ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:	NOT YOUR TERRORIST: CASE STUDIES EXAMINING THE INTERSECTIONAL IDENTITIES AND ASPIRATIONS OF ARAB AMERICAN MUSLIM MIDDLE SCHOOL BOYS
	Dina Shafey Scott, Doctor of Philosophy, 2017
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Arab Muslim boys living in the United States have experienced varying levels of public scrutiny since 9/11 and prior to. Public perceptions of these experiences are centered on media driven representations; often inaccurate depictions of the nuanced lives of these boys. While Arab Muslims have lived in the United States more than a century, their lived experiences, particularly experiences while in school are missing. This research study examined how Arab American Muslim Middle School boys perceived their intersecting identities while navigating instances of bias. To address this, one overarching research questions guided this study: "How do key intersecting social classifications race, gender, culture, and religion, impact Arab American middle school boys' ethnic identity constructs?" To further explicate on these nuances four sub-questions were addressed, including: "How do these boys define success and achievement in relation to schooling?"; "How have middle school Arab

American boys experienced cultural bias/or how have they perceived cultural bias?";
To what extent do Arab American boys seek out resources (community family,
religion), through their social networks?" and "How have they navigated schooling as
framed by these experiences of cultural bias?"

Using an Intersectional Identities Theoretical Framework (Crenshaw, 1989;
Phelan, 1991; Collins, 2009), this study explored the multifaceted nature of
identity perception, namely the boys' experiences with power relationships
resulting from these identifiers. As a result of this study four predominate themes
surfaced including how they operationalized power and oppression across identity
categories namely, Religion, Culture, Gender and Race. To delve into these
questions and to represent the experiences of each boy with detail, a qualitative case
study design (Bodgen & Biklen 2003; Erickson & Shultz, 1992; Merriam, 1998; Yin,
2006) was used to analyze and produce rice and detailed narratives. This study will
promote discussion about the very nature of the lived experiences of Arab Muslim
boys growing up in the United States. It will also serve as a platform for
administrators and policy makers in the daily decisions, for example curriculum
decisions, impacting this scrutinized population.

NOT YOUR TERRORIST: CASE STUDIES EXAMINING THE
INTERSECTIONAL IDENTITIES AND ASPIRATIONS OF ARAB AMERICAN
MUSLIM MIDDLE SCHOOL BOYS

by

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
2017

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Dedication

To Winston and Simone. You are my sunshine's my only sunshine's, you make me

happy when skies are grey, you both will never know how much I love you. This is

dedicated to you, you can be and do anything you want to be in life.

Acknowledgements

When I began this Ph.D. program I waivered in my believe that I could get through it. No matter what has come in my direction, God has always provided and was there when I lost hope and faith. I want to acknowledge that no matter what happens in our lives, God always has a plan that will work. Alhamduallah.

For 15 years, my husband and my best friend Vernon Scott has stood by me. He has been a father to my children, a provider, a crutch, a companion, a philosophical and intellectual equal, a sounding board, a friend, my comfort. This process has taken 9 years out of our lives and I'm so happy that you were there to share them with me and will be there for the many years to come. I love you so much and am so grateful that we found each other.

My mother Neema Arafa, the kindest and smartest woman that I know. You have given so much of yourself to give us a chance to succeed. I only have an inkling of the struggles that you endured to make this life better for us now that I am a mother. I love you. Dad, Hany Shafey, you left everything you knew and made this journey so that we could do better, be better and continue to live our lives with piety and kindness. I am a replica of you, a photocopy, as I'm told. It is the best compliment. I love you. Sarah and Ahmed, our lives growing up were riddled with challenges, but you are my siblings and I know you were and are, always there for me. I love you guys.

To my amazing advisor, Jennifer Turner. When no one else would take a chance with me, you stepped up to the challenge and did it with such grace, intellect and kindness. You believed in me and pushed me through every edit and struggle. Thank you for taking a chance. Patricia Hill Collins, I am humbled and grateful to have gotten the chance to get to know you and learn from you. Sahar Khamis, shukran a million times for listening to me through these years as I professed my commitment to this important work. Tara Brown, your thoroughness and thoughtful feedback were invaluable. Nazish Salahuddin, thank you for stepping in when I needed someone the most!

When one envisions the process of writing it doesn't usually involve a grocery store. I wrote every paper, every comprehensive exam, every part of my dissertation proposal and my final dissertation at the Harris Teeter in Olney, Md. This has become my writing community, all of the night shift employees here, you helped me get through this process, always armed with a smile, a bottle of water and from the beginning, believing in me by calling me Doc.

Through the years, I have come to realize there are many people who have my back. Both ARHU and AAP have become my families over the past years. They have become my shoulder to cry on, academic minds whereby Io seek advice and just two groups of really kind people whom I am eternally lucky to know.

