

# The Politicization of Muslims and National Security Policy

**ABSTRACT:** Existing literature suggests evidence that American citizens have implicit and explicit biases against Muslims that influence or allow biased policies.

My paper analyzes public opinion towards security legislation that discriminates against Muslims and examines how willing Americans are to support policies that infringe on civil liberties. My research poses three main questions: 1) Are opinions on national security influenced by the framing; 2) Does bias and ethnic-profiling make minorities more prone to support protection of civil liberties and 3) Are discriminatory policies against Muslims politicized by party affiliates?

Using a survey, I found that framing the chosen policies to emphasize liberty or security had little influence on responses. Furthermore, I argue that, while literature suggests that minority groups tend lean pro-liberty relative to the White demographic, this concept is not substantial across all races when considering current Muslim-profiling policies. Finally, we find some evidence that ideology and ethnocentrism have become closely related factors after the 2016 Presidential Campaign, and that negative feelings of Muslims and national security policy has become more polarized than in the past.

**METHODS:** My research design surveys respondents about policies that institutionally discriminate against Muslims. These statements are framed in one of three ways: neutral, emphasis on national security intentions, and emphasis on infringement of civil liberty rights.

Frame	General Question	Wording
Neutral	4 <sup>th</sup> Amendment Rights	The government should be allowed to detain all U.S. citizens suspected of terrorism, regardless of whether the government has obtained a warrant for their arrest.
Neutral	U.S. Security	The FBI and the police should be allowed to conduct surveillance of the behavior and lifestyles of certain racial or religious communities.

Frame	Policy	Question Wording
Neutral	Detention of Terrorists	The government should be allowed to detain all U.S. citizens suspected of terrorism, regardless of whether the government has obtained a warrant for their arrest.
Neutral	FBI Surveillance	The FBI and the police should be allowed to conduct surveillance of the behavior and lifestyles of certain racial or religious communities.
Neutral	Muslim Ban	I support the recent executive order that bans individuals from certain countries from entering the United States.
National Security	Detention of Terrorists	The government should be allowed to detain all U.S. citizens suspected of terrorism, regardless of whether the government has obtained a warrant for their arrest, in order to protect national security.
National Security	FBI Surveillance	In order to protect US citizens, the FBI and the police should be allowed to conduct surveillance of the behavior and lifestyles of certain racial or religious communities.
National Security	Muslim Ban	No Change
Civil Liberties	Detention of Terrorists	The government should be allowed to detain all U.S. citizens suspected of terrorism, regardless of whether the government has obtained a warrant for their arrest, even if this violates citizens' constitutional rights.
Civil Liberties	FBI Surveillance	Even if it means violating privacy rights, the FBI and the police should be allowed to conduct surveillance of the behavior and lifestyles of certain racial or religious communities.
Civil Liberties	Muslim Ban	No Change

## CONCLUSIONS:

This paper studies race and ideology in the context of biased policy against Muslims for a variety of reasons. My study agrees with some conversations stating that non-white individuals tend to choose civil liberties more frequently over security; obviously, this is not the case across all policies. In highlighting how bias against Muslims leads to institutionalized discrimination, I emphasize how important it is to have individuals set a precedent for their rights, and look past stereotypes that victimize groups and permit problematic policies.

Finally, while its clear Liberals and Conservatives have different views on security policies and Muslims, I believe there is merit in studying how these are associated from election to election. Both Conservative and Liberal administrations have passed stringent security policies, but the way party affiliates and media representatives discuss them are is very different. Failing to considering discrimination in the context of policy will lead to a gap between Americans’ understanding of legislation and the government’s perpetuating laws that might disregard important values.

## RESULTS:

As expected, individuals have a high support for the constitutional amendment that ensures privacy and security. Observing Figure 1, we see that 87% of respondents are on some level of agreement with the belief in the 4th amendment, the law that is supposed to protect citizens from unlawful search and seizure.The majority of respondents also agreed that the U.S. government was doing enough in terms of national security (Figure 2).

