Introduction

In 2006, in the midst of the Iraq War and the War on Terror, the race for the open seat in Minnesota's third congressional district pitted Republican Erik Paulsen against Democrat J. Ashwin Madia, a Marine Corps veteran. Madia's youthful profile and diverse background were deemed by many to be a winning combination and he emphasized his military service on the campaign trail. A month before the election, a television attack ad aired nationally with footage of Madia that had been edited so that his skin tone appeared darker. Minnesota GOP officials emphasized that Madia was not "one of us." While many decried these campaign tactics, Madia lost by almost eight percentage points, a sizable drop from expectations (Weaver 2012). Since his defeat, however, a larger number of South Asian Americans have sought and won elected office, most prominently Vice President Kamala Harris who is of Indian and Jamaican descent (Sadhwani and Arora 2020).

Research has found a distinct hierarchy in how a white majority view racial minorities in the United States (Kim 1999) with Asians seen positively in comparison to black people on issues related to civic and social integrity, and that this hierarchy also extends to political candidates (Visalvanich 2017*a*,*b*). However, South Asians' place in this hierarchical dynamic remains unclear. On the one hand, South Asians possess many of the same qualities as East Asians, especially when it comes to the history of US immigration policy towards them (Bald et al. 2013; Prashad 2000), as well as socio-economic status and education (DeNavas-Walt, Richardson and Stringfellow 2010). On the other hand, research has found a tendency for the dominant white majority to project broad, mostly negative stereotypes onto heterogeneous racial out-groups (Bobo 2001; Omi and Winant 1994), including South Asians. Recent work has also pointed to the issue of South Asians not being seen as "Asian enough." (Lee 2000). Since the terror attacks of 9/11, South Asians have been subject to increasing racial discrimination, because of their ethnic features (Mishra 2016; Joshi 2006).

While the emergence of South Asians to political prominence in and of itself begs for further academic investigation, South Asian candidacies also allow us to examine how em-

phasizing different social identities can impact minority political candidacies and voter evaluations. Stereotyping of South Asians is linked to both religious identity (Lajevardi 2020; Calfano and Lajevardi 2019), as well as perceived disloyalty to America due to the events of 9/11 (Mishra 2016). Research on social identity theory has found that some members of racial minority out-groups choose to emphasize different aspects of their identity in order to be accepted by the higher status in-group (Hickel et al. 2020). Scholarship on minority campaigns have generally found that minority candidates strategically emphasize and de-emphasize the racial aspects of their candidacies to improve their chances at election (Perry 1996), and that cuing military service can be a credible way of asserting American values (McDermott and Panagopoulos 2015). Through a survey experiment, we test how voters evaluate fictional South Asian American candidates with differing religious identities and examine whether emphasizing a military background has any effect in moderating negative racial response to South Asian candidates.

We find South Asian Muslim candidates to be significantly disadvantaged when compared to white candidates with a similar profile. The addition of ideological cues diminishes this disadvantage, but we find it persists with conservative Muslim candidates. On the other hand, Muslim candidates with a military background receive a boost in evaluation that is on par with white military candidates. South Asian Hindu candidates, conversely, do not receive as much of a boost from having a military background as Muslim candidates do. Finally, we find significant differential effects among partisans, with Republicans being more hostile to both Muslim and Hindu candidates. Additionally, Democrats are more favorable towards Hindu candidates when compared to the fictional white candidates and evaluate Muslim candidates similarly to their white counterparts.

Minority Candidate Stereotyping and Racial Messaging

Voters weigh numerous factors when deciding who to support in an election, judging not just a candidate's personal background and political record but also evaluating the messages a candidate's campaign seeks to emphasize (Vavreck 2009; Popkin 1994). Minority candidates face an additional challenge of race-based stereotypes impacting their candidacies as research on minority candidates broadly has found that, white voters impute group-based stereotypes onto minority candidates (Juenke and Shah 2016; Andersen and Junn 2010; McDermott 1998; Sigelman et al. 1995; Terkildsen 1993). Much of this literature has focused on examining black and Latino candidates and has found that conservative white voters penalize black and Latino candidates by attributing racial-political attributes onto black and Latino Democrats (Visalvanich 2017*b*; Sigelman et al. 1995; McDermott 1998). Black and Latino candidates are seen as more left-leaning and less competent than their white counterparts, especially if they are Democrats (Visalvanich 2017*b*).

While studies have shown that group-based stereotyping has an influence on how minority candidates are perceived, these group-based stereotypes can be mitigated by party identification and politicians crafting their own personal brands (Huffmon, Knotts and McKee 2016). Research on minority campaigns have found that minority candidates can make strategic messaging choices which can either seek to emphasize race or de-emphasize race in favor of other aspects of their identity. According to Perry (1996), candidates strategically "racialize" or "deracialize" their campaigns depending on the constituency to whom they are trying to appeal. How race factors into candidate evaluation is a combination of group-based stereotyping as well as how the candidate decides to handle their racial identity in the campaign.

South Asians In America: Diversity and Racialization

In order to properly understand the challenges South Asian candidates face, we must first place South Asians within the racial context of America and its group-based stereotypes. South Asia covers a wide array of ethnic groups, many with their own distinct cultures, languages, dialects, and religions (Mishra 2016; Chakravorty, Kapur and Singh 2016). While these ethnic groups have formed the basis of some major political and social cleavages in South Asia (Mishra 2016), it is not clear that these differences are considered distinct in America. Research has found that White, Black, and Latino respondents consider South Asians to be distinct from East Asians (Lee 2000).

