Polyculturalism and Attitudes Toward Muslim Americans

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Polyculturalism is the belief that different racial and ethnic groups, both historically and contemporarily, have interacted, exchanged ideas, and influenced each other's cultures. Endorsement of polyculturalism involves viewing cultures as dynamic and constantly changing, as well as deeply connected to each other through different racial and ethnic groups' interactions and shared histories. Our past work in diverse samples in the U.S. has found that endorsement of polyculturalism is associated with less support for social inequality, more positive attitudes toward diversity, and lower racial/ethnic-, gender-, and sexual identity-based prejudice. Given heightened levels of prejudice faced by Muslim Americans in the U.S. currently, we aimed to explore in the current investigation whether polyculturalism can help us understand attitudes toward Muslim Americans. We found with both community adults across the U.S. (via craigslist; Study 1) and undergraduates at a university in the Northeastern U.S. (Study 2) that endorsement of polyculturalism was associated with less negative and more positive intergroup and policy attitudes as well as behavioral intentions toward Muslim Americans. These associations persisted when controlling for potentially confounding sociodemographic variables, such as age, gender, nativity, and race/ethnicity (both studies), as well as other established predictors of intergroup attitudes, including social dominance orientation and right-wing authoritarianism (Study 2). Consistent with past studies, these results suggest endorsement of polyculturalism is associated with more positive attitudes toward Muslim Americans in addition to other intergroup attitudes. Studying polyculturalism may be important for us to understand and improve intergroup attitudes and dynamics in an increasingly globalized, diverse world.

Keywords: diversity, intergroup attitudes, Muslims, Muslim Americans, polyculturalism

Arab, Middle Eastern, and Muslim Americans have faced heightened levels of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination in the U.S. since September 11, 2001 ([Jenkins, Ruppel, Kizer, Yehl, & Griffin, 2012](); [Raiya, Pargament, Mahoney, & Trevino, 2008]()). The events of that

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day, along with subsequent increases in representations of these groups as "terrorists" in mass media, military actions in Iraq and Afghanistan, government profiling and detaining of people from these groups accused of "terrorism," as well as other factors have been a part of this increase in already existing negative attitudes toward Muslim, Arab, and Middle Eastern Americans. Facing these heightened levels of interpersonal prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination, and threat of and/or actual physical violence by other people, as well as institutionalized discrimination, has many adverse consequences for these groups (Amer & Bagasra, 2013). Therefore, it is important to understand factors that contribute to attitudes toward these groups and that can potentially be harnessed to reduce this prejudice.

Experimental and correlational studies in the U.S. have found various factors that contribute to more positive or more negative attitudes toward Muslim Americans, such as perceptions of threat to Western values (Matthews & Levin, 2012), imagined intergroup contact (Turner & Crisp, 2010), authoritarianism, patriotism, and religious traditionalism (Kalkan, Layman, & Uslaner, 2009). And, some research has suggested that attitudes toward Muslim Americans may be driven by and be similar to attitudes toward other marginalized groups in the U.S., and because of this may be influenced by beliefs about diversity (Kalkan et al., 2009).

In this investigation, we explore the role of polyculturalism, an individual difference belief about the connections and influences among different racial and ethnic groups that shows promise in contributing to a fuller understanding of attitudes toward Muslim Americans.

Polyculturalism

Polyculturalism is the belief that different racial and ethnic groups both historically and contemporarily have interacted, exchanged ideas, and influenced each other's cultures (Rosenthal & Levy, 2010, 2012, 2013). Thus, endorsement of polyculturalism involves viewing cultures as dynamic and constantly changing, as well as deeply connected to each other through different racial and ethnic groups' mutual interactions and cultural influences. The concept of polyculturalism was introduced by historians Kelley (1999) and Prashad (2001, 2003). These historians have provided evidence of ways that different racial and ethnic groups around the world have interacted and influenced each other's cultures over time and continue to do so today. For example, Prashad (2001) documented the pan-African and pan-Asian (in addition to other) influences that created and contributed to the evolution of Kung Fu, although this martial art form is often thought of as solely an East Asian cultural product. Also, Flint (2006) has written about the ways that people of African and Indian descent in South Africa have shared ideas and practices and together influenced health and medicine in contemporary South Africa.

