



# Muslim Public Intellectuals: Revealing Conditional Participation Through Circulation



**BY JULIA SCHAFFER**

# What's a Public?



- **Michael Warner**

- “A public is the social space created by the reflexive circulation of discourse” (Warner 2002, 62)
- The path of a texts circulation is a social entity (Warner 2002, 64).

**“the” public as a composite of dominant publics created through the circulation of texts**

# The Online Public Sphere



- As representative of *the* public
- A proxy

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- ◆ **the Director of Duke University's Islamic Studies Center**
  - ◆ **the past Chair for the Study of Islam**
  - ◆ **current Chair for Islamic Mysticism Group at the American Academy of Religion**
  - ◆ **published author, frequent public speaker, and online presence**



**Dr. Omid Safi, Public Intellectual**

# Measuring the Public



- Used Altmetrics to measure circulation
  - Muck Rack measure shares, likes, comments, tweets

**when an op-ed had a lot of shares it was being more widely circulated, or “picked up” by the public**



# Overall Data Breakdown

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**Meditation on Love**

**Meditation on Love  
and Politics**

**Philosophy**

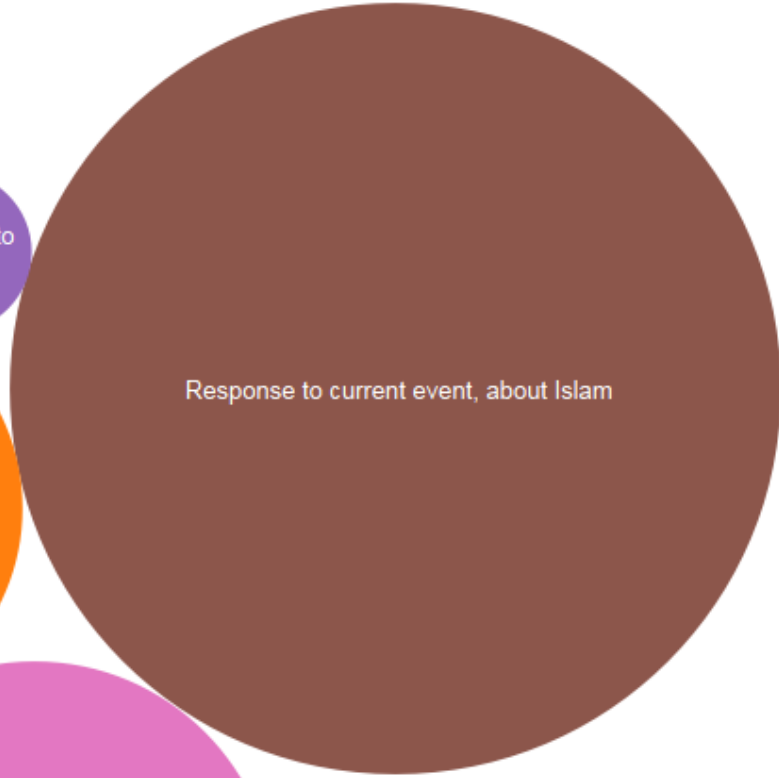
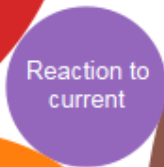
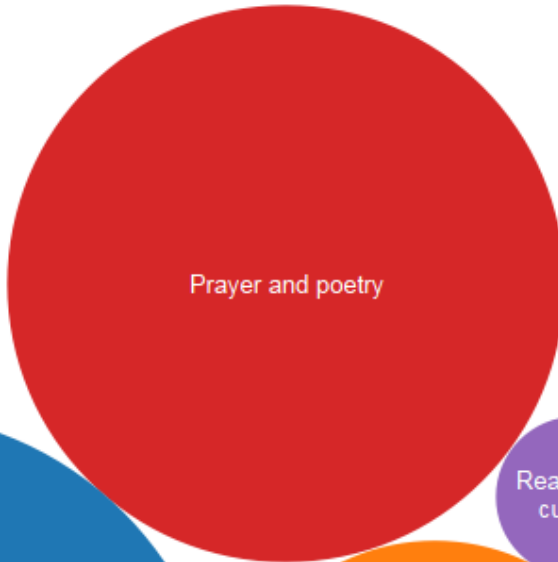
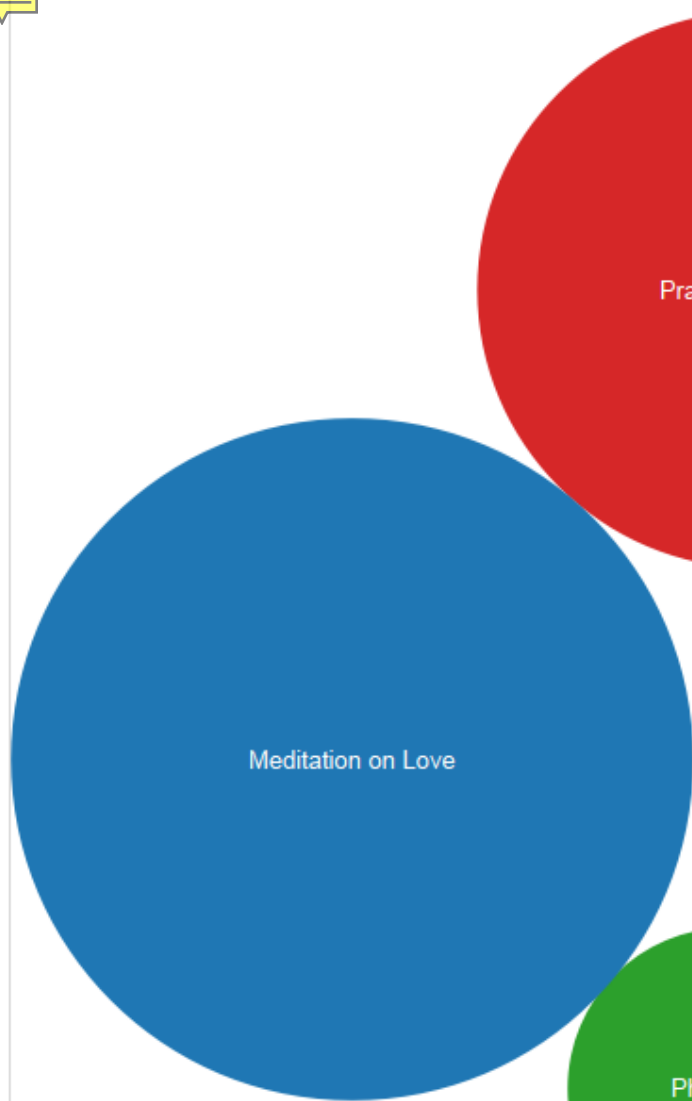
**Response to Current  
Events (not about  
Islam)**