Framing policies usually provides substantial differences in research. However, for our national security agendas regarding Muslim surveillance, the nature of the questions in our survey have negligible differences. In Figure 3, percentages between the control, the national security highlighted questions and the civil liberty highlighted questions are slightly dissimilar. While not exactly homogenous, the control and national security framed survey questions have almost identical results. Conversely, in terms of percentages we see that the survey questions emphasized in terms of civil liberties display the opposite of the original hypothesis, that is, more individuals agreed with the policies as legitimate national security initiatives.

In Figure 4, its revealed that, across the chosen policies, 92.73% of conservatives agree while 50.38% of liberals agree with the security initiatives. Party ideology plays a larger role in support of national security agendas that institutionalize discrimination against Muslims; the differences are notable since opinions on security policies were never this polarized.

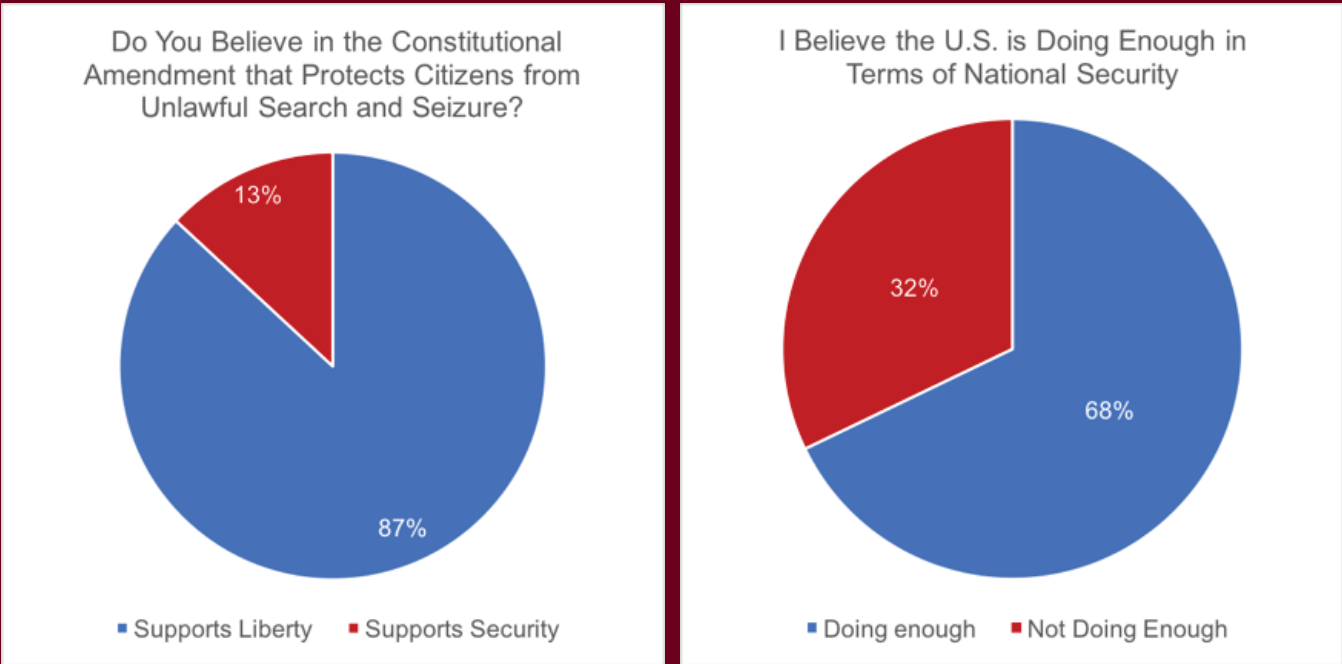


Figure 1.

Figure 2.