Bringing this concept into psychology, we began to examine individual differences in endorsement of or belief in polyculturalism, and the associations with intergroup attitudes (Rosenthal & Levy, 2010). From a psychological perspective, endorsing polyculturalism involves thinking of cultures and people as products of historical and contemporary interactions and influences among many different groups (Kelley, 1999), recognizing ways that we are all deeply and dynamically connected to people of other cultures by intersecting histories and shared cultural influences (Prashad, 2003), and viewing cultures as constantly changing because of these intergroup interactions. Even though polyculturalism is not a lay term, lay people may still endorse polyculturalism, especially in the U.S. or other places where everyday cross-cultural influences are at least sometimes discussed, such as with art, food, music, or politics. As one example, someone in the U.S. might think about influences from all racial and ethnic groups in the U.S., as well as cultures from around the world, in creating Jazz in its many forms and various aspects of the culture around Jazz. Endorsement of polyculturalism is presumed to foster more positive racial, ethnic, and religious intergroup attitudes and behaviors by de-emphasizing cultural boundaries and emphasizing connections among members of different groups, while still recognizing the importance of these identities (see Rosenthal & Levy, 2012). Greater endorsement of polyculturalism was expected to be associated with believing more in social equality among different groups, being more comfortable with and appreciative of diversity, and being more interested in interacting with people from backgrounds other than

one's own (Rosenthal & Levy, 2010; Rosenthal & Levy, 2012).

Our past work across many samples of diverse undergraduate and graduate students as well as adult community members in the U.S. indicates that endorsement of polyculturalism is indeed associated with less support for social inequality, more positive attitudes toward diversity, and lower racial/ethnic- (Rosenthal & Levy, 2012), gender- (Rosenthal, Levy, & Militano, 2014), and sexual identity-based prejudice (Rosenthal, Levy, & Moss, 2012). We have also found that in both the U.S. and the Philippines, endorsement of polyculturalism is associated with more positive attitudes toward immigrants (Bernardo, Rosenthal, & Levy, 2013). Across these studies, polyculturalism explains unique variance in intergroup attitudes, while controlling for many well-known predictors of intergroup attitudes, including assimilation, colorblindness, conservatism, egalitarianism, gender and race essentialism, gender and racial/ethnic identification, multiculturalism, positive self-beliefs, right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, and sociodemographics. Further, these associations have been found with a neutral (neither positively nor negatively framed) set of items meant to assess belief in polyculturalism as an understanding of cultures in general. Taken together, these past findings suggest that viewing cultures as dynamically connected to each other through interaction and influence is associated with more positive attitudes toward diversity in many forms and toward various social groups.

Because of the heightened levels of prejudice faced by Muslim Americans in the U.S. currently, it is important for research to continue to explore factors that can explain differences in, and potentially be leveraged to, improve attitudes toward Muslim Americans. Given that past research suggests attitudes toward Muslim Americans may be influenced by beliefs about diversity (Kalkan et al., 2009), and building on our past work on endorsement of polyculturalism finding that it is associated with more positive attitudes toward diversity and social equality (Rosenthal & Levy, 2012), we aimed to explore in the current investigation whether studying polyculturalism can specifically contribute to an understanding of attitudes toward Muslim Americans. Muslims from many cultures and parts of the world have influenced cultures around the world for centuries, including those in the U.S. We can see influences of Islamic cultures in architecture (e.g., arches), art (e.g., pottery, textiles), food (e.g., ice cream, spices), and science (e.g., algebra, the scientific method), as just a few examples. Individuals who endorse polyculturalism more might be more knowledgeable about some specific examples of Muslims' influences on different cultures. And, even if they did not know specific examples, because endorsement of polyculturalism on a broad level involves recognition that cultures influence each other, individuals endorsing polyculturalism would be expected to assume Islamic cultures have influenced and continue to influence other cultures.

The Current Investigation

In the current investigation, we aimed to test the hypothesis that endorsement of polyculturalism is associated with more positive and less negative attitudes and behavioral intentions toward Muslim Americans among both adult community members and college students in the U.S. We aimed to assess a broad range of both positive and negative attitudes, affect, and behaviors toward Muslim Americans across the two studies, including allophilia (positive attitudes, like, or love of a group; Studies 1 and 2), intergroup anxiety (anxiety experienced when interacting with members of a group; Study 1), behavioral intentions (willingness for contact with members of a group; Studies 1 and 2), interest in knowing about or helping with issues faced by a group (Study 1), and support for policies that could positively or negatively affect a group (Studies 1 and 2). In testing our hypothesis, we assessed and controlled for potentially confounding sociodemographic variables, including age, gender, nativity, and race/ethnicity (Studies 1 and 2), as well as other well-established predictors of intergroup attitudes, including social dominance orientation and right-wing authoritarianism (Study 2).