Omi and Winant (1994) describe the racialization process as one that occurs through both political institutions (in legal classifications, such as racial categories in the US Census) and how dominant groups create sub-groups within societies by attributing qualities and values to those groups that often serve the purpose of creating societal hierarchies. Often groups are created around physical appearance, more specifically phenotypic distinctions, but cultural and religious distinctions can also play a role in racial group formation (Mishra 2016; Rana 2011). Purkayastha (2005) notes that despite the best efforts of South Asian Americans to self-identity with an ethnicity of choice, Americans often impute their own understanding and values as to who gets to be South Asian (or Indian specifically), forcing South Asians to adopt identities that are not truly their own.

Relative to both whites and East Asians, South Asians feature a higher degree of educational attainment as well as a higher median household income, making them the wealthiest and most educated racial sub-group in the United States (*American Community Survey* 2016; Kuo, Malhotra and Mo 2014; DeNavas-Walt, Richardson and Stringfellow 2010). Like East Asians, the demographic structure of South Asians in America has largely been determined by immigration regimes instituted by the federal government during and after the 1960's, which prioritized highly-skilled and educated migrants (Mishra 2016; Bald et al. 2013;

Prashad 2000).[1]

Research on racialization and phenotype has found that phenotypic distinction can serve as a key component of the racialization process, providing racial out-groups with a distinguishable cue for racial stereotyping (Vasquez 2010; Gonzalez-Sobrino and Goss 2019). Along those lines, South Asians are phenotypically distinct and are often confused by white Americans as having Arab or Persian origins because of their phenotypic qualities (HartResearchAssociates 2015; Mishra 2016). South Asians have also been subject to the same kind of racial discrimination many immigrants have experienced, despite their general status as high-skilled migrants (Mishra 2016). In the wake of the terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001, the socio-political status of South Asians has changed dramatically. Although all the perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks were from the Middle-East,[2] instances of discrimination against South Asians increased, regardless of their ethnic or religious background (Modi 2018). Scholars have found that the racialization dynamics of South Asians have centered around both their distinct phenotypic qualities as well as religious identity, particularly the association between South Asians and Islamic identity (Husain 2019; Joshi 2006).

Considering South Asian Candidates

We first consider the possibility that South Asian candidates will be considered similarly to East Asian candidates - namely, as "model minorities," and, consequently, are likely to be viewed favorably when compared to the baseline. As mentioned before, South Asians, like their East Asian counterparts, are a generally highly-educated and economically prosperous group.

The model minority stereotype, when applied to East Asians, is a racialization tool which serves to homogenize of Asian American communities and create conflict between

[1]It is important to note, however, that like East Asians, there is significant economic diversity within the South Asian community in America. Bangladeshi-Americans and Pakistani-Americans, for instance, are significantly more likely to occupy low-skilled professions (SAALT 2007)

[2]15 of 19 of the attackers originated from Saudi Arabia, two were from the United Arab Emirates, one from Lebanon, and one from Egypt.

different racial minority groups (Kim 1999). However, the stereotype of Asians as competent, educated, and hard-working is prevalent within American society and research has found that, at least on this racial dimension, these stereotypes extend to Asian candidates as well (Bobo 2001; Visalvanich 2017*a*).[3] While the model minority stereotype has been more explicitly tied to East Asians, the similar demographic qualities of South Asians in America allows for the potential that South Asian candidates could be viewed similarly to East Asian candidates. Thus, our first expectation, like Visalvanich (2017*a*) finds for East Asians, is that South Asian candidates will be seen as more competent and qualified for office.

The Potential Effects of Religious Identity

As religious identity, particularly around Islam, has been a key factor in the racialization of South Asians, we consider the effect of different religious identities on South Asian candidates. Scholars have generally considered religious identity and political identity as being intertwined (Djupe, Neiheisel and Sokhey 2018). Political candidates communicate their religious identity strategically (Chapp and Coe 2019), seeking to appeal common values to similarly religious voters (McLaughlin and Wise 2014; Weber and Thornton 2012). While the research has found that political candidates can potentially benefit from their religious identity, particularly among electorates that value religiosity (Bradberry 2016), cueing identity can be a double-edged sword as well, decreasing a candidate's appeal among religiously agnostic voters (Castle et al. 2017).

In terms of religions, two of the most prominent religions among South Asians are Islam and Hinduism (Pew 2012). There is ample reason to expect that this religious cleavage could influence voters in different ways. While historically, racial differences in the United States have been centered between black and white communities (Key 1949), these divisions have not been centered around religious background, as a majority of both black and white Americans identify as Christian (Pew 2015). In order to build a more nuanced understanding

[3]While Asians are seen positively on a "superior-inferior" dimension related to social integrity, they are seen as further away than blacks on the "insider-foreigner" dimension.

of the experience of Hindu and Muslim candidates, we draw upon work from (Joshi 2006), who conceptualizes the "racialization of religion." According to Joshi, There are distinct views of South Asians and their religious preferences, but only enough to fit Americans' pre-existing stereotypes; Hindu and Muslim Americans each "deal with a unique set of expectations placed upon them by the mostly Christian public."

Research on Islam and American politics has found that, in the post-9/11 era, terms such as "Muslim," "Arab," and "Middle-Eastern" have become increasingly conflated with one another (Lajevardi and Oskooii 2018), which has also resulted in a burden placed on Muslim Americans to often choose which identity - Muslim or American - to adopt (Calfano et al. 2019). More recent research has found that religious animus towards Muslims have taken on a more racial tone with many racially-conservative whites rating Muslims as being "less evolved" as a group (Lajevardi and Oskooii 2018) The same religious animus influenced the white vote in favor of Donald Trump in the 2016 Presidential Election (Lajevardi and Abrajano 2018). Indeed, research examining the political effects of a candidate being of Muslim faith has found that voters are likely to punish Muslim-identified candidates, especially among voters with a high degree of outgroup antipathy (Kalkan, Layman and Green 2018). Braman and Sinno (2009) found that Muslims were perceived to less likely to have "shared values" with the rest of the populace, though (Lajevardi et al. 2020) determined that "culturally integrated" Muslim Americans were also more likely to perceive discrimination. Thus, we expect that candidates who are Muslim will be evaluated negatively when compared to other non-Muslim candidates with the same backgrounds.