**Response to  
Current Events  
(about Islam)**

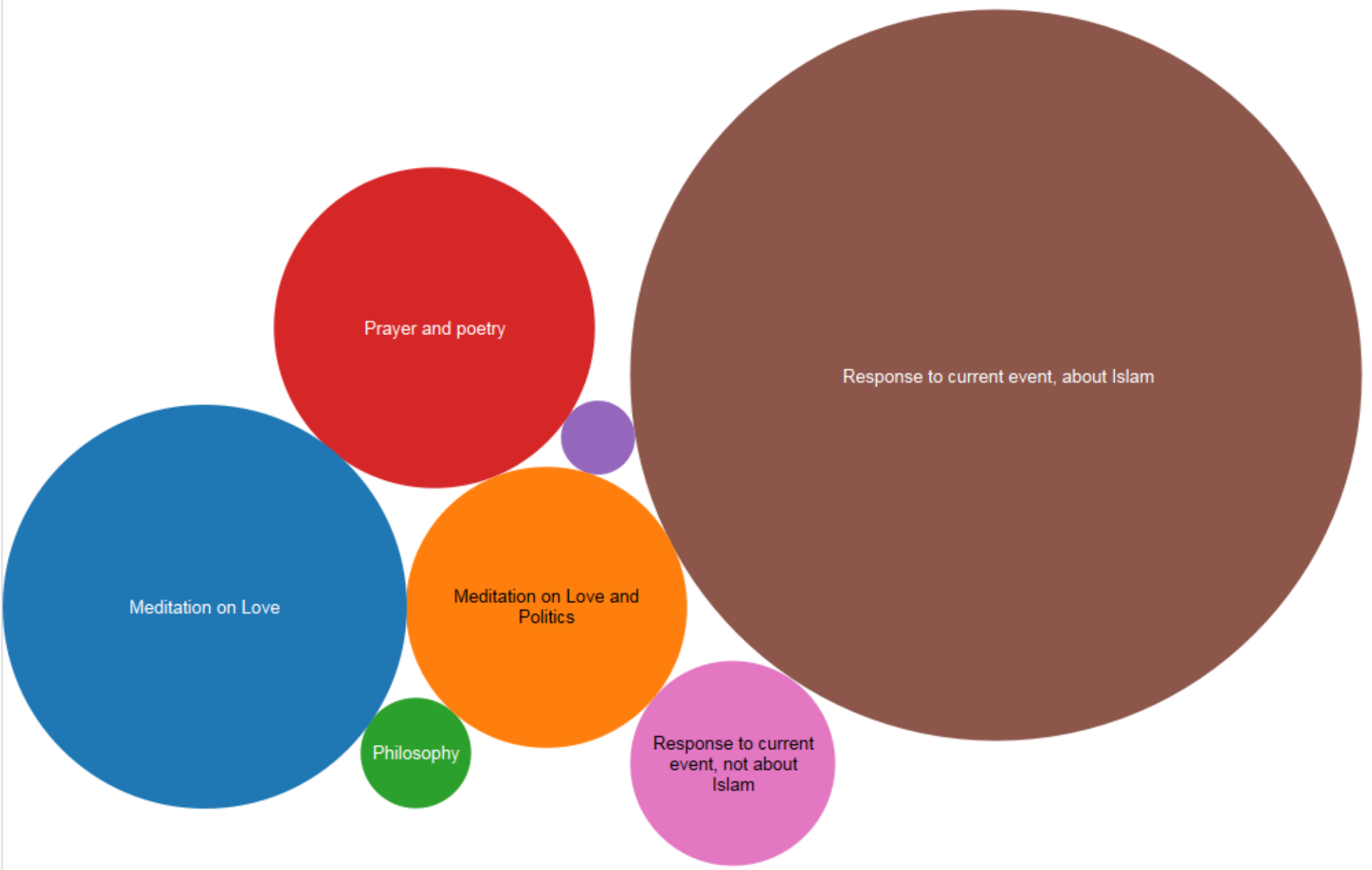
**Prayer and Poetry**



# Themes by Number of Times Written About



# Overall Shares By Theme



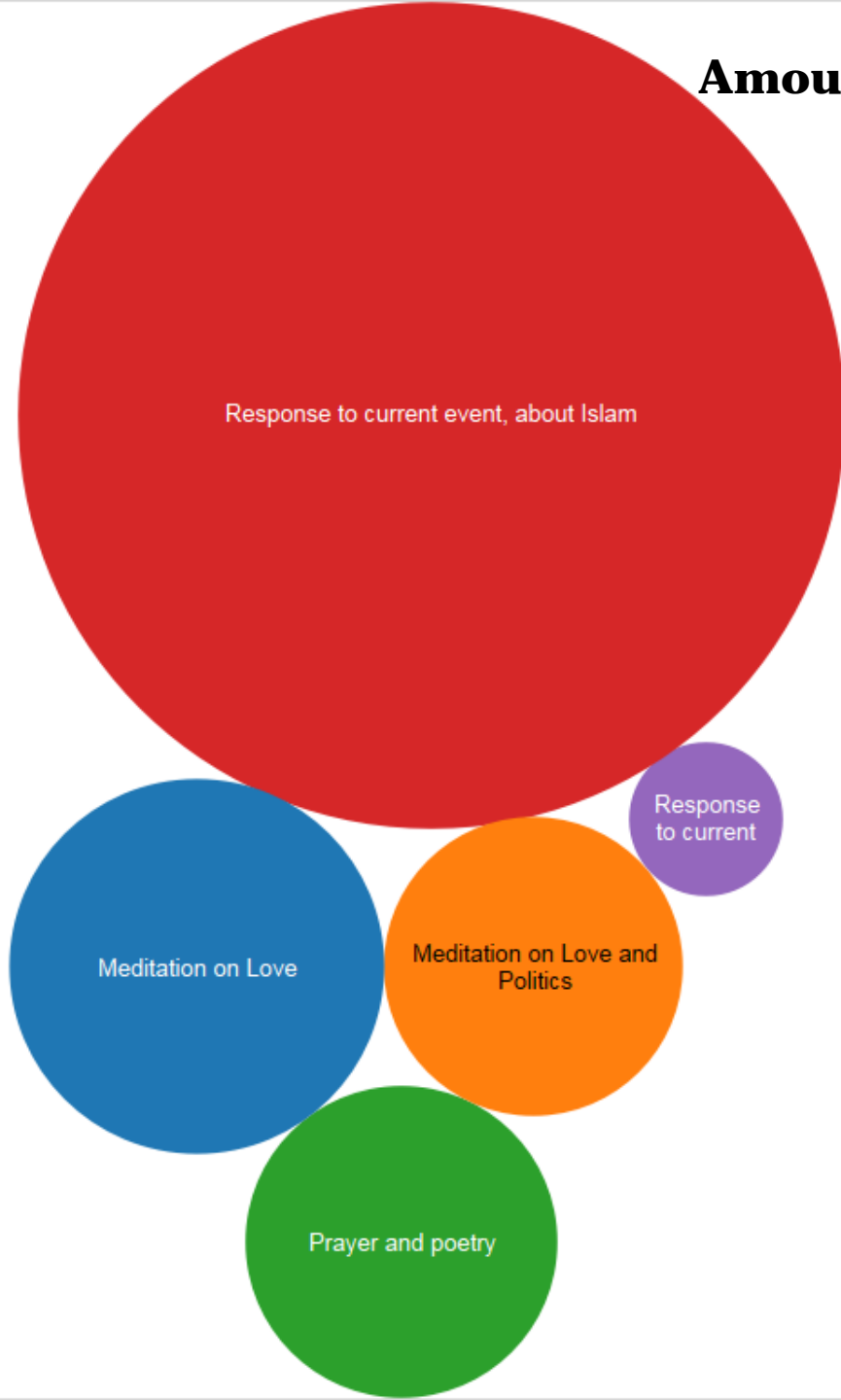




# High Circulation Data Breakdown



# Amount of Circulation by Theme



Response to current event, about Islam