Study 1

Study 1 aimed to test the association of endorsement of polyculturalism with attitudes toward Muslim Americans among a sample of adults from cities across the U.S., while controlling for potentially confounding sociodemo-

graphic characteristics, including age, gender, nativity, and race/ethnicity.

Method

Participants and procedure. A total of 166 adults (114 women, 52 men; $M_{age} = 32.87$, $SD = 12.59$; 103 White, 20 Latino, 12 Black, 7 Asian, 24 Other or Multiracial/ethnic; 150 born in the U.S., 16 born outside the U.S.) were recruited via craigslist and completed an online survey. Participants were recruited from the following 28 cities' craigslist sites across the U.S.: Birmingham, Alabama; Anchorage, Alaska; Phoenix, Arizona; Scottsdale, Arizona; Long Beach, California; Sacramento, California; San Diego, California; Santa Ana, California; Aurora, Colorado; Washington, DC; Hialeah, Florida; Jacksonville, Florida; Fort Wayne, Indiana; Wichita, Kansas; Detroit, Michigan; Omaha, Nebraska; Reno, Nevada; Newark, New Jersey; Buffalo, New York; Greensboro, North Carolina; Cleveland, Ohio; Portland, Oregon; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Corpus Christi, Texas; El Paso, Texas; Houston, Texas; Virginia Beach, Virginia; Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Participants were entered into a raffle for the potential to win one of ten $25 gift cards. An additional 16 adults completed the survey, but were excluded from analyses because they identified as Muslim or Muslim American. And, an additional nine complete entries were removed because of it being a participant who completed the survey more than once (determined based on IP address, name, and email address).

Measures

Polyculturalism. Participants completed an established 5-item measure of endorsement of polyculturalism (e.g., "Different cultural groups impact one another, even if people in those groups are not completely aware of the impact"; Rosenthal & Levy, 2012; $\alpha = .92$) on a scale of 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly Agree*).

Allophilia. Participants completed an established 17-item measure of allophilia, or positive attitudes toward outgroups, adapted for this study to refer to Muslim Americans (e.g., "In general, I have positive attitudes about Muslim Americans"; Pittinsky, Rosenthal, & Montoya, 2011; $\alpha = .95$) on a scale of 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly Agree*).

Intergroup anxiety. Participants completed an established 11-item measure of intergroup anxiety, adapted for this study to refer to Muslim Americans (e.g., "I would feel nervous if I had to sit alone in a room with a Muslim American and start a conversation"; Britt, Bonieci, Vescio, Biernat, & Brown, 1996; $\alpha = .84$) on a scale of 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly Agree*).

Behavioral intentions. Participants completed the established 12-item Behavioral Intentions measure, which assesses willingness for intergroup contact, and which was adapted for this study to refer to Muslim Americans (e.g., How willing you would be to "have a Muslim American as a close friend?"; Esses & Dovidio, 2002; $\alpha = .94$) on a scale of 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly Agree*).

Interest in Muslim American issues. Participants responded to the question, "How interested would you be in knowing about or helping with the issues faced by Muslim Americans?" on a scale of 1 (*Not at all interested*) to 10 (*Very interested*).

Policy attitudes. Participants reported on a scale of 1 (*Oppose Strongly*) to 4 (*Favor Strongly*) their attitudes toward four policies: (a) "the government limiting the number of Muslims allowed to get visas to visit the U.S. as tourists"; (b) "the practice of racial profiling by police or security of Muslim Americans in airports and other places"; (c) a policy that makes it illegal for police or security to racially profile Muslim Americans"; (d) "the building of more mosques in your area." We examined each of these policy attitudes separately because of their distinct implications.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 displays means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations for Study 1. A series of eight stepwise regression analyses were conducted for allophilia, intergroup anxiety, willingness for contact, interest in Muslim American issues, and the four policy questions as outcome variables. These analyses all included polyculturalism as the main predictor variable of interest entered in Step 2 of the regressions by itself, as well as control variables for age, gender, nativity, and race/ethnicity (as 4 dummy-coded variables for Asian, Black, Latino, and White) entered together in Step 1 of the regressions. Results of Step 2 of the regression analyses are in Table 2. Consistent with hypoth-