While research on Muslim political stereotyping gives us a good idea of how Muslim candidates may be perceived, it is less clear what effect, if any, being Hindu would have on South Asian candidacies. Hinduism is the most prominent religious identity among American South Asians, with about 50% of South Asians in America identifying as Hindu (Pew 2012). In 2014, Pew survey participants evaluated Hindus and Muslims on a feeling thermometer at 50 and 40 "degrees" respectively. This jumped to 58 for Hindus and 48 for Muslims in 2017,

and then fell down to 55 "degrees" for Hindus in 2019, but slightly improved to 49 "degrees" for Muslims in 2019 (Pew 2019, 2017, 2014). Older survey participants were less likely to hold positive views of Hindus or Muslims (Pew 2017). Religious knowledge was also quite poor; only 60 percent of respondents correctly identified Ramadan, and a paltry 15 percent could identify the Vedas as "the text most closely associated with Hinduism" (Pew 2019).

Much of what Americans know about Hinduism is associated with portrayals in popular culture, with Hindus being seen as foreign and exotic (Gottschlich 2011). This type of racialization is particularly linked to depictions of the Hindu religion, with specific representations of Hindu deities ranging from being an object of amusement to being characterized as "cultish, fraudulent, and deviant," according to Joshi (2006). Like other minorities in the United States, Indian Americans are often affected by what Joshi (2006) calls "factors of difference." Since Indian Americans represent so many distinct identities, each unique characteristic - religion, language, accent - makes members of this community appear even more distinct from white voters.

This offers us a few differing expectations as to what we might expect from Hindu candidates. The first is that Hindu candidates will be evaluated negatively in a similar vein to Muslim candidates for reasons explained above - being seen as foreign and deviant from the norm. Additionally, the tendency for white Americans to identify South Asians as a whole, regardless of their actual religion, as "Muslim looking" could mean that South Asians who are Hindu could themselves be subject to the same electoral penalty facing Muslims. Alternatively, the Hindu-Indian Americans could be seen as distinct from Muslims, and therefore be spared the negative stereotyping often associated with Muslims and be evaluated positively by comparison.

Considering Military Service

Next, we consider the potential effects of military service on South Asian candidate evaluation. Political candidates who have served in the military often emphasize their prior

military service in their political biographies (Teigen 2012; McDermott and Panagopoulos 2015). Military service is generally seen as a positive among voters, cutting across party lines and cuing valence qualities such as patriotism and civic commitment, as well as strength on foreign policy, national defense, homeland security, leadership, and personal character (Leal and Teigen 2018; Teigen 2012; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Miller, Wattenberg and Malanchuk 1986). Importantly, cuing a military background is seen as key to communicating an American identity, as well as patriotism and fealty to American values (Teigen 2012; McDermott and Panagopoulos 2015). Consequently, there is ample evidence voters reward military service in their candidates and representatives (Leal and Teigen 2018).

While we expect that Muslim candidates will be evaluated negatively when compared to non-Muslim candidates, we seek to examine whether cuing military service diminishes the negative effects of being Muslim. Salaita (2005) argues that Muslim and Arab Americans communities specifically feature the challenge of "imperative patriotism," in which they are automatically seen by the dominant white majority as inherently disloyal to American values in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and must "prove" their loyalty through overt displays of patriotism, often through a renunciation of Islamic radicalism. This trend is in keeping with prior literature on the racial placement of Asians in American society, who have, at various times in American history, been seen as "perpetually foreign" who have suspect loyalty to American political values and institutions (Kim 1999). While this line of research is more focused on East Asians as a "Yellow Peril," the more contemporary version of this depicts South Asians as being placed as the modern-day foreign threat, especially in age of increased focus on international terrorism.

We expect South Asian identity, particularly those from a Muslim background, to suffer an electoral penalty as the result of group-based stereotyping around lack of fealty to American values as well as national security concerns. We hypothesize that cuing a military background will counteract these effects by affirming a South Asian candidates patriotic commitment as well as signaling credibility on national defense issues (McDermott and

Panagopoulos 2015).

Ideological Cues and Differential Effects in the Electorate

While some elections occur in low-information environments in which voters must rely on other political cues, absent information on candidate partisanship or ideology (such as local or judicial elections), most high-profile elected offices in America feature distinct political cues that define competing candidates. In these elections, partisan political cues are the most dominant determinant of vote choice (Campbell et al. 1960; Popkin 1994; Bartels 2000), especially in this era of greater political polarization (Nicholson 2011; Rahn 1993).

We consider the possibility that different subsections of the electorate might respond differently to South Asian candidates. Specifically, there are reasons to expect differential results among whites and among Republican identifiers. There is ample evidence that whites have a tendency to ascribe social and political stereotypes on groups as a whole (Omi and Winant 1994; Bobo and Kluegel 1993). More recent work has found evidence of an emergence of whiteness as a racial identity has shaped political attitudes, particularly attitudes on racial equality, as well as policy considered racial in nature, such as immigration or affirmative action (Jardina 2019; Hajnal and Abrajano 2017; Hajnal and Rivera 2014). Contemporary research on minority candidates has found differential effects on how whites view minority candidates when compared to other minority respondents (Visalvanich 2017*b*; Lajevardi 2020).