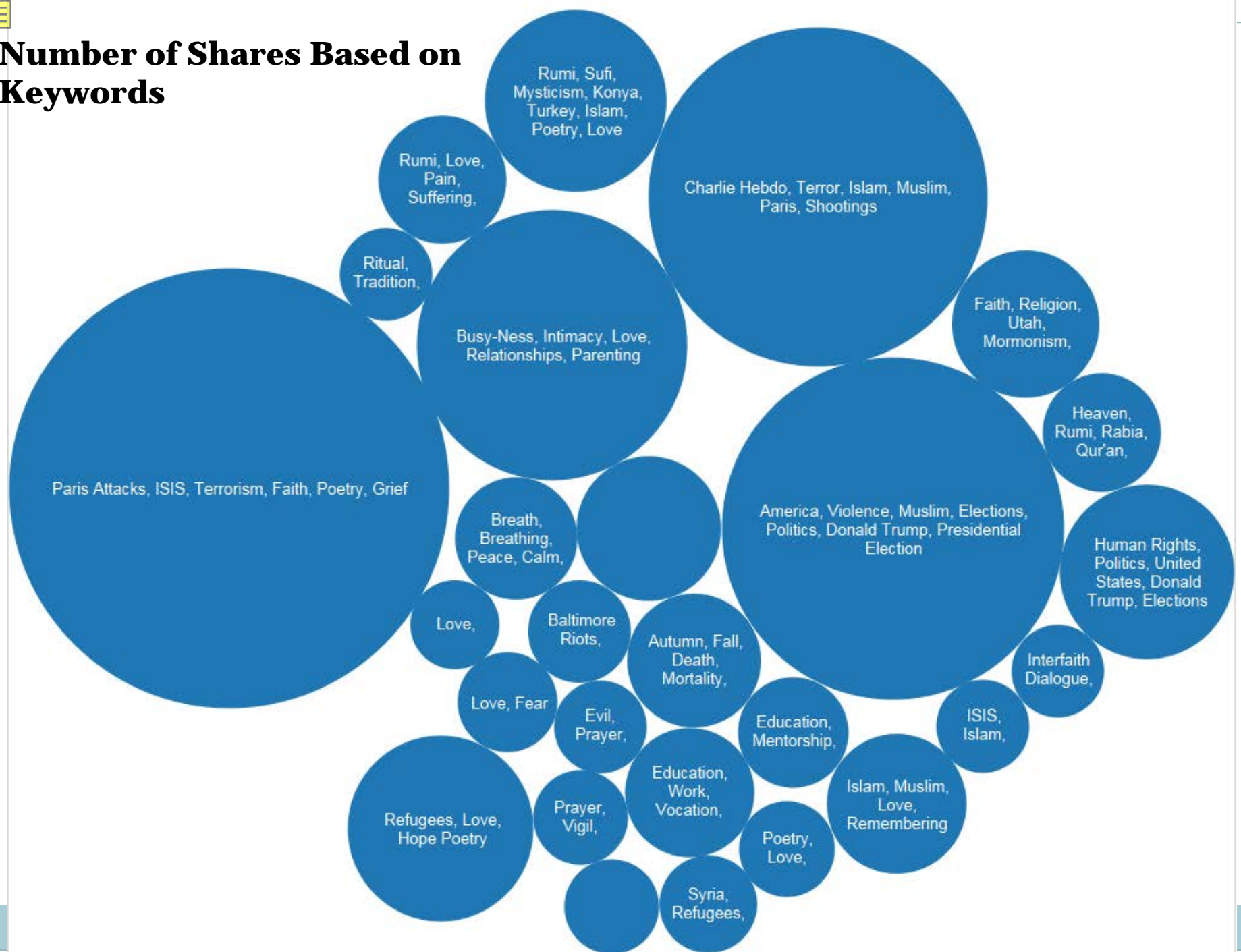
Response to current

Meditation on Love

Meditation on Love and Politics

Prayer and poetry

# Number of Shares Based on Keywords



# Discussion



- Muslim public intellectuals expected to respond to current events that place a lot of scrutiny on Muslim Americans
  - They are also expected to be discussing topics that are about/affect Muslim Americans
- This means that Muslim public intellectuals are included in public discourse on a *conditional* basis.
- Coerced participation
- Signification
- Exclusivity of a Secular public
- Can participation be conditional?