Table 1
Bivariate Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Study 1 (N = 166)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Polyculturalism									
2. Allophilia	.20*								
3. Intergroup anxiety	−.20*	−.50**							
4. Behavioral intentions	.39**	.69**	−.51**						
5. Interest in Muslim American issues	.15	.48**	−.30**	.45**					
6. Limiting tourist visas	−.25**	−.29**	.49**	−.36**	−.17*				
7. Racial profiling	−.30**	−.27**	.40**	−.33**	−.22**	.68**			
8. Policy making racial profiling illegal	.28**	.35**	−.20*	.43**	.39**	−.21**	−.34**		
9. Building more mosques in area	.19*	.61**	−.29**	.53**	.47**	−.14	−.04	.37**	
M	5.55	4.54	3.28	5.28	5.30	1.92	1.92	2.55	2.62
SD	1.25	1.14	1.07	1.29	2.56	.88	.99	1.10	.84

* $p < .05.$ ** $p < .01.$

eses, endorsement of polyculturalism was significantly associated with greater allophilia toward Muslim Americans, lower intergroup anxiety toward Muslim Americans, greater willingness for contact with Muslim Americans, and greater interest in knowing about or helping with Muslim American issues. Also consistent with hypotheses, endorsement of polyculturalism was significantly associated with less support for limiting tourist visas to the U.S. for Muslims and for racial profiling of Muslim Americans, as well as more support for a policy that would make racial profiling of Muslim Americans illegal and for building more mosques in one's area. Results support that even while controlling for potentially confounding sociodemographic variables, greater endorsement of polyculturalism is associated with more positive and less negative attitudes toward Muslim Americans, including for relevant policies and behavioral intentions for contact with Muslim Americans.

Study 2

Study 2 aimed to test the association of endorsement of polyculturalism and attitudes toward Muslim Americans among a sample of undergraduates attending a midsized public university in the Northeastern U.S., while controlling for potentially confounding sociodemographic characteristics, including age, gender, nativity, and race/ethnicity, as well as well-known predictors of intergroup attitudes, including social dominance orientation and right-wing authoritarianism.

Method

Participants and procedure. A total of 228 (132 women, 96 men; $M_{age} = 19.03$, $SD = 2.46$) undergraduates (102 Asian, 75 White, 23 Black, 18 Latino, 10 Other or Multiracial/ethnic; 163 born in the U.S., 65 born outside the U.S.) at a midsized public university in the Northeastern U.S. completed an online survey and received Psychology subject pool participation credit for their participation. An additional 14 students completed the survey, but were excluded from analyses because they identified as Muslim or Muslim American.

Measures. Participants completed the same measures for polyculturalism ($\alpha = .91$), allophilia ($\alpha = .95$), and behavioral intentions ($\alpha = .93$) as from Study 1. Participants also responded to two of the same policy questions from Study 1, regarding limiting the number of tourist visas to the U.S. for Muslims and racial profiling of Muslim Americans in airports and other places.

Social dominance orientation. Participants completed the established 14-item measure of social dominance orientation, or support for social hierarchy and inequality (e.g., "It's OK if some groups have more of a chance in life than others"; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994; $\alpha = .92$) on a scale of −3 (*Very Negative*) to + 3 (*Very Positive*).

Right-wing authoritarianism. Participants completed an established 8-item measure of right-wing authoritarianism, or submission to established and legitimized authorities in society, hostility toward those who go against authorities, and high conventionality (e.g., "Our country will

Table 2
Results of Step 2 of Regression Analyses for Study 1 (N = 166)

