Muslim Public Intellectuals: Revealing Conditional Participation Through Circulation

BY JULIA SCHAFER
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
Dr. Omid Safi, Public Intellectual

- 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
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

Meditation on Love

Philosophy

Response to Current Events (not about Islam)

Meditation on Love and Politics

Response to Current Events (about Islam)

Prayer and Poetry
Themes by Number of Times Written About

- Prayer and poetry
- Meditation on Love
- Meditation on Love and Politics
- Philosophy
- Reaction to current
- Response to current event, about Islam
- Response to current event, not about Islam
Overall Shares By Theme

- Prayer and poetry
- Meditation on Love
- Meditation on Love and Politics
- Philosophy
- Response to current event, not about Islam
- Response to current event, about Islam
High Circulation Data Breakdown
Amount of Circulation by Theme

- Response to current event, about Islam
- Meditation on Love
- Meditation on Love and Politics
- Prayer and poetry
- Response to current
Number of Shares Based on Keywords

- Rumi, Sufi, Mysticism, Konya, Turkey, Islam, Poetry, Love
- Charlie Hebdo, Terror, Islam, Muslim, Paris, Shootings
- Faith, Religion, Utah, Mormonism,
- Heaven, Rumi, Rabia, Qur'an,
- America, Violence, Muslim, Elections, Politics, Donald Trump, Presidential Election
- Human Rights, Politics, United States, Donald Trump, Elections
- Interfaith Dialogue,
- ISIS, Islam,
- Refugees, Love, Hope, Poetry
- Prayer, Vigil,
- Syria, Refugees,
- Poetry, Love,
- Islam, Muslim, Love, Remembering
- Education, Work, Vocation,
- Education, Mentorship,
- Autumn, Fall, Death, Mortality,
- Evil, Prayer,
- Baltimore Riots,
- Love, Fear
- Breath, Breathing, Peace, Calm
- Busy-Ness, Intimacy, Love, Relationships, Parenting
- Ritual, Tradition,
- Paris Attacks, ISIS, Terrorism, Faith, Poetry, Grief
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?