their sixties) who self-identify as moderately religious and as Shi'a Muslims. The broad trend toward the gradual consolidation of an overarching, more politically meaningful Muslim American identity that supplants subidentities seems to be reflected in this generational attitudinal change.

The Worsening Economic Situation in the Metropolitan Detroit Area Will Delay the Easing of Ethnic and Religious Bias

In general, younger, wealthier, and more educated Americans are more accepting of Muslim candidates. One could therefore expect better prospects for Muslim and Arab American candidates over time as generational change takes place and more people become educated and better off. Michigan and metro Detroit's economic troubles will probably delay this transformation,

as would a continuation of geopolitical conflicts between the United States and Muslim-majority nation-states.

The Increase in the Muslim and Arab Populations in the Area May Lead to a Dramatic Increase in Representation Unless Current Elites Change Electoral Rules

Osama Siblani explains that AAPAC considers citywide elections to currently disadvantage the Arab American community, but hopes that the reverse will become true in five or six years when Arab Americans may form a majority within city limits.[45] He may very well be right, but if a study by Trebbi, Aghion, and Alesina (2008) of the history of electoral rule changes in American cities is any indication, the ruling establishment may very well change from a "winner-take-all" citywide electoral rule to a single-member district rule in order to limit Arab representation as the community approaches becoming a majority. This was the consistent strategy used by white politicians in southern cities and elsewhere after the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to maintain their influence. Of course, these are different times, and responsible officials who already have a good relationship with Arab and Muslim Americans may shun such an approach in Hamtramck, Dearborn, and other districts where demographics may tilt in favor of Arab and Muslim Americans.

The Retirement of Non-Arab Elected Officials Supported by Arab and Muslim Organizations Would Provide an Opening for Candidates from These Communities

The arrangement between Arab and Muslim community organizations and elected officials who are not from the community will logically have to be reevaluated whenever a supportive elected official retires, loses, or moves on to other pursuits. If qualified Arab or Muslim candidates happen to be running for any of these offices, they may very well be able to enjoy their endorsement and the resources and support they channel. The more the supply of qualified candidates increases, the more likely this is to happen.

Of course, unpredictable events may dramatically affect prospects of the two minorities' representation, such as a new war in the Middle East, a terrorist attack, a stable peace in the Middle East, an economic recession or depression, the influence of political or cultural change from outside of Michigan, and so forth. If nothing of the kind happens, however, we expect Arab and Muslim representation to gradually improve in the metro Detroit area because of the interplay of the five factors discussed above.

Notes

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1. We sometimes use the term "community" to refer to Arab Americans and Muslim Americans for convenience, but recognize that it is at best a metaphor because of internal divisions within each group and because of the ease of exit from them. As our discussion shows, for example, some Arab American politicians have become socially and politically "white" and some politicians who had a Muslim parent grew up, and self-identify, as Christians.

2. For a history of Arab American representation in Michigan, see Ahmed (2006).

3. The percentages of Arab Americans are from the 2000 U.S. census and are minimum estimates because it takes initiative for a respondent to figure out that she can write "Arab" or the name of her Arab country of ancestry under Other Race in the census form. Also, many Arabs consider themselves, and are legally considered, white and may therefore just check the legally appropriate box in the U.S. census form or American Community Survey questionnaire. See also Schopmeyer, "Arab Detroit after 9/11," this volume.

4. Abraham's father is Muslim, but he was raised as and identifies as Catholic, like his mother.

5. Incidentally, Hussein Berry was elected to the Dearborn Public School Board of Education in 2009.

6. They are: David Allen, Judge, Third Circuit Court, Wayne County; Annette Berry, Circuit Court Judge, Wayne County; Dianne Dickow D'Agostini, Oakland County District Judge, Forty-eighth District; Joseph J. Farah, Circuit Judge, Genesee County; Linda Saoud Hallmark, Probate Judge, Oakland County; Karen Khalil, Judge, Seventeenth District Court; Charlene Mekled-Elder, Judge, Third Circuit Court; James J. Rashid, Wayne County Circuit Court Judge; Henry William Saad, Judge, Michigan Court of Appeals; Sam Salamey, Magistrate Judge, Dearborn District Court; George Steeh, U.S. District Court Judge, Eastern District of Michigan; David Turfe, District Court Judge, Twentieth District; Tracy A. Yokich, Circuit Court Judge, Macomb County.

7. Interview with Osama Siblani, publisher of the *Arab American News* and a founding member of AAPAC, Dearborn, Michigan, October 12, 2009.

8. For example, David Bazzy, a Dearborn council candidate, told us that he was eagerly waiting the endorsement of YAPAC (interview with David Bazzy, Dearborn, Michigan, October 15, 2009).

9. Interview with David Turfe, Dearborn Heights, Michigan, October 16, 2009.

10. The MAPS surveys find Muslim Americans to be better off than other Americans in education and income, and the Pew Research Center's survey (2007, "Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream," 18) found them to "mirror the U.S. public in education and income."

11. AAI, "Arab Americans," http://www.aaiusa.org/arab-americans/22/demographics. Data is culled from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 4, but we couldn't access the raw data.

12. The Obama campaign later apologized for its staffers' behavior. Incidentally, the McCain campaign also alienated Michigan Muslims by removing Ali Jawad from a campaign position after a smear campaign by an Islamophobic campaign against him. See "Arab Americans Seek Apology from McCain Campaign," *Arab American News*, May 5, 2008, http://www.arabamericannews.com/news/index.php?mod=article&cat=Community&article=1006.