Finally, thank you to all of those who supported me while researching and writing, Dawn, Jason, Shasha, Kelsey and everyone else I spoke to through this process. My PhD Mamas writing group, venting to you saved my life. To the boys and their families who allowed me into their homes and treated me like family: your stories will change the way people view young Arab Muslim boys in the United States.

Although I began this dissertation with a robust cohort I ended with only one other person. Prima, Dr. Rosy Ramierz Carrenza, you were such a huge part of me getting this done. The only other mother with two kids in this program, we spent countless hours going back and forth about how different this journey is for mothers than anyone else! You inspire me!

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1ˢᵗ Illustration: Father and Son

Early in their lives, Arab[1] boys are bound to a trajectory of success through cultural and religious commitments. I recall my father's stories of hard work, sacrifice, and most importantly his desire to support his family. He talked of working menial jobs, even with his medical degree, to acquire enough assets to immigrate from the Middle East to North America. This is the story of an Arab immigrant to Canada in the 1980s experiencing a very stark language difference and a different land with different people. He worked long days and nights to support and create a better life for his family. Without knowing, his son was also part of this trajectory towards aspirational success. My brother's story met many different paths; however, my brother experienced challenges and struggles that were unique to his growing up as a first-generation Canadian. The process of discovering his own identity was filled with diverse cross-cultural trials; however, he always returned to his support network. Success for both my father and brother were and continue to be based on multigenerational views of the role of Arab Muslim boys; deeply-imbedded concepts within the culture and religion, such as a respect for elders and the necessity to care for a future family, helped my brother navigate the complexity of choices.

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[1] For the purposes of this study the term 'Arab' encompasses those individuals whom identify some facet of their identities as Arab.

1

2nd Illustration: The Son

I have witnessed and acknowledged the personal achievements of Arab American boys. In a pilot study conducted in 2012, I interviewed a recent college grad named MK about his experiences with cultural or racial stereotypes. During the interview, MK recalled a very specific example from his childhood:

> *This guy saw us talking in Arabic and he started to scream at us. This was in 1994 -- the summer of 1994. We were in the park. We were just walking and he was very pissed off that he saw us speaking another language. He said to us, "What, you don't know how to speak English?" Then, he got very angry and started kicking the garbage cans over. That was probably the first incident that I remember that was negative." (MK Interview, 2010)*

Later in the interview, MK said the following about his academic aspirations:

> *You know, I attribute my desire to achieve to my upbringing. My parents and I have never felt badly about my culture or religion. I am a microbiologist and I can always look to the Qur'an² when I'm trying to explain a phenomenon. Additionally, as a male, I was always taught that I have to get an education, as this will be important for my future family." (MK Interview, 2010)*

MK's religious obligations intersected with his cultural and gendered obligations, motivating MK to meet his career aspiration and helping him thwart the negative implications of cultural and religious bigotry. As with other Arab Muslim boys, MK's story of success was one of strength, religion, culture, and aspiration.

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² The religious text which guides Muslims, revealed to the Prophet Over 23 years beginning in 609 and ending in 632 when the prophet died (Shaikh, 2001).

Introduction

Stories of conflict, achievement, and success between a father and son and Arab Muslim boys in general are numerous. I was drawn to telling the stories of young Arab Americans because their experiences are reflective of many invisible voices. The stories I have encountered and personally experienced as an Arab American Muslim woman are part of the fabric of American immigrant success stories. Although I have personal insight into the stories of Muslim American women and girls, it seems they have more representation in current literature. The lived experiences of Arab American girls are often characterized by traditional norms and values; parents weigh heavily on the choices young Arab American Muslim girls make. On the other hand, many Arab American boys are not under the same scrutiny. They are often allowed to go out with friends, talk to girls, and assume a more adaptive identity; however, there are differential nuances and difficulties in how Arab American boys perceive identity. While standing in an airport, I have witnessed the impacts of post-9/11 Islamophobia -- fathers not permitted to join their children on airplanes, mothers subjected to searches revealing the parts of their bodies they have chosen to hide, and young children having to defend their culture and religion as not inherently evil.

In delving into the nuances of these experiences, I posit that Arab American boys' capacity to have future successes based in academic achievement stems from access to forms of social and cultural capital (Bourdieau, 1986; Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Lareau, 1987; Yosso, 2005; Zhou & Bankston, 1994). Access to social and cultural capital sustains them when experiencing forms of oppression. The present

study looked at how young boys born in post-9/11 America conceptualize their intersecting identities: race, gender, religion, and culture. Existing research shows links between stereotyping and academic achievement, confidence, and self-image (Abu El-Haj, 2006; Ewing, 2008; McKown & Weinstein, 2003; Steele, 1997, 1998). The present study assessed how Arab Muslim boys in the United States experienced schooling while framed by cultural bias and the operationalization of power and oppression. More importantly, I sought to discover how each boy saw their gendered, cultural, and religious identities how the intersectionality of these identities impacted self-image and identity formation.