Similarly, there is reason to expect differences in effect by voter partisanship as well. Research on voter attitudes toward racial issues has found a widening partisan gap between Republicans and Democrats on the importance and salience of racial issues, such as immigration or the Black Lives Matter movement (Hajnal and Rivera 2014; Tesler 2013; Highton 2020). The literature on minority candidacies has found a similar partisan gap in how minority candidates are evaluated. We know that partisan identification is a significant predictor of bias and favorability towards minority political candidates (Kinder and Dale-Riddle 2012;

Table 1: Demographic Summary of Lucid Sample

Respondents	Survey Sample	Number
Democrat (with leaners)	42.15%	1,138
Republican (with leaners)	35.96%	971
Independent	13.89%	375
Female	55.80%	1,385
Income less than $50K	57.75%	1,431
% with less than college degree	56.68%	1,400
Under 35	55.50%	1,485
White	71.33%	1,926

Visalvanich 2017*b*), with self-identified Democrats being more favorable towards minority candidacies, as many of these voters support increased minority representation in elective politics (Johnson 2017). For these reasons, we expect that Democrats will be more favorable towards South Asian candidates than Republicans.

There is ample reason to suggest that candidate ideology will have a significant influence on candidate evaluation, as political partisans have by in large sorted into ideological camps, with Democrats more likely to identify as political liberals and Republicans as political conservatives (Fiorina, Abrams and Pope 2006). This could also dull the effect of racial cues, as studies have consistently found that partisan and ideological cues can counteract the effect of candidate race and gender (Visalvanich 2017*b*; Ditonto 2018).

Data and Experimental Design

In order to examine how voters respond to South Asian candidates of different religious and military backgrounds, we implement a survey experiment administered through the online marketplace Lucid Fulcrum Exchange. Lucid offers a platform in which a task is published and payment is offered for those who participate. Diagnostics conducted on the Lucid sample have been found to meet national benchmarks in other experimental studies (Coppock and McClellan 2019). The experiment in this paper was conducted at the end of 2018.

Table 2: Experimental Conditions

Treatment Conditions	Respondents
Hindu Low-Info vs. White Low-Info	208
Muslim Low-Info vs. White Low-Info	205
Hindu Non-Military vs. White Military	205
Hindu Military vs. White Non-Military	202
Muslim Non-Military vs. White Military	194
Muslim Military vs. White Non-Military	204
Hindu Liberal vs. White Conservative	199
Hindu Conservative vs. White Liberal	196
Muslim Liberal vs. White Conservative	198
Muslim Conservative vs. White Liberal	203
Control Conditions	
White Military vs. White Non-Military	207
White Liberal vs. White Conservative	209
White Low-Info vs. White Low-Info	207
Total	2,637

Table 1 shows a demographic breakdown of the Lucid sample. In total, 2,637 valid respondents were recruited into the sample, and of those respondents, 1,891 (or 71.33%) identified as white.[4] The breakdown of white respondents reveal a relatively even split between Republican and Democratic identifiers. Contrary to other online samples, especially those associated with Amazon Mechanical-Turk, the Lucid sample recruited for this study more closely resembles the partisan split in America (Berinsky, Huber and Lenz 2012). Women make up about 56% of the white sample.

Through Lucid we implemented a survey experiment that presents respondents with a biography of two fictional candidates competing for political office, similar to the experiment described in (Visalvanich 2017*a*). Table 2 shows the different experimental conditions within this experiment, along with the total number of respondents who were exposed to each condition. Since part of our theory is that religious affiliation conditions responses to South Asian candidates, we cue religious identity in all of the political biographies and vary whether the South Asian candidate featured is Muslim or Hindu. In order to cue religion for all

[4]Respondents who finished the survey in less than 4 minutes are excluded from the analysis.

candidates, white candidate biographies denote regular attendance of church. Hinduism is cued with attendance at a temple. Islam is cued through attendance at a mosque.

Both the Hindu and Muslim candidate feature the name "Naveen Shah," and a biography that mentions the candidate is the child of Indian immigrants. This name was purposely chosen as it is a name that could belong to a Hindu or Muslim South Asian. In addition, both Hindu and Muslim candidate biographies also mention the candidate is a descendent of Indian immigrants; although Hinduism is the dominant religion in India, a significant minority of Indians also belong to the Islamic faith. Both the Hindu and Muslim candidates are accompanied by the same picture of a South Asian candidate, and all white candidate biographies feature a picture of a white candidate.[5] The white candidate was given the name "David Jones." After being presented with the two biographies, the respondent was asked to choose which candidate they would vote for in the hypothetical election, as well as other measures of candidate evaluation[6] and asked to indicate which candidate they would vote for in a hypothetical election.

The treatment conditions are as follows. The first was a "Low-Information" condition in which respondents are given minimal political cues with the cues given being primarily non-ideological. The purpose of this condition is to examine whether race has an effect on evaluations when voters have less information to inform their evaluations. Two different low-informational biographies were used, which we call Biography A and Biography B. While each biography was written to de-emphasize political cues, with the candidate promoting issues with broad support, such as infrastructure and emergency planning, there remains a chance that each low-information biography might have an its own independent treatment effect. For this reason, the receipt the different South Asian treatments as well as the receipt

[5]All candidate pictures that were chosen feature roughly the same age, attractiveness, and dress. A preliminary survey was conducted on a number of different potential profile pictures in order to assess how respondents rated each candidate on measures including attractiveness and trustworthiness. The profile pictures ultimately chosen were rated as similarly attractive and trustworthy.

[6]Respondents were asked to evaluate the candidate's ideological leanings and suitability for office on a seven-point scale. Options for ideology range from "Very Liberal" to "Very Conservative" and options for qualifications range from "Very Qualified" to "Very Unqualified." While this paper mostly focuses on vote choice, analysis of these measures can be found in the appendix.

the two different low-information biographies are randomized within that treatment group.