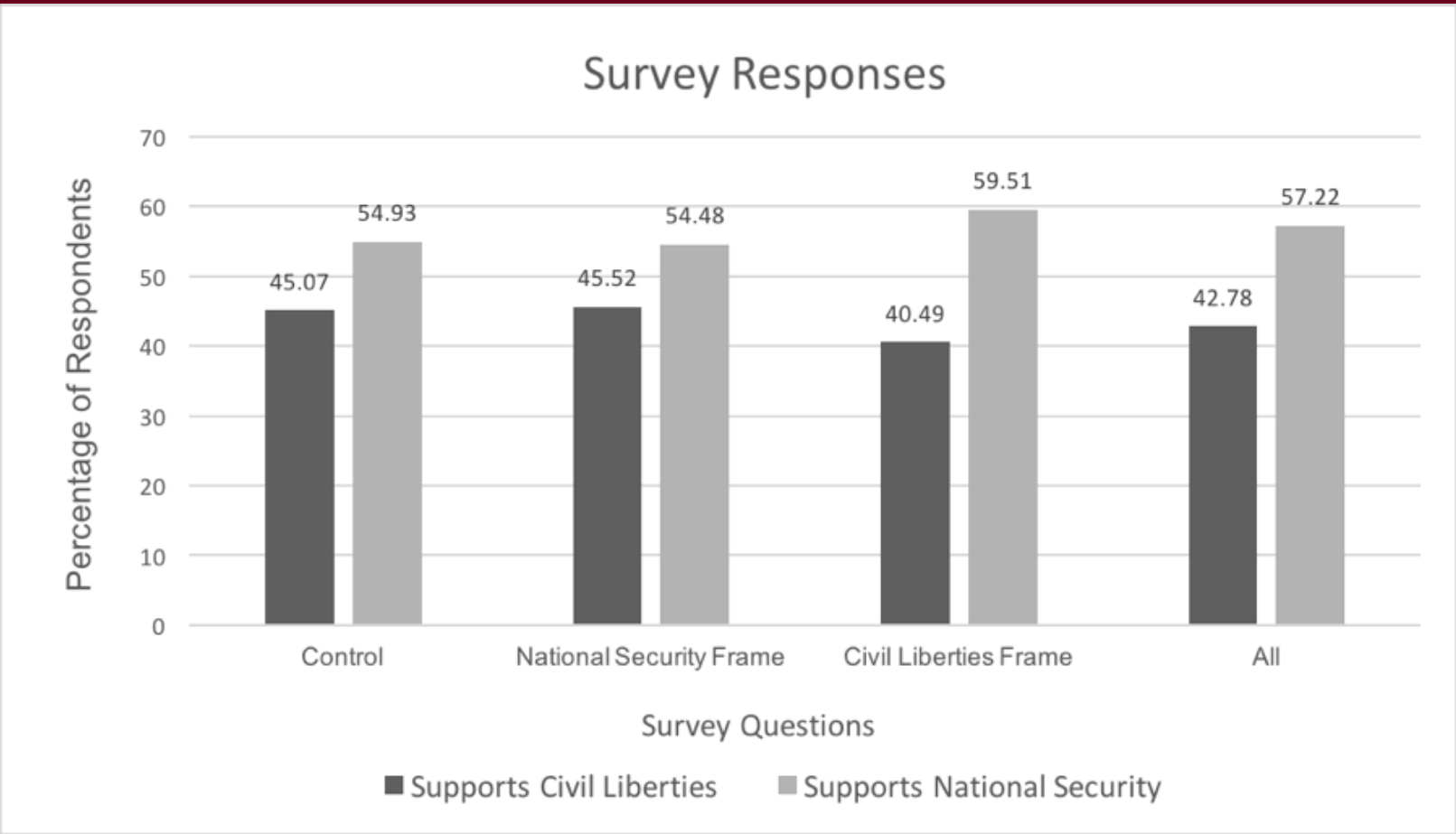


Figure 3.