	Allophilia β	Intergroup anxiety β	Behavioral intentions β	Interest in Muslim American Issues β	Limiting tourist visas β	Racial profiling β	Policy making racial profiling illegal β	Building more mosques in area β
Age	.00	−.04	−.06	.04	.12	−.02	.00	.10
Female	.18*	−.00	.07	.08	−.22**	−.30**	.13	.06
Born in U.S.	.11	−.10	.10	.02	−.14	.03	−.04	.12
Asian	.11	−.01	.01	.14	.04	.02	−.04	.06
Black	−.07	−.04	−.12	.21*	.03	.02	−.09	−.07
Latino	.08	−.08	−.06	.17	.02	−.09	−.02	−.04
White	−.00	.02	−.01	.09	.11	.09	−.14	−.05
Polyculturalism	.18*	−.22**	.35**	.19*	−.23**	−.30**	.26**	.17*
ΔR² for Step 2 (inclusion of polyculturalism)	.03*	.04**	.11**	.03*	.05**	.08**	.06**	.03*

p < .05. ** *p* < .01.

be destroyed someday if we do not smash the perversions eating away at our moral fiber and traditional beliefs"; Sibley, Harding, Perry, Asbrock, & Duckitt, 2010; α = .72) on a scale of 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly Agree*).

Results and Discussion

Table 3 displays means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations for Study 2. A series of four stepwise regression analyses were conducted for allophilia, willingness for contact, and the two policy questions as outcome variables. These analyses all included polyculturalism as the main predictor variable of interest entered in Step 2 of the regressions by itself, as well as control variables for age, gender, nativity, race/ethnicity (as 4 dummy-coded variables for Asian, Black, Latino, and White), social dominance orientation, and right-wing authoritarianism entered together in Step 1 of the regressions. Results of Step 2 of the regression analyses are in Table 4. Consistent with hypotheses, endorsement of polyculturalism was significantly associated with greater allophilia toward Muslim Americans and greater willingness for contact with Muslim Americans. Also consistent with hypotheses, endorsement of polyculturalism was significantly associated with less support for limiting tourist visas to the U.S. for Muslims and for racial profiling of Muslim Americans. Results replicate and extend Study 1 results, and support that even while controlling for potentially confounding sociodemographic variables and well-known, strong predictors of intergroup attitudes, greater endorsement of polyculturalism is associated with more positive and less negative attitudes toward Muslim Americans, including for relevant policies and behavioral intentions for contact with Muslim Americans.

General Discussion

In two online survey studies, one with adult community members from cities across the U.S. (recruited via craigslist) and one with undergraduates at a midsized public university in the Northeastern U.S., we found support for the hypothesis that endorsement of polyculturalism is associated with greater allophilia toward Muslim Americans, less intergroup anxiety toward Muslim Americans, greater willingness

Table 3
Bivariate Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Study 2 (N = 228)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Polyculturalism							
2. Social dominance orientation	−.42**						
3. Right-wing authoritarianism	−.26**	.24**					
4. Allophilia	.26**	−.28**	−.16*				
5. Behavioral intentions	.44**	−.47**	−.35**	.64**			
6. Limiting tourist visas	−.26**	.22**	.20**	−.12	−.16*		
7. Racial profiling	−.27**	.32**	.13	−.26**	−.23**	.40**	
M	5.66	−1.53	3.36	4.30	5.05	1.96	1.98
SD	.89	.99	.92	.94	1.03	.70	.82

* $p < .05.$ ** $p < .01.$

for contact with Muslim Americans, greater interest in knowing about or helping with the issues faced by Muslim Americans, as well as less support for limiting tourist visas to the U.S. given to Muslims and racial profiling of Muslim Americans, and more support for making racial profiling of Muslim Americans illegal and building more mosques in one's area. These associations remained significant while controlling for potentially confounding sociodemographic variables, including age, gender, nativity, and race/ethnicity, as well as other established predictors of intergroup attitudes, including social dominance orientation and right-wing authoritarianism. These results build on a growing body of work demonstrating the positive associations that polyculturalism has with a variety of intergroup attitudes, and confirm that this also applies to a range of attitudes and behavioral intentions toward Muslim Americans, a

group currently facing heightened prejudice in the U.S.