Next is an ideological condition, in which respondents are exposed to ideological and political cues that are meant to resemble a partisan contest between a conservative candidate and liberal candidate as is common in most American elections.[7] Respondents were randomly assigned a condition where the South Asian (either Hindu or Muslim) candidate is a liberal competing against a conservative white candidate or vice versa. In order to test the effect of military service on South Asian candidacies, the final set of conditions have candidate biographies that feature military service. A military candidate "served with distinction" in Iraq and rose to the rank of Captain before being honorably discharged. Each military biography was paired with a competing civilian biography and respondents were randomly assigned to a condition where the South Asian candidate has a military background or a civilian background. Lastly, the control conditions featured all white candidates under each of these scenarios: low-information, ideological, and military.[8]

Findings

Overall Findings and Findings by Race

We begin with an examination of how voters respond to South Asian candidates as a whole compared to white candidates. Table 3 shows shows the proportion of respondents who indicated they would vote for a candidate with a particular biography and compares them by the different treatment conditions. The vote choice numbers in the two South Asian conditions shows the proportion of respondents indicating they would vote for that South Asian candidate, whether it be Muslim or Hindu, with that biography, while the

[7]We intentionally decided against the use of explicit partisan identification as the fictional scenario in which the candidates sought office was at the local level, where elections are often non-partisan. An examination of the results reveals that respondents exposed to the ideological treatments were able to correctly associate the ideological cues provided to ideological evaluations of the candidates and respondent Republican and Democratic identifiers were more likely to support the candidate whose ideology matched with their party identification.

[8]The complete text of each biography can be found in the appendix.

Table 3: Vote Choice in the Low-Information Scenario

Full Sample			
Treatment	*Vote Bio A*	*Diff. vs. White*	*Diff. vs. Hindu*
White	55.1%		
Hindu	46.7%	-8.4% (0.08)	
Muslim	42.8%	-12.6%(0.04)	-3.9% (0.71)
	Vote Bio B	*Diff. vs. White*	*Diff. vs. Hindu*
White	44.6%		
Hindu	42.7%	-1.6%(0.35)	
Muslim	33.6%	-11.1%(0.04)	-9.1%(0.05)
Whites Only			
Treatment	*Vote Bio A*	*Diff. vs. White*	*Diff. vs. Hindu*
White	58.3%		
Hindu	46.0%	-12.3% (0.04)	
Muslim	38.4%	-19.9% (0.00)	-7.6% (0.13)
	Vote Bio B	*Diff. vs. White*	*Diff. vs. Hindu*
White	42.6%		
Hindu	32.9%	-9.7% (0.05)	
Muslim	32.8%	-9.8% (0.05)	-0.1% (0.50)

Note: p-values in parentheses

'White' condition shows the proportion of respondents indicating they would vote for that biography in the all-white candidate condition. The top half of Table 3 shows these comparisons with the full sample. Two biographies were written to include minimal political cues, but since respondents might be preferable towards one biography when compared with the other, for transparency sake, we report the results split by both biography types. In the Low-Information scenario, whites were more likely to favor white biographies, with 55.1% of those treated to the white biography indicating they would support that candidate. By contrast, when shown South Asian candidates with similar biographic information, respondents were seemingly less likely to support that candidate. 46.7% of respondents indicated they would support the Hindu candidate with Biography A, which, when compared to a white candidate with a similar biography, shows a difference of 8.4% which is close to statistical

significance. 42.8% of respondents said they would support a South Asian Muslim candidate with Biography A, showing a difference of 12.6% in favor of the white candidate, which is statistically significant. We observe similar results when comparing support for candidates with Biography B. Respondents were generally less likely to support Biography B on the whole, however they were significantly less likely to support South Asian Muslim candidates with that biography when compared to white candidates with the same biography. The results for Hindu candidates with this biography were similar to that of the white candidate, with the differences being not statistically significant. An examination of the difference between Hindu and Muslim candidates show that for both biographies, Muslims perform worse than Hindu candidates; however, the result is only statistically significant for Biography B.

These initial findings indicate that, in keeping with expectations, white voters are more likely to be hostile to South Asian biographies, particularly Muslim biographies. The bottom half of Table 3 shows the same comparisons as Table 3, but with white respondents only. We choose to examine this separately in order to see if the South Asian penalty is particularly pronounced among white respondents, who may be more likely to see South Asians as a homogeneous group (Omi and Winant 1994). The South Asian penalty is even more pronounced among white respondents, as white respondents were significantly less likely to indicate support of both Hindu and Muslim South Asian biographies. Additionally, white respondents seem more likely to evaluate Hindu and Muslim candidates similarly negatively, lending support to the hypothesis that white respondents would homogenize South Asian Hindu and Muslim candidates to a degree.

Thus far, the results have indicated that there is a general bias against South Asian candidates, particularly for Muslim candidates and especially among white respondents. We expect that when ideological cues are introduced, racial effects will be diminished when compared to a low-information condition. Table 4 shows the vote preference between white, Hindu, and Muslim candidates by ideologically liberal and conservative biographies, with the top half of Table 4 showing the results with the full sample of respondents and the bottom

Table 4: Vote Choice in the Ideological Scenario

Full Sample			
Treatment	*Vote Liberal Bio*	*Diff vs. White*	*Diff. vs. Hindu*
White	54.6%		
Hindu	53.5%	-1.1% (0.52)	
Muslim	50.5%	-4.1% (0.29)	-3.0% (0.25)
	Vote Cons. Bio	*Diff. vs. White*	*Diff. vs. Hindu*
White	46.7%		
Hindu	50.2%	+3.5% (0.24)	
Muslim	42.3%	-4.4% (0.18)	-7.9% (0.04)
Whites Only Sample			
Treatment	*Vote Liberal Bio*	*Diff. vs. White*	*Diff. vs. Hindu*
White	49.3%		
Hindu	48.6%	-0.7% (0.44)	
Muslim	46.7%	-2.6% (0.32)	1.9% (0.38)
	Vote Cons. Bio	*Diff. vs. White*	*Diff. vs. Hindu*
White	50.6%		
Hindu	52.6%	+2.0% (0.24)	
Muslim	40.3%	-10.3% (0.03)	-12.3% (0.01)