Moreover, I desired to understand how these boys' identities may be constructed through a lens influenced by others' representations and how this construct affects the choices they make in schooling and in life. The popular representations of Arab Muslim males that exist in mainstream media do not account for the positive influences of social and cultural capital within these communities. In addition, manifestations of race and culture become more pronounced when coupled with heightened media attention and security threats. Like other stigmatized social groups, Arab Muslims are beginning to experience how internalization of negative imagery can have detrimental effects on self-image and self-perception (Abu El-Haj, 2006; Ewing, 2008). At a time when a Republican presidential candidate proposes to restrict travel from the Middle East[3] to the United States and create a database to monitor American Muslims, the present study provides an opportunity for

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[3] "The "Middle East" is sometimes defined to include both North Africa and southwest Asia as far as Afghanistan but more often refers to the countries from Egypt or Libya east to the Arabian Peninsula and Iran" (Ameri & Arida, 2012, pg. 229).

Arab Muslim boys to share stories of success and perseverance in the face of

discrimination. These stories give voice to the many Mohamed's, Ahmed's, and

other Arab Muslim boys as they paint a more accurate picture of their lives.

Who are the Arabs?

While often seen as a collective group, Arabs differ by religion, country of

origin, race, ethnicity, language, and other facets which define the cultural group.

While the map in Figure 1 may foster an overdetermined view of the Arab world, the

boys who participated in this study effectively connected with one or more of these

Arab nations in their identification. The term 'Arab' encompasses individuals who

speak Arabic as a primary language. There are approximately 22 Arabic-speaking

countries and while Arabic speakers also reside in countries that are not considered

Figure 1. Map of the Arab World (U.S. Arab Chamber of Commerce, 2011).

Arab, they may also self-identify as Arab. Conversely, there are groups

within Arab countries that do not consider themselves Arabs, such as the Kurds (who inhabit Iran, Syria and Iraq and speak Kurdish) and Berbers (who inhabit portions of North Africa and speak Berber) (De la Cruz, 2003).

The term "Arab American" originated in the 1970's during a time where many ethnic groups in the U.S. began to self-identify using a hyphenated identifier. In this study, the phrase Arab American will not be hyphenated. The hyphenate identity creates an adjective that weigh Arab's levels of Americanness, rather than look at the intersectional nature of Arab and Americans identities existing simultaneously. Shortly after this, Americans of Arab origin began to organize politically and establish themselves; they created the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (AAADC) and the Arab American Institute (AAI) were founded in 1980 and 1985 respectively, to empower and defend the civil rights of Arab Americans (Ameri & Arida, 2012).

Statement of the Problem

An estimated 3.5 million Arabs have immigrated to American (AAI, 2007), since the early 20th century. Despite these significant numbers and their subsequent contributions to many facets of American life, research on the academic experiences of Arab Muslims in the United State is sparse (Abdullah, 2008; Crocker & Major, 1989; Sarroub, 2006). What is known, however, is the negative attention this population has received during the past 15 years and well before the events of 9/11. The events that culminated on September 11, 2001, included three separate acts of terrorism, leaving nearly 3000 Americans dead and many others were injured (CNN,

2011). This event was not unique, as it was not the first instance of Arab Muslim terrorism on US soil. However, this catastrophic event became the catalyst leading to the portrayal of Arab Muslim identity as inherently fueled by evil.

My desire to focus this research on first-generation, American-born Arab Muslim middle school boys was partially rooted in the lack of available research on this group compared to the hyper-scrutiny Arab Muslims receive in the news media (Abdulla, 2008; Crocker & Major, 1989; Halsell & Wheaton; Sarroub, 2005; Tabbah, 2012). Statistics not commonly shared with the general public include the academic performance of Arabs in America. Per the 2010 U.S. Census, of the nearly 950,000 Arabs 25 and over surveyed in the United States, at least 89% have obtained at least a high school diploma (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2010). This data is also significant because it demonstrates that Arab American youth are successful navigating the educational system despite their constant exposure to negative imagery about their culture and religion, as well as the difficulties they encounter due to how they perceive their identity marked by complex delineations of religion, race, culture, and gender.