Taken together, these and past findings suggest that polyculturalism—the belief that different racial and ethnic groups both historically and contemporarily have interacted, exchanged ideas, and influenced each other's cultures—is a unique construct that explains additional variance in a range of intergroup attitudes, above and beyond relevant constructs, including assimilation, colorblindness, conservatism, egalitarianism, gender and race essentialism, gender and racial/ethnic identification, multiculturalism, positive self-beliefs, right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, and sociodemographics. In forthcoming work, we have additionally found that among racially and ethnically diverse undergraduates, greater endorsement of polyculturalism is associated with less intergroup anxiety (and thereby more pos-

Table 4
Results of Step 2 of Regression Analyses for Study 2 (N = 228)

	Allophilia β	Behavioral intentions β	Limiting tourist visas β	Racial profiling β
Age	.00	−.00	.04	.09
Female	−.07	.02	.14*	.05
Born in U.S.	.07	.07	.02	−.04
Asian	−.13	−.06	−.07	−.12
Black	−.11	.06	−.09	−.15
Latino	−.04	.05	.03	−.11
White	−.25	.03	−.10	−.12
Social dominance orientation	−.21**	−.30**	.12	.24**
Right-wing authoritarianism	−.07	−.20**	.13	.03
Polyculturalism	.14*	.24**	−.19*	−.15*
ΔR^2 for Step 2 (inclusion of polyculturalism)	.02*	.04**	.03*	.02*

* $p < .05.$ ** $p < .01.$

itive academic- and alcohol-related outcomes), while controlling for general social anxiety and both current and high school grade point average (Rosenthal, Levy, London, & Lewis, 2015), again suggesting that polyculturalism makes a unique contribution to our understanding of intergroup dynamics. An understanding of cultures from around the world as dynamically connected to each other through both historical and current interactions and influences is not a part of other relevant intergroup beliefs, although it is also related to other beliefs. Past research indicates that intergroup beliefs such as polyculturalism and multiculturalism, or right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation are related to each other but still explain unique variance in intergroup dynamics (Crawford, Brady, Pilanski, & Erny, 2013; Rosenthal & Levy, 2012), suggesting it is fruitful to continue to explore the interconnections among these constructs. It may be that to best understand intergroup dynamics and develop ways to improve intergroup relations, we should be taking into account and combining many different belief systems (e.g., see Rosenthal & Levy, 2010). Additionally, a better understanding of what leads people to adopt these various belief systems (e.g., education, intergroup contact, etc.) can inform intervention efforts (e.g., see Rosenthal & Levy, 2010).

Limitations and Future Directions

The current investigation involved two cross-sectional, survey studies, thus not allowing for confidence in the direction of effects. Given the results that polyculturalism is associated with more positive attitudes and behavioral intentions toward Muslim Americans, future research should explore experimentally if priming or teaching polyculturalism leads to increases in positive and decreases in negative attitudes toward Muslim Americans and/or other groups. We have not yet tested the extent to which polyculturalism is a stable belief versus a belief that changes over time; longitudinal work that measures polyculturalism across several points in time is needed to assess this. Together, future experimental and longitudinal research will be able to determine if and how polyculturalism can be leveraged and implemented in intervention efforts aimed at reducing prejudice, stereo-

typing, and discrimination toward Muslim Americans in the U.S.

The current study used a general, neutral measure of endorsement of polyculturalism, which has been used in prior empirical work; therefore, findings suggest that understanding cultures generally as connected to each other through mutual interactions and influences may help people to see people from different backgrounds more positively, even when faced with many negative images of some groups, such as with Muslim Americans. However, it is unknown if measuring the more specific belief that Muslims have influenced culture in the U.S. and/or vice versa would yield the same, stronger, or weaker associations with attitudes toward Muslim Americans. Related to this issue of group specificity is the question of whether a group's relative level of status or power in society might influence the implications of polyculturalism. We have previously found endorsement of polyculturalism to have consistent associations with more positive intergroup attitudes across members of different racial and ethnic as well as gender groups of differing social status and power in the U.S. (Rosenthal & Levy, 2012; Rosenthal et al., 2014); however, this again was using a general measure of polyculturalism. Future work that utilizes a group specific measure of polyculturalism could help address whether the relative social status or power of two particular groups influences the association between endorsement of polyculturalism and specific intergroup attitudes. This is relevant, as contexts of cultural contact and influence often involve dynamics of power and oppression (e.g., slavery, colonization). Future work may want to explore these and other potential nuances in measurement of polyculturalism to more deeply understand the implications of this way of understanding cultures.

Future work may also want to build on the current investigation by testing whether endorsement of polyculturalism buffers people from exposure to negative stereotypes of Muslim Americans, for example, through mass media, leading to more negative attitudes and behavioral intentions toward Muslim Americans. Are people who endorse polyculturalism more not as influenced by these negative images promoting stereotypes as others who endorse it less?