Note: p-values in parentheses

half of Table 4 showing the results for self-identified white respondents only. Candidates with a liberal biography received a similar proportion of the vote from white respondents across the racial/religious treatments. Liberal white, Hindu, and Muslim candidates received 54.6%, 53.5%, and 50.5% of the vote respectively, and difference-in-proportions tests did not show any of these differences to be statistically significant. This result is in keeping with the expectation that ideological cues will diminish the effect of being South Asian. Similarly, conservative white, Hindu, and Muslim candidates received 49.3%, 50.2%, and 42.3% respectively. While conservative Hindu candidates did slightly better than conservative white candidates, and conservative Muslim candidates did slightly worse, neither of these differences were statistically significant. On the other hand, the conservative Muslim candidate did worse than their conservative Hindu counterpart by 7.9%, which is statistically

significant.

The results for the whites-only sub-sample, on the other hand, show some significant differences. White respondents were significantly less likely to say that they would support a conservative Muslim candidate when compared to conservative Hindu and white candidates. While white and Hindu conservative candidates received 50.6% and 52.6% of the white vote respectively, the Muslim conservative candidate received only 40.3% of the vote, significantly and substantially less when compared to either the white or Hindu conservative candidates. The difference between conservative Muslim and Hindu candidates is even more pronounced among white voters, indicating a particular weakness for conservative Muslims. These results indicate that bias against Muslim candidates may persist among politically-conservative voters.

Table 5: Vote Choice in the Military Scenario

Full Sample			
Treatment	*Vote Military Bio*	*Diff. vs. White*	*Diff. vs. Hindu*
White	61.6%		
Hindu	59.4%	-2.2% (0.38)	
Muslim	62.5%	+1.1% (0.57)	3.1% (0.27)
	Vote Civilian Bio	*Diff. vs. White*	*Diff. vs. Hindu*
White	39.1%		
Hindu	43.7%	+4.6% (0.18)	
Muslim	37.6%	-1.5% (0.38)	-6.1%(0.10)
Whites Only Sample			
Treatment	*Vote Military Bio*	*Diff. vs. White*	*Diff. vs. Hindu*
White	61.5%		
Hindu	55.5%	-8.0% (0.07)	
Muslim	62.5%	-1.0% (0.43)	+7.0% (0.11)
	Vote Civilian Bio	*Diff. vs. White*	*Diff. vs. Hindu*
White	39.4%		
Hindu	40.8%	+0.4% (0.48)	
Muslim	30.4%	-9.0% (0.05)	-10.4%(0.05)

Note: p-values in parentheses

Table 5 shows how respondents indicated they would vote in a scenario where a candidate with a military background is competing with a candidate with a non-military or civilian background, with the top-half showing the results for the full sample of respondents and the bottom half showing results for whites only. On the whole, the results show a preference for military candidates of all racial backgrounds with white, Hindu, and Muslim candidates getting 61.6%, 59.4%, and 62.5% of the vote respectively, with no statistically significant differences found between all three candidate types. Comparisons using the full sample show no statistically significant differences between the biographies, although unlike in the Low-Information scenario, Hindu civilian candidates performed slightly better than white candidates, although in both instances the differences were not statistically significant.

An examination of the results among whites show some significant results. Muslim candidates from a civilian background are significantly weaker when compared to white and South Asian Hindu candidates. While voters favored military candidates in this experimental condition, only 30.4% of respondents indicated they would support the Muslim candidate, compared to 39.4% for the white candidate and 40.8% for the Hindu candidate with the same biography. On the other hand, an examination of the differences among the military biographies reveals a dramatic change, especially for Muslim candidates. Muslim candidates with a military background perform almost as well as white candidates with the same background, with 61.5% and 62.5% of treated respondents indicating they would vote for that candidate, respectively. While Hindu candidates also benefit from the military background, this effect was muted compared to the effect for Muslim candidates, with a difference of 7% from the Muslim candidate. Conversely, Muslim civilian candidates perform significantly worse than Hindu civilian candidates by a statistically margin of 10.4%. On the whole, These results indicate that while Muslim candidates in lower information scenarios suffer from a political handicap, this handicap is mitigated by a military biography, which is a result in keeping with our expectations.

The Effect of Respondent Partisanship

Table 6: Vote Choice in the Low-Information Scenario by Partisan ID

Republican			
Treatment	*Vote Bio A*	*Diff. vs. White*	*Diff. vs. Hindu*
White	56.4%		
Hindu	32.5%	-23.9% (0.01)	
Muslim	25.0%	-31.4% (0.00)	-7.5% (0.21)
	Vote Bio B	*Diff. vs. White*	*Diff. vs. Hindu*
White	43.5%		
Hindu	35.5%	-8.0% (0.12)	
Muslim	20.9%	-22.6% (0.01)	-14.6% (0.05)
Democrat			
Treatment	*Vote Bio A*	*Diff. vs. White*	*Diff. vs. Hindu*
White	55.8%		
Hindu	63.8%	+8.0% (0.24)	
Muslim	60.8%	+5.0% (0.34)	-3.0% (0.26)
	Vote Bio B	*Diff. vs. White*	*Diff. vs. Hindu*
White	43.1%		
Hindu	47.3%	+4.2% (0.34)	
Muslim	45.4%	+2.3% (0.41)	-1.9% (0.45)