13. Interview with Imad Hamad, Dearborn, Michigan, October 12, 2009.

14. Interview with Osama Siblani.

15. Interview with Ramzi Dalloo, Troy, Michigan October 11, 2009.

16. According to the 2010 U.S. census, the four major Arab American groups in metropolitan Detroit are Lebanese/Syrian (59.7 percent), Palestinian/Jordanian (7.6 percent), Yemeni (2.7 percent), and Iraqi (13.3 percent).

17. One Arab American candidate claimed that opponents were trying to put a wedge between him and a rival family from his ancestral village to undermine his electoral chances.

18. Historically, Dearborn mayors Orville Hubbard and Michael Guido would manipulate and encourage divisions within the Arab American community, many of them personal, to get some support from it in spite of their hostility toward Arab Americans.

19. Interview with Dawud Walid, Southfield, Michigan, October 14, 2009.

20. Interview with Imad Hamad.

21. Interview with Osama Siblani.

22. Interview with Imad Hamad.

23. Interview with Ismael Ahmed, Dearborn, Michigan, October 12, 2009. His predecessor, Edward McNamara, was on equally friendly terms with Arab Americans.

24. Interview with James Allen, Detroit, Michigan, October 15, 2009.

25. Some community leaders were very critical of ACCESS's leadership, describing it as a monopoly that doesn't consult with those it is supposed to serve and that keeps other service organizations from developing (interview with Abed Hammoud, Dearborn, Michigan, October 14, 2009).

26. Interview with Ali Sayed, Dearborn, Michigan, October 16, 2009.

27. Interview with Suzanne Sareini, Dearborn, Michigan, October 12, 2009. Some claim that she did not receive community support because she was too close to Mayor Guido, who was hostile to Arabs at the time.

28. Interview with Abed Hammoud.

29. One in the Third District, 3 in the Fifth District, 1 in the Eighth District, 3 in the Ninth District, 5 in the Eleventh District, 1 in the Twelfth District, 3 in the Thirteenth District, 20 in the Fourteenth District, and 13 in the Fifteenth District (http://www.aaiusa.org/arab-americans/3923). The Republican Party does not have such positions.

30. *Democratic Party*: Ismael Ahmed, Third Vice Chair, Michigan Democratic Party; Jumana Judeh, Member, Democratic State Central Committee; Masoud al-Awamleh, Officer at Large, Michigan Democratic Party; Taleb Salhab, Officer at Large, Michigan Democratic Party; Mohamed Okdie, Vice Chair, Thirteenth Congressional District Democratic Party; Abed Hammoud, Treasurer, Dearborn Democratic Club; Mark Hanna, Chair, Oakland County Democratic Party; Ahmad Chebbani, Executive Board, Thirteenth District Democratic Party, Member, State Democratic Party; Fay Beydoun, Officer at Large, Michigan Democratic Party; Florence Nasser, Executive Board Member, Genesee County Democratic Party; Kenwah Dabaja, Regional Director for Michigan Young Democrats (Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth districts). *Republican Party*: Nicola Hawatmeh, Youth Chairman, Macomb County Republican Party and Vice President, Tri-City Republican Club; Abe Munfakh, Chairman, Eleventh Congressional District Republican Party; Abdul M. Mackie, Chairman, Dearborn Republican Club; Paul Sophiea, Vice Chair, Coalitions and Outreach Committee, Michigan Republican Party; Ken Harb, Secretary, Livonia Republican Club.

31. Historically this was true as well. The Democrats were encouraged to consider Arab Americans a supportive constituency as far back as the early 1950s; the Republicans organized the Arab American Republican Club to reverse this trend in the early 1960s (interview with Chuck Alawan, Dearborn, Michigan, June 16, 2010).

32. "Barack Obama Holds Lead among Arab American Vote: Historic Shift toward Democratic Party Continues," Zogby International, September 18, 2008, http://www

.zogby.com/news/ReadNews.cfm?ID=1553. See also "Zogby/AAI Poll: Arab American Voters to Decide on 2008 Presidential Candidates by Stance on Iraq War," Zogby International, June 28, 2007, http://www.zogby.com/news/ReadNews.cfm?ID=1330.

33. Interview with Osama Siblani.

34. Wayne County is divided into fifteen districts, Oakland County into twenty-five, and Macomb County into twenty-six. Commissioners are elected every two years in even-year elections. Wayne and Oakland counties elect one commissioner from each district, whereas Macomb County elects two, one to the County Commission and one to the Charter Commission.

35. Follow-up phone interview with Ismael Ahmed, April 23, 2010.

36. See, inter alia, http://americaslaststand.blogspot.com/2007/08/hamtramck-michigan.html and http://www.jihadwatch.org/2004/04/michigan-its-christian-bells-vs-muslim-prayer-calls.html.

37. Interview with Rashida Tlaib, Detroit, Michigan, October 16, 2009. Also confirmed in other interviews.

38. Interview with David Turfe. For wild threats from the blogosphere, see, inter alia, http://www.debbieschlussel.com/2611/islamerica-hezbollah-judge-elected-in-michigan/.

39. Interview with James Allen.

40. This is consistent with national studies and polls conducted between 1999 and 2007 by Gallup, Fox News, the *Los Angeles Times*, Rasmussen, and Pew that find that between 31 and 61 percent of their respondents claim that they would not vote for a Muslim candidate for president. Those rates are generally two to five times the rates for Catholics or Jews, slightly worse than the proportion of those who wouldn't vote for a Mormon, but a little better than the proportion of those who wouldn't vote for an "atheist" (Sinno 2009).

41. Inter alia, interview with James Allen.

42. Interview with Ismael Ahmed. See Haddad (1991) on this issue on the national level.

43. Interview with Adam Shakoor, Detroit, Michigan, October 13, 2009.

44. Incidentally, he made a similar statement about followers of all religions and expressed considerable respect for those who do not follow a religion as well.

45. Some estimate that two-thirds of Dearborn's under-18 population is Arab today.

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