The current investigation also did not explore potential mechanisms involved in the relationship between polyculturalism and attitudes toward Muslim Americans, which may be an important area for future research to examine. For example, are affective or cognitive processes, or both, involved in explaining why believing that different racial and ethnic groups interact and influence each other's cultures is associated with more positive attitudes and behavioral intentions toward Muslim Americans, as well as diverse others more generally?

It may be helpful for future work to continue to explore any cultural differences in endorsement of polyculturalism and the associations that polyculturalism has with different cultural beliefs and attitudes. In our past work, we have found endorsement of polyculturalism to be high and polyculturalism to have consistent associations with more positive intergroup attitudes across different racial/ethnic groups in the U.S. (Rosenthal & Levy, 2012) and across the U.S. and the Philippines (Bernardo et al., 2013). We have also found endorsement of polyculturalism to be associated with more positive intergroup attitudes while controlling for racial/ethnic identification, and to be associated with greater openness to criticizing some elements of one's own culture that, for example, may discriminate against some groups of people, such as women or gay men and lesbian women (Rosenthal et al., 2012; Rosenthal et al., 2014). However, there is much more to learn about how endorsement of polyculturalism may vary across different cultural groups and may be related to various culturally relevant beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors in future research.

Related to the importance of being attuned to potential cultural differences, although research on polyculturalism to date has consistently found associations with more positive and less negative intergroup attitudes, it is important for future work to continue to be mindful of any potential adverse consequences of polyculturalism. For example, we created the measure of polyculturalism to be free of valence purposefully, but this means that we do not yet know if focusing on positive versus negative interactions among different racial/ethnic cultures throughout history or currently would affect whether the associations with intergroup attitudes are positive or negative. Also, we do not know the implications of polyculturalism in re-

gions of the world in which there are heightened levels of conflict and violence between different racial/ethnic groups because, in these cases, we do not know if thinking about intergroup interactions and cultural influences would be viewed positively or negatively. Indeed, the social, political, and cultural history of each region of the world likely plays a role in levels of endorsement, framing, judgment, and implications of polyculturalism, all of which remains to be tested in future research.

Conclusion

We found that endorsement of polyculturalism—the belief that different racial and ethnic groups interact and influence each other's cultures—is associated with more positive and less negative attitudes and behavioral intentions toward Muslim Americans, a group facing heightened levels of prejudice currently in the U.S. These findings build on past work and support that endorsement of polyculturalism has many positive associations for a range of intergroup attitudes. This body of work also connects to other research and theory that are currently attempting to move beyond a focus on difference and separateness when thinking about intergroup relations and managing diverse societies. While colorblindness has been criticized for ignoring important group identities, cultural differences, and experiences of discrimination due to race, ethnicity, language, or culture (Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000), multiculturalism has also been criticized for focusing too much on cultural differences such that it can lead to stereotyping and maintaining divisions among groups (Bigler, 1999). Indeed, research finds both positive and negative consequences of each of these beliefs or approaches to managing diversity (see Rosenthal & Levy, 2010 for a review). Approaching diversity and understanding cultures in more dynamic ways that allows for nuances of both difference and connection among groups is a direction much work is taking that may be promising for intergroup relations. For example, Lalonde, Cila, Lou, and Cribbie (2015) has argued that in psychology we are biased toward focusing on differences between groups, often at the expense of paying attention to similarities across diverse groups of people. In addition, Moghaddam (2012) has argued for taking an "omniculturalism" approach

to improving intergroup relations, by first teaching people to focus on commonalities across groups, and then later teaching them to recognize differences between groups. Belief in polyculturalism allows for recognizing and paying attention to group memberships and identities, and the different experiences those bring along with them, while simultaneously seeing connections across groups because of focusing on the ways that different racial and ethnic groups have always interacted and influenced each other's cultures over time. We suggest polyculturalism should not replace, but rather be incorporated with other beliefs known to have positive consequences for intergroup relations to aid in a more nuanced view of groups and cultures (Rosenthal & Levy, 2010). All of these research efforts move us forward and provide new perspectives about how we can understand the complexities involved in and work toward improving intergroup relations both within the U.S. and around the world. Our current findings, along with our past work, suggest that polyculturalism may be a key belief for research to continue to explore in understanding intergroup attitudes and reducing intergroup conflict in diverse societies, and in an increasingly globalized world.

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