My focus on Arab American masculine identities using an intersectional frame is driven by three major components. First, data on Arab Americans navigating schooling is nominal and, when available, has focused on the experiences of Arab girls (Sarroub, 2006). Secondly, in conversations about Arab Muslim terrorism, boys are most closely linked to negative perceptions and are directly impacted. Literature on Arab Americans currently used in K-12 curriculum may not be entirely representative of the nuances of Arab American masculine identities. Modern

perceptions and misconceptions of identities need to be shared and stories need to be told.

Arab Muslim boys have grown up in a post-9/11 America at a time when they are the focus of many negative media representations; stories of achievement and positive portrayals of identity perceptions are sparse. In a politically-charged media environment, Arab American boys with both phenotypical Arab traits and ethnolinguistic markers (e.g., names, religious identities) do not have stories -- except for negative portrayals perpetrated by the media. This study attempts to demonstrate how Arabs are an invisible minority in the United States. The level of scrutiny that documented minorities experience is not comparable for Arab Americans because their identity is not recognized as an official American racial/ethnic identity. On the most recent iteration of the U.S. Census, 'Arab American' is not available as a selection for respondent race or ethnicity; Arab Americans must select 'Caucasian' as their identity.

Rationale

Since 2001, many Arab Americans have either experienced or witnessed an oppressive environment or another form of oppression (Abdulla, 2008; Crocker & Major, 1989; Halsell & Wheaton; Sarroub, 2005; Tabbah, 2012). Children born in post-9/11 America must negotiate a personal sense of self within a system marred by fundamentally negative media representations of terrorist and aggressor. Additionally, given the current socio-political climate, where Arab men are perceived as a threat to the American way of life, Arab American Muslim boys' awareness of stereotypes of

Arabs and Muslims weighs on their psyche and carries through their schooling experiences. Many of the self-identity concepts that Arab American middle school boys born post-9/11 formulate are rooted in media representations of the stereotypical Arab as aggressive, prone to violence, and ready to kill anyone. According to Britto (2008), "since September 11, 2001, there have been increasing reports of schools becoming a milieu of discrimination, bullying, and exclusion of Arab Muslim students" (p. 854). Arab American students are increasingly aware of how other Americans associate them with terrorists. In 2011, an exhibition entitled "The Heart of Arab America: A Middle School Perspective," conducted by the Arab American National Museum, gave a glimpse into the lives of a predominately Arab American middle school class in Dearborn, Michigan, ten years after 9/11. It showed how the imagery associated with 9/11 resonated with these students. Many of the components of this exhibition were visual representations of the lives of Arab American middle school students and firsthand stories of how these students navigated their lives in a post-9/11 America. It displayed their emotions and distress surrounding the antagonists of 9/11.

Given the numerous depictions of modern Arabs in the media, the experiences of young Arab Americans navigating schooling and formulating identity are unrepresented. Although Arabs make up a significant number of immigrants in the United States, few representations exist of their contemporary experiences of identity formulation or their educational experiences. For example, Abu El-Haj (2006) points out that "the significance of Arab Americans as a minority racial and ethnic group has rarely been recognized in the area of multicultural education" (p.

22). Further, Arab American people have forged their identities in the United States as many others before them. Arab American racial categorization is marked by various legal court cases addressing whiteness and effectively shifting race of Arab Americans from 'other' to 'White' (e.g., *In re Najour* (1909)*, In re Mudarri* (1910)*; In re Ellis* (1910)*; Dow v. United States* (1915)). Since these court cases, Arab Americans have encountered conflicting racial categorization, cultural instability, and religious persecution as immigrants and invisible minorities.

Understanding the impact of widespread representations of Muslims and Arabs on the lives of Arab Americans boys will give context for educators, politicians, and policy makers. The decisions that they make surrounding curriculum choices, policy decisions, and diversity lack representative voices of Arab Americans. The results of the present study can also inspire the development of strategies to tackle systematic injustices heightened by the events of September 11, 2001. In the 2020 U.S. Census, Arab Americans have an opportunity for representation with a new U.S. Census checkbox – "MENA" (Middle Eastern and North African). According to the AAI (2015), "[t]he creation of a coherent ethnic category for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region will have a positive impact on the treatment and services available to members of the Arab American community." However, because of the changing political landscape, many Arab Americans see classification as another form of surveillance. An opportunity for Arabs to self-identify will provide a platform for the reexamination of strategies to thwart instances of injustice.