Note: p-values in parentheses

A closer examination of the data shows that the bias against South Asian candidates is driven in large part by partisan differences in how Republicans and Democrats evaluate these candidates. Table 6 shows votes in the low-information scenario divided by Democratic and Republican partisans. While Republican partisans were about equally as likely as Democrats to choose between white candidates in the control condition, they were significantly less likely to say they would vote for a South Asian candidate with a similar biography, with only 32.5% indicating they would support a Hindu candidate with the Biography A background, and 25.0% indicating that they would support a Muslim candidate with the same background. This represents a difference of -23.9% and -31.4% for Hindu and Muslim candidates respectively, which represents a yawning gap between the white and South Asian

candidates. The differences for Biography B show similar results, although the difference between Hindu and white candidates with that biography are more muted. In both scenarios, Muslim candidates perform worse than Hindu candidates, this difference is statistically significant in Biography B. This indicates that among Republican identifiers, being South Asian has a similar negative effect, an effect that is even more pronounced among Muslim South Asians. On the other hand, Democrats were at least equally as likely to say they would support the Muslim candidate when compared to a white candidate with a similar biographical background, with smaller differences between Hindus and Muslims. The results indicate that Democrats favored both the South Asian Hindu and Muslim biography over the white biography, although these differences were not statistically significant.

Table 7: Vote Choice in the Ideological Scenario by Partisan ID

Republicans			
Treatment	*Vote Liberal Bio*	*Diff. vs. White*	*Diff. vs. Hindu*
White	29.7%		
Hindu	25.6%	-4.1% (0.27)	
Muslim	25.6%	-4.1% (0.27)	0.0% (0.49)
	Vote Cons. Bio	*Diff. vs. White*	*Diff. vs. Hindu*
White	70.2%		
Hindu	69.0%	-1.2% (0.43)	
Muslim	56.5%	-13.7% (0.03)	-12.5% (0.05)
Democrats			
Treatment	*Vote Liberal Bio*	*Diff. vs. White*	*Diff. vs. Hindu*
White	79.0%		
Hindu	79.2%	+0.2% (0.48)	
Muslim	67.9%	-11.1% (0.05)	-11.3% (0.05)
	Vote Cons. Bio	*Diff. vs. White*	*Diff. vs. Hindu*
White	20.9%		
Hindu	29.8%	+8.9% (0.10)	
Muslim	26.9%	+6.0% (0.18)	-2.9% (0.34)

Note: p-values in parentheses

Table 7 shows vote choice in the ideological scenario broken down by party identification,

with Democratic respondents in the top half of the table and Republican respondents in the bottom half. These results show that Muslim candidates were generally weaker among voters who were ideologically aligned with them as opposed to voters who were ideologically misaligned with them. This finding is especially stark among Republican respondents. When exposed to the conservative Muslim candidate, only 56.5% of Republican respondents indicated they would support this candidate. When exposed to the conservative white candidate, 70.2% of Republican respondents indicated they would support this candidate, a statistically significant difference of 13.7%. Conservative Hindu candidates do not suffer a similar penalty, indicating that effect of being Muslim is especially strong and overrides ideological considerations to an extent. In keeping with expectations, Republican respondents were generally opposed to candidates with a liberal biography, but they were slightly more favorable white liberal biographies compared to South Asian liberal biographies, although this difference is not statistically significant.

The bottom half of Table 7 shows the results among Democratic respondents. Democratic respondents as a whole were less inclined to support all three types of conservative candidates, although they seemed to favor both Hindu and Muslim conservatives slightly; this result only approaches statistical significance. Democrats appeared to be equally as favorable to white and Hindu liberal candidates and significantly less favorable to Muslim liberal candidates. On the whole, these results indicate that the introduction of ideological cues does lessen the effect of race and religious identity on the evaluation of South Asian candidates, although this effect is strongest when evaluating candidates who hold opposing ideological viewpoints to the respondent. Conservative Muslim candidates still suffered a penalty among Republican identified respondents, with a similar dynamic playing out to a lesser extent among liberal Muslim candidates among Democratic respondents, indicating that these effects persist among candidates who are ideologically aligned with the respondent. Negative partisanship - opposing the 'other side' - appears to have a stronger effect in diminishing the effect of race.

Table 8: Vote Choice in the Military Scenario by Partisan ID

Republicans			
Treatment	*Vote Military Bio*	*Diff. vs. White*	*Diff. vs. Hindu*
White	68.9%		
Hindu	50.0%	-18.9% (0.00)	
Muslim	48.6%	-20.3% (0.00)	-1.4% (0.43)
	Vote Civilian Bio	*Diff. vs. White*	*Diff. vs. Hindu*
White	31.0%		
Hindu	24.2%	-7.2% (0.18)	
Muslim	26.9%	-4.1% (0.30)	+2.7% (0.36)
Democrats			
Treatment	*Vote Military Bio*	*Diff. vs. White*	*Diff. vs. Hindu*
White	61.1%		
Hindu	66.6%	+5.4% (0.21)	
Muslim	75.2%	+14.1% (0.01)	+8.6% (0.09)
	Vote Civilian Bio	*Diff. vs. White*	*Diff. vs. Hindu*
White	38.8%		
Hindu	56.3%	+17.5% (0.00)	
Muslim	44.3%	+5.5% (0.23)	-12.0% (0.05)

Note: p-values in parentheses

The top half of Table 8 shows responses to the military scenario among Republican identifiers, the bottom half shows those results for Democrats. Both Republican and Democratic identifiers were generally more favorable towards military biographies compared to civilian biographies. However, Republicans were especially favorable towards white military candidates, with 68.9% of these respondents indicating they would support such a candidate over a white civilian candidate. Conversely, only 50% and 48.6% of Republicans exposed to the South Asian Hindu and Muslim military biographies indicated they would support that candidate, respectively. This indicates that while South Asians with a military background are viewed more favorably when compared to non-military candidates, Republican partisans are more likely to reward white military candidates for their military background.

