

American Muslims in the Houston Metropolis

A Study of the Contributions and Impact of American Muslim Communities at the Local Level

Overview

New America is preparing to conduct an in-depth and policy-relevant discussion about Muslim communities at the local level in Houston. This groundbreaking study will offer fresh insights and help shape a national and much needed discussion about Muslims that will be data-driven and one that moves beyond the generalizations, prejudices, and fear that too often surround public discourse about Muslim communities.

Key Deliverables

- 1. In-Depth Quantitative and Qualitative Research on American Muslim Communities in Houston.** New America will conduct in-depth research in Houston on the following questions: What kind of impact do Muslims have on their neighbors and neighborhoods? What effect do Muslim communities have on housing, schools, and healthcare? What role do Muslims play in the civic life of their neighborhoods and cities? By systematically surveying Muslim communities within key cities New America will be able to provide the best evidence to date of the many ways — big and small — that Muslims impact their local communities.
- 2. On-line Hub of Information.** The study's key findings will be curated on-line within a "living" hub of information on New America's website. Doing so will ensure that the research and its findings have reach and influence beyond any one particular institution and that it engages with scholars, public intellectuals, the media, elected officials, and policymakers at the local level in Houston and across the United States.
- 3. Storytelling about Houston's Muslim Leaders.** New America will conduct a series of related podcasts and video interviews with Muslim community leaders in Houston. The interviews are an innovative way to personalize Muslims and, by extension, elevate the public discourse about Muslim communities and correct the public record on some common misconceptions.
- 4. Blogposts and Op-eds.** New America's lead scholar on the study will write regularly in short form – blog posts, op-eds, etc. – on key issues that are identified in the study.
- 5. Public Events to Showcase the Study's Findings.** New America will showcase the research findings with public events in Washington, DC.

Outcomes

- 1. Local public opinion impact:** As in most parts of the country, Islamophobia is a problem within Houston and Texas. By getting the research findings out in the local media – coupled with publishing compelling data and stories in local media outlets – the study will help counteract Islamophobia.

2. **Local policy impact:** New America will brief city and state lawmakers on the positive economic and social impact of Muslims in Houston as well as highlight the public policy areas where improvement is needed.
3. **National public opinion impact:** New America, through its deep relationships with major media outlets, will publish research findings in op-eds in order to inform and improve the public conversation about these issues and help boost public opinion.
4. **National policy impact:** New America will brief policymakers in Washington, DC. The aim is to use the research findings to convince them to drop anti-Muslim policies.

Timeline

The study will run from January 1, 2018 to November 30, 2018, with the specific aim of providing key findings before the mid-term elections in 2018. Circulating the findings from the study in the lead-up to the mid-terms could help roll back and block some of the anti-Muslim agenda.

Why New America

[New America](#) is a leading think tank committed to studying and solving some of the biggest challenges of our time. We generate big ideas, bridge the gap between technology and policy, and curate broad public conversation. Structurally, we combine the best of a policy research institute, technology laboratory, and public forum. We are a distinctive community of leading thinkers, writers, researchers, and technologists who believe deeply in the possibility of American renewal.

Robert L. McKenzie – Lead Scholar

The study will be lead by Robert L. McKenzie, PhD, a senior fellow at New America and founding director of its Muslim Diaspora Initiative. Before joining New America, McKenzie was a visiting fellow and nonresident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, where he focused on Muslim communities in the West and the Syrian refugee crisis. McKenzie is a domestic and foreign policy analyst and scholar of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), with fifteen years of applied research and work experience for the U.S. government, private sector, and academia. McKenzie is an adjunct professor at Georgetown University and he has been a lecturer at Wayne State University (Detroit), a researcher at the American University in Cairo, and a visiting scholar at the University of Oxford. He earned a bachelor's in economics from Michigan State University, a master's in security studies and a graduate certificate in Arab Studies from Georgetown University, and a doctorate in anthropology from the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London. McKenzie has written for, appeared with, or been cited by: Al Jazeera, the *Baltimore Sun*; *Bloomberg View*; The Brookings Cafeteria Podcast; CNN; the *Detroit Free Press*; Foreign Policy in Focus; the *Guardian*; the *New York Times*; Share Radio; the *Washington Post*; and the *Washington Times*.