

2016

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POLS 334
March 18, 2016

All For One and One For All:
When We Target Muslims, We All Lose

Donald J. Trump freaking sucks. I know, these are strong words; however, I am not sure how else to describe in writing how much Mr. Trump has not only hurt Muslims with his rhetoric, but all U.S. citizens and the greater world as a whole. I am sure this may come as a surprise to some Trump supports, but scapegoating Muslims causes more damage than we may think. First, putting everyone from a large religion into one grouping and wrongly and negatively categorizing them is wrong in and of itself. It can have lifelong effects on how that group sees themselves, how the “other” group views themselves, and can lead to discrimination, violence, and pain.

But, since Trump and his supporters seem to not really care about that part, I will put it in a way they may understand. As in the TED talk that we watched, targeting Muslims hurts international relations and people’s points of view. In studies we see that “7 out of 10 countries that view the United States most unfavorably are Muslim countries, while only 1 of the top 10 countries that view America the most favorably is Muslim” (Mousavian 2). Through this hateful rhetoric, the United States loses allies and pits much of the world against us. By othering a whole group of people, which spread throughout the world, we send the message that we are hateful people and build walls (literally and figuratively) when we could possibly be creating alliances, friendships, and tackling some of our human societies’ biggest problems.

Also through legitimizing terrorist groups as Muslim, we only future their cause. By claiming that all Muslims are terrorist and that these groups are Muslims, we are actually giving them credit and legitimizing their beliefs and actions. Also by casting these labels, it makes it easier to not want to help Muslims, who are often the victims of these terrorists groups, and push them to depend of these groups after we turn a blind eye. All of these factors lead to the further spread of terrorism. However, Donald Trump believes that by making these assertions we somehow are combating terrorism-which he has no proof of and is absolutely wrong.

He is right about one thing: he has started a word battle of hate and ignorance which has lead to actual physical violence and may turn into policy and law. Trump’s rhetoric is having a negative domino effect on others in the Republican Party. Through targeting Muslims and placing them into stereotypical boxes, he has paved the path for other Republican candidates to do the same in order to get votes from some of Trump’s supporters. Jeb Bush and Ben Carson have said Muslim refugees have to prove their Christianity to gain entrance into the country and compared them to dogs (West 2). Ted Cruz has stated with vigor that he would “carpet-bomb” the Islamic state, including innocent women and children. This open prejudice is not new to American voters who questioned Obama’s ability to lead based on the rumor that he may be Muslim or of Middle Eastern decent. However, this is the first time in my memory that I have heard this language not just from one nut job representative-but a whole party of leaders! This hurtful discussion not only causes some of the situations I described earlier, but it distracts voters from “real” issue and encourages candidates to become more and more radical and outrageous just to win popularity and media attention.

Donald Trump is harming not just Muslims, but everyone. Sadly maybe it takes framing it in this way to get the public and those voting for him to stop and evaluate their thinking.

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