Framing the Problem through an Intersecting Identity Lens

        Understanding the complexities surrounding the experiences of the Arab American middle school boy requires an interdisciplinary framework to tease out the nuances of identity and aspiration amongst this marginalized group. The layers of Arab Muslim boys' identities encompass race, culture, religion, and gender, which are very much interdependent. The perceived power dynamic and experiences with oppression and privilege associated with masculinity, also called *hegemonic masculinity* (Connell, 2005), may be overshadowed by racial, religious and cultural markers. The use of an intersectional lens (Collins, 2009) will explicate their unique experiences as nuanced and possibly in contempt with the traditional masculine power dynamic surrounding their 'White privilege'. The ways in which society has assigned power to Arab males through depictions of terror, war, and control over women may diminish power associations derived from their masculinity. This intersectional lens allowed this study to approach specific identity categories, namely, religion, gender, culture and race simultaneously, thus better situating how forms of privilege and oppression are operationalized in the lives of these study participants. Consequently, Arab American boys experience forms of oppression stemming from their matrix of domination (Collins, 2009) where collective identity markers -- Arab, Muslim and male -- and conflicting racial classifications coalesce.

Framing the Problem through a Social and Cultural Capital Lens

While Arab American males may experience discrimination and oppression, the ways in which they experience and respond to discrimination and oppression as compared to other marginalized populations is unique. For example, in predominately Arab communities, large bilingual communities with Arab shops and familiar faces have become enticing to newly immigrated Arab peoples. "New grocery stores, bakeries, restaurants, and clothing stores opened, whose diverse ownership included Yeminis, Lebanese, Palestinians, and Iraqis. Arab American lawyers, doctors, and pharmacists serve clients in the areas and established thriving practices" (Ameri, 2012, p. 19). This type of community, considered by many educational researchers as examples of social and cultural capital (Bourdieau, 1986; Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Lareau, 1987; Yosso, 2005; Zhou & Bankston, 1994), has helped first-generation Arab American children offset the biases encountered during the events after September 11, 2001, by providing networks of support. Incorporating this lens uncovers the forms of capital that are embedded in the daily lives of these boys, both social and cultural and clarifies when, how and why they would need to activate them.

Research Questions

To help guide this research, the overarching research question, "How do key intersecting social classifications race, gender, culture and religion, impact Arab American middle school boys' ethnic identity constructs?"and sub-questions were intended to analyze the complex nature of social structures, identity perceptions, and

the intersection of race, religion, culture and gender. To explicate more deeply, the two sub-questions were incorporated to determine how experiences with cultural bias impacted the lived experiences of Arab American Muslim boys. More specifically, each of these sub-questions forced an even deeper dive into the facets of identity that impact their lived experience. Overall, the purpose of these questions was to uncover the truths that these boys experience to then attempt to understand their framing of their intersecting identities.

1. How do these boys define success and achievement in relation to schooling?

2. How have middle school Arab American boys experienced cultural bias/or how have they perceived cultural bias.

    a. To what extent do Arab American boys seek out resources via their community, mosques, family, and religion through their social networks?

    b. How have they navigated schooling as framed by these experiences of cultural bias?

Research on Arab American lived experiences is necessary to present a more comprehensive depiction of the lives of Arab American boys that might refute negative images held by their teachers, neighbors, police and within the media and other US social institutions; it also serves as context for those who encounter Arab American youth while they experience difficulties with assimilation and identity construction (Abdulla, 2008; Al-Khatab, 1999; Crocker & Major, 1989; Sarroub, 2005). This research provides essential clarity for educators and administrators

13

attempting to navigate Arab American boys' experiences and context in understanding many of the issues Arab American boys encounter daily. This research may also serve as a good cross-comparison when studying other marginalized and othered groups.

Study Design

I used qualitative methodology to uncover the nuanced stories and experiences of four Arab American middle school boys. This methodological tool helped frame my understanding of their lived experiences and uncovered the interconnectivity of identity, academic success and aspiration. A case study approach, utilizing semi-structured individual interviews and focus groups, was used to inspire deep and rich conversations illuminating their lived experiences and aspirations (Bodgen & Biklen 2003; Erickson & Shultz, 1992; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2006).

I used purposeful sampling (Maxwell, 2005) to recruit participants with the following requisites existing for participation:

- Identify as male;

- Identify as Muslim;

- Identify as Arab American;

- Were born in the United States after September 11, 2001; and

- Were enrolled in middle school (grades 6-8) as of the time of the study.

Interviews and focus groups were conducted in the homes of the participants.

Summary

While there are numerous stories and countless representations of the experiences of Arab Americans in modern media, few are accurate. Further, even fewer stories articulate the lived experiences and academic experiences of Arab Americans, especially Arab American boys. This study attempts to represent the experiences of Arab American middle school boys who have conceptualized their self-image and identities in a post-9/11 American landscape. The present study utilized an intersectional lens to assess the multidimensional narratives positioning the identity perceptions of Arab American middle school boys. By understanding their perceptions of their identities against a backdrop of societal expectations, I hope to create a more accurate depiction of their experiences and future aspirations.