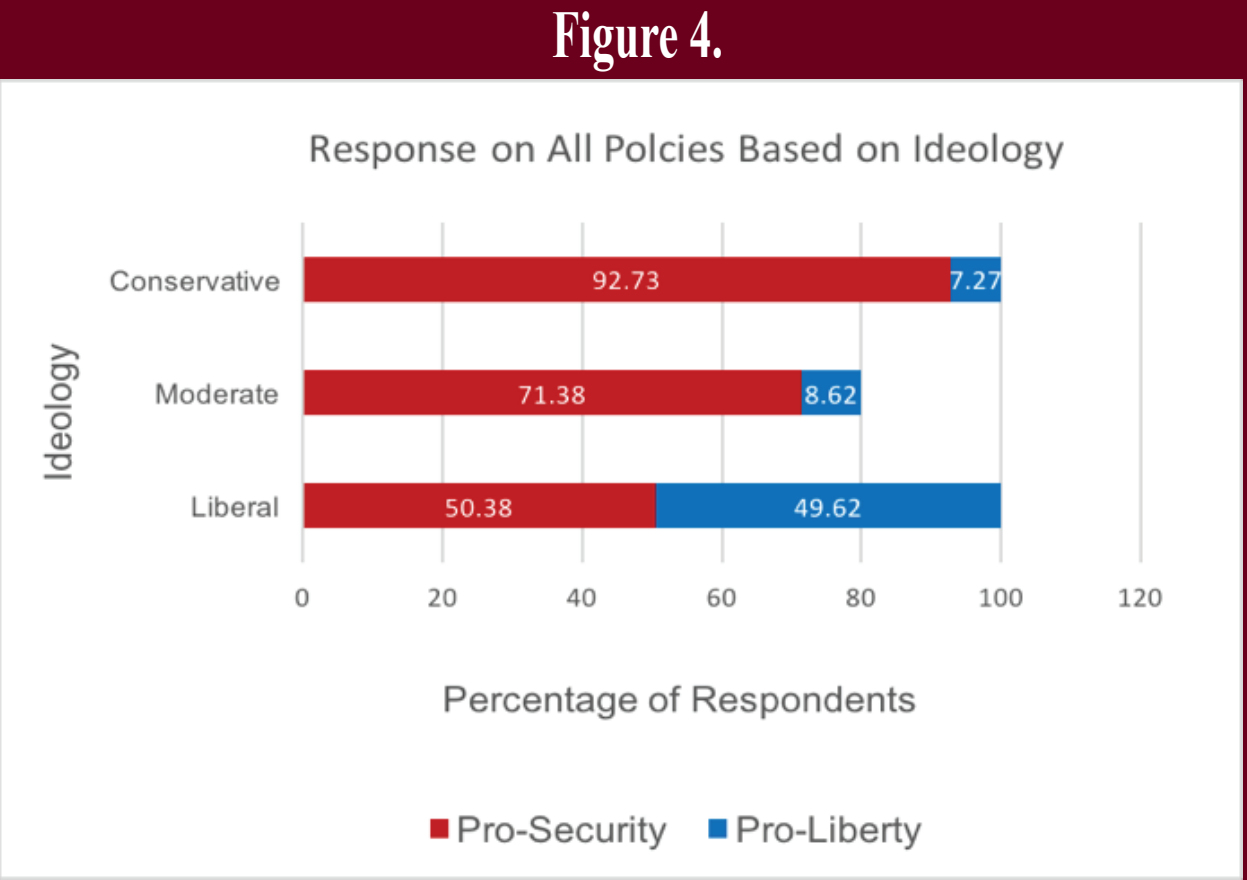


Figure 4.

“ Donald J. Trump is calling for a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country’s representatives can figure what the hell is going on. We have no choice.”

- Donald J. Trump  
45th President of the United States of America