For Democrats, the results also show that having a military biography benefits candidates

of all racial and religious backgrounds. Unlike their Republican counterparts, Democrats were even more favorable towards Muslim candidates with a military background when compared to both whites and Hindu military candidates - 75.2% of Democrats said they would support the Muslim military candidate compared to 66.6% said they would support the Hindu military candidate and 61.1% said they preferred the white military candidate. These results indicate that "imperative patriotism" - signalling loyalty and fealty to American values - may be most effective at convincing political liberals and the racially tolerant to support South Asian candidates for office.

White Democrats were especially supportive of Hindu civilian candidates. 56.3% of white Democrats indicated they would support the Hindu civilian candidate over a white military candidate, compared to just 38.8% who indicated they would support a white civilian candidate over a white military one. Again, this result is in keeping with the finding that Hindu candidates may benefit from a general predisposition among white Democrats towards racial minority candidates, a benefit that appears to elude Muslim candidates unless that candidate comes from a military background.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to explore the candidacies of South Asian candidates in a comprehensive way, examining the effect of different informational cues on the evaluation of South Asian candidates. While this project focused on South Asian Americans, we argue that our findings have broad implications for electoral and candidate messaging, particularly for candidates at the local- and state-levels who contend with low-information scenarios and candidate cues derived from race, ethnicity, military status, and religion. On the whole, we find that South Asian candidates do suffer a penalty as a result of their ethnic background, and that this effect is more pronounced among Muslims than Hindus. However, we also find that other informational cues matter and can have a dramatic effect on South Asian

candidate evaluation.

In the first set of findings, we examined how voters might evaluate our fictional candidates when provided with minimal informational cues. As expected, respondents were most likely to favor white over South Asian candidates based on their minimal biographies. When given a choice between Hindu and Muslim candidates, respondents were more inclined to choose the Hindu candidate over the Muslim one. One of our expectations was that voters could levy the same electoral penalty on Hindu candidates that they do on Muslim candidates, as white voters tend to blur these racial and ethnic differences and view these groups as homogeneous (McIlwain and Caliendo 2011), and in keeping with this expectation, white voters less likely to support South Asian Hindu and Muslim candidates. Further investigation revealed that it is mainly Republican respondents who viewed both Hindu and Muslim candidates negatively, showing that this tendency to homogenize could be more pronounced among certain subsections of the populace.

Our findings on religious identity show some evidence of a religious hierarchy for South Asians, with Muslim South Asians incurring a stronger and more persistent penalty than Hindus. This finding confirms other research that South Asians from Sikh and Hindu backgrounds incur a penalty, particularly from politically conservative voters (Kirk and Husser 2017). This implies that religious identity can have a compounding effect with predominant racial stereotypes for minority political candidates and that South Asian candidates could be incentivized to hide their religious identity in some instances or assert an alternative identity in order to better appeal to white voters (Sriram and Grindlife 2017). Alternatively, positive effects, specifically for Hindu candidates among Democratic respondents indicate that religious cuing could also cue diversity, which can be a boon among racially liberal voters and runs counter to studies that have found that religious cuing hurts candidates among the more politically liberal (Castle et al. 2017; Weber and Thornton 2012).

In our second set of findings related to the "high information" treatments, we find the effect of candidate ethnicity was blunted with the introduction of ideological cues. While

ethnicity provided one type of cue, the real focus is the influence of religion, and its intersection with partisanship. Muslim conservatives were not given the same partisan boost among Republicans that Hindu conservatives were, indicating that South Asian Muslim candidates incur a penalty despite ideological alignment with Republican voters. This leads us to conclude that Republican conservative voters do not see Muslim conservatives as ideologically similar, even if sharing similar values, because these candidates are seen as Muslim first, which conflicts with Republican voter preferences.

We find that the inclusion of military information in a candidate's biography makes the fictional South Asian Muslim candidate an attractive one (more so than the Hindu candidate). These results are in keeping with our theoretical expectation that a Muslim candidate who signals their patriotism and commitment to "American values" can potentially overcome the negative perception associated with Muslims generally. These results provide for an interesting contrast with the literature on military service as an informational cue; while in prior research, military service provided a significant boost among Republican-leaning voters (McDermott and Panagopoulos 2015), our results indicate that the opposite is the case for Muslim candidates with a military background, who benefit primarily among Democrats. This is in keeping with the finding that Islamophobic attitudes are particularly prevalent among conservative and Republican voters (Tesler and Sears 2010; Lajevardi and Oskooii 2018; Lajevardi and Abrajano 2018; Sides, Tesler and Vavreck 2018), that this antipathy extends to South Asian candidates, and that these attitudes are difficult to dislodge even with overt appeals to military service. Democrats, alternatively, are more receptive to these military appeals, despite prior research finding that the positive effects of military service is muted among Democrats (McDermott and Panagopoulos 2015). It appears that Democrats, with their more racially accepting attitudes (Beck, Tien and Nadeau 2010), are more willing to provide Muslim candidates with the benefit of the doubt, particularly when provided with information that runs counter to predominant negative racial stereotyping.

The primary takeaway from our findings is that South Asian candidates occupy a distinct

space within the racial politics of minority candidates, in which religious identity can have a compounding effect. Our findings illustrate that patriotic appeals can be effective at lessening the impact of religious cues on certain candidates. However, the story being told here is that these candidates must go above and beyond to demonstrate particular values in order to become viable candidates, which candidates of other racial and ethnic backgrounds may not need to do.

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