The stories presented by the four participating Arab American boys can provide educators and administrators more tools to effectively support Arab American students and address the unique needs of this invisible minority population. The four student narratives can also serve as representations of their own students and allow for a different perspective from what they see on television. Because Arab American boys' identities are nuanced, this study looks at how they navigate their privilege and simultaneous systems of oppression. The power that provides privilege to White boys may not be activated by these boys because of their Arab and Muslim identities. Finally, as Arab American boys are exposed to instances of cultural bias and discrimination, this study assesses how and if they encounter negative perceptions of their identity and how these negative perceptions impact how they live their lives.

In Chapter 2, I build an understanding of the problem by offering an extensive overview of the history of Arabs in America and an examination of the existing literature around the conceptual framework to further understand this population. While there is a dearth of literature about the Arab American population, this review extrapolates from research on other marginalized groups who may have similar experiences and may be similarly situated in U.S. society. Chapter 3 provides an overview of case study methodology as well as justification of how case studies can produce rich and comprehensive accounts of the lived experiences of each of the study participants. Chapters 4 through 7 introduce and explicate on the narratives of each of the four participants – Sef, Zach, Jo, and Timothy. Following the individual narratives, Chapter 8 outlines the emergent themes of this study as they relate to the religion, culture, gender and race of Arab American boys. Finally, Chapter 9 offers a culminating discussion and final recommendations on how to support the identity development of Arab American boys.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The following literature review explores the personal accounts of Arab Americans in education from 1980 to present. As there is little literature in this area, it should also be noted that I am also drawing on literature about similarly-situated populations as a point of comparison. I begin by providing a historical overview of the immigration patterns of Arabs to the United States. Next, I address literature that discusses identity perceptions in immigrant youth (Phinney, 1993) and the impact of identity perceptions on the lives of these youth. Because the multilayered identity categories of Arab American middle school boys are inextricably linked through their masculinity, religion, culture, and race, I use an intersectional lens (Crenshaw, 1989; Phelan, 1991; Collins, 2009) to address how multifaceted social identities impact the traditional masculine power dynamic, shifting the matrix of domination (Collins, 2000). To follow, I address literature on forms of capital, namely social and cultural capital, as potential resources to help navigate schooling (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Lareau, 1987; Zhou & Bankston, 1994). Finally, I explore the conceptual framework to further situate this research.

I draw on literature that examines the academic experiences of Arab Americans in the U.S. educational system from 1980 to present. Since 1870, the pursuit of education has been adopted by Arab communities in the United States. "Middle Eastern people have an intellectual tradition that dates back to the time when, between the tenth and twelfth centuries, knowledge developed by Arab cultures was passed to Europe scholars" (Marvasti & McKinney, 2004, pg. 17). Although their academic pursuits were not thoroughly documented, Arab Americans

17

are beginning to appear in literature through researchers who desire to elucidate inaccurate representations and gaps of understanding (Crocker & Major, 1989; Sarroub 2005). Locating scholarly research on Arab Americans in K-12 education is difficult; the limited resources that address this constituency from 1980-present were acquired through multiple searches and filters, including EBSCO, Digital Dissertations and Google Scholar, among others. In the field of Arab Americans in education, scholarly research was located utilizing the search terms "Arab Americans and K-12 education" and "Arab American students in the United States". Thus, this literature review covers what scholars have said regarding Arabs in Education over the past 30 years.

History of Arabs in the United States

Arabs have a long history in the United States; their journey to acclimate and achieve is similar to other immigrant struggles. The social, economic and political experiences of Arab immigrants have laid the foundation for the current struggles and successes of this group. The push factors leading them away from their native countries and pull factors leading them into the United States are indispensable factors when addressing current experiences of this group. Arabs arrived in the United States in the late nineteenth century and proceeded in two distinctive waves thereafter. The first wave of Arab immigration to the United States occurred from 1870 to 1924; the second wave of Arab immigration occurred from the late 1920s to 1965. The third and largest wave of Arab immigration started in 1965 and continues to present day. The following section provides a brief summary of these three waves

of Arab immigration as well as a summary of the social, economic, and political experiences of Arab immigrants within each of these waves. Additionally, while discussing these waves in some detail, this section discusses the push factors which prompted these immigrants to leave their native homelands and the pull factors which attracted them to the United States.

The First Wave of Arab Immigration to the United States: 1870 - 1924

The first significant wave of Arab Immigration to the United States occurred in the late 19th century and was primarily made up of Syrian and Lebanese Christian men (Marvasti & McKinney, 2004). Although Muslim slaves were thought to have been transported to the United States many centuries prior, the first recognized and documented Arab immigration occurred much later. The specific ethnic identities of these individuals were not thoroughly documented because of the inaccuracies in racial categorization. These early Arabs left from the declining Ottoman Empire and were considered Ottomans by political institutions in the United States. According to Haddad (2004), "until 1899 U.S. officials simply referred to all such immigrants as Turkish" (p. 4). The period of the first wave of immigration brought approximately 100,000 Syrian and Lebanese immigrants to the United States.

Factors pushing Arabs from their homelands were numerous. Primarily, many early Arab immigrants sought to escape the harsh conditions imposed by the Ottoman Empires (Haddad, 2004). The failing political and economic conditions in their native countries included severe taxation, which made living and subsisting impossible for many Christians living under Muslim rule. The political instability of the Ottoman

Empire as reflected, for example, by the *Arabi Pasha Revolt of 1882*[4] in Egypt was one of many push factors that led Syrians to emigrate to the U.S. rather than neighboring Egypt. Many of these early Arab immigrants were of Christian faith; approximately 80% of emigrating Arabs were Orthodox, Melkite and Maronite Christians (Mehdi, 1978). The impending fall of the Ottoman Empire made economic conditions harsh; many non-Muslims were ostracized and unable to freely practice their Christian faith. These early Arab immigrants sought refuge in the United States and other countries. They were drawn by the lure of freedom of religion as guaranteed by constitutional decree. Additionally, the early immigrants were aware of the economic opportunity the United States had provided for others. In his autobiography, Rizk (1943) spoke of the United States through the eyes of a schoolmaster with exaggerated descriptions:

> It is a country-but not like Syria. It is really a country like heaven and you cannot know what it is like until you have been there… He told me many more things about America…So many wonderful, unbelievable things my schoolmaster told me…. The land of hope… the land of peace… the land of contentment… the land of liberty… the land of brotherhood… the land of plenty… where God has poured out wealth… where the dreams of men come true (Rizk, 1943, p. 70).

Early Arab immigrants came from an agrarian society where trading was a means to obtain goods. As a result, many Arab immigrants took to peddling exotic and uncommon goods when they came to the United States (Marvasti & McKinney,

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[4] The British increased their prominence in the Ottoman Empire and the Egyptian General Arabi Pasha, with the support of the Egyptian military revolted against British Rule (Mayer, 1988).

20

2004). The difficult transition to the United States was made easier by for these immigrants by continuing their trading practices. Eventually, many of these peddlers would grow into legitimate business owners and shopkeepers. This allowed them to build names for themselves in their communities as well as monetary security; "one of every three of these early immigrants were and eventually became shop owners" (Parillo, 2003, p. 354). The early Arab immigrants were strongly tied to their homelands with a hope that they would one day return once they amassed enough wealth. They did not seek to Americanize themselves but chose to settle in communities where other Arab immigrants resided. Arab immigrants were selective regarding where they chose to move within a given neighborhood. Just as their homelands restricted and condemned the mixing of Muslims and Christians, early Arab immigrants adhered to these restrictions as well (Marvasti & McKinney, 2004).

In addition to the Christian Arab immigrants of the 1870's, the first few Muslim males from the Syrian Provence of the Ottoman Empire came to the United States as migrant laborers (Naff, 1988). This was followed by an additional 4,000 Muslim immigrants to the United States between 1899 and 1914. Because of the harsh treatment of minorities in the United States during these early immigration years, some immigrants underwent the pattern of Americanization by altering their names and becoming involved in the education system. Of significance, many of these early Arab immigrants placed an emphasis on education; Syrian parents, for example, required their children to finish primary school (Parillo, 2003). The prospect of achieving for these immigrants was a narrative written through educational means. Although many of the first immigrants did not have opportunities in their homelands

to achieve academic success, they had expectations of their children to surpass their own achievement (Parillo, 2003).

Although many of these early Arab immigrants were hopeful at the prospect of returning to their homelands with their amassed wealth, the First World War isolated Arabs from their home countries and left many Arab immigrants with the reality that the United States would become their home. Early resistance to American culture changed when Arab immigrants felt that the United States was their home; the children of these early immigrants were considered the first assimilationists (Parillo, 2003). Since these immigrants were compelled to stay in the United States because of war and political struggle in their homeland, the Arab immigrants struggled with political issues of their own regarding their racial categorization in the United States. In the early 20th century, the first Arabs began questioning their racial categorization which limited their involvement in the communities in which they resided. Early immigrants were classified as Turks, which carried the stigma of being of Muslim faith. This association with Islam carried negative connotations, although many of the initial immigrants were Christian. In *Shahid vs. South Carolina* (1913), the judge determined that Shahid -- a 59-year-old immigrant who had resided in the United States for eleven years -- did not meet the standards for citizenship as classified by the 1790 Naturalization Act which stated that only free White persons "of good moral character" were allowed citizenship (Naturalization Act, 1790).

Following this case, another Arab American of Syrian ancestry challenged many of the same foundations of categorization. In *Dow v. United States* (1914), George Dow was able to prove to the courts that he should be considered White based

upon his phenotype, literacy, and religion. The judge in this case, Judge Woods, ruled

in the plaintiff's favor and cited that "the generally received opinion . . . that the

inhabitants of a portion of Asia, including Syria, [are] to be classed as White persons"

(*Dow v. United States*, 1914). Although Christian Arabs were soon able to classify as

White, many of the Muslim immigrants who were either darker in complexion or who

classified themselves as Muslim first had a more difficult time with racial

classification. In *Hassan v. Michigan* (1942), the Judge determined that:

> Arabs as a class are not White and therefore not eligible for citizenship.
>
> [A]part from the dark skin of the Arabs, it is well known that they are a part of
>
> the Mohammedan world and that a wide gulf separates their culture from that
>
> of the predominantly Christian peoples of Europe. (*Hassan v. Michigan*,
>
> 1942)

Although these early immigrants grappled with racial identity and a desire to

return to their homelands one day, many Arab immigrants chose to stay in the United

States. The second wave of Arab immigration to the United States also had its roots in

political and other historical factors unique to its time.

The Second Wave of Arab Immigration to the United States: 1925 - 1965

As with the first wave of Arab immigration to the United States, the second

wave was reflective the current state of US policitcs. It began shortly after the end of

World War II (WWII) and was the result of litigious factors and opportunity. The end

of WWII saw the United States vesting its political interests in the Arab nations. With

the end of the war and a poor economic rebound, the U.S. saw the need to fill the

intellectual void by recruiting many foreign students to come study in U.S.

universities. According to Haddad (2004):

> The second wave of immigrants came after the end of WWII, when the U.S.
>
> assumed responsibility for the security of the oil fields in the Middle East and
>
> recruited students from the newly independent Arab states to study at
>
> American universities with the expectation that once they returned to their
>
> home countries they would constitute an important asset to the U.S. interest.
>
> (p. 250)

Many of these students came to the United States pursuing higher education and

bringing with them highly specialized skills. As stated in Haddad (2004):

> The immigrant cohort of the fifties came to the United States for higher
>
> education and, as American higher education expanded in the 1960's, a great
>
> number became professors at universities. While a significant number of this
>
> group became professionals and business people in the United States, it was
>
> mostly the immigrants who were admitted on preference visas after 1965 who
>
> became doctors and engineers. They brought with them a special enthusiasm
>
> for these two professions, as they are highly prized in the Arab world as a
>
> means to social and economic mobility (p. 11).

This was common amongst many of the second-wave immigrants who saw the

importance of highly specialized forms of education (Haddad, 2004). Second-wave

immigrants resided in affluent suburban neighborhoods and assimilated much quicker

than first-wave immigrants. Although education and higher literacy rates were factors

in their ability to quickly assimilate, they were also not torn between their culture and

their country (Haddad, 2004). Second-wave immigrants were proud of their Arab culture and wanted to spread this in the United States. Ameri (2012) stated that "second-wave Muslim Arab immigrants isolated religious and cultural identity and worked to become part of the larger American collective" (p. 11). While the second wave was nationalistic towards their Arab countries, they were also not as restrictive as their first-wave predecessors. Two-thirds of Arab students who came to the United States during the second wave married American wives. They also varied in terms of their religious and cultural identities. Many of the first-wave immigrants were of Syrian or Lebanese descent and predominately followed Christian religious practices (Ameri, 2012); second-wave immigrants were from varying countries including Iran, Iraq, Palestine, Egypt and Lebanon (Marvasti & McKinney, 2004).

The revocation of the *Asia Exclusion Act of 1924*[5] in 1965 prompted a mass influx of many other Muslim nationals. Haddad (2004) discusses the acculturation and assimilation of Muslim communities and deduced that future career possibilities had the greatest impact on Arab Muslim immigrants:

> These immigrants placed a great stress on college education as a means of social and economic mobility. One Arab-American in her 60's who grew up in Ohio, reported proudly, "My parents came to this country as illegal immigrants. They were both illiterate, but they worked hard and put all eight children through college." (Haddad, 2004, p. 11).

Whereas many of the first wave of Arabs came fleeing religious persecution as instituted by the Ottoman Empire, the second generation was generally more educated

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[5] This act limited the number of immigrants to only 2% per country as a means to control specific races from entering the United States.

and came to America for educational opportunity. Other push factors included the *1968 Palestinian-Israeli* conflict over land in the Gaza strip and the West Bank. This enduring conflict came to its pinnacle with the partitioning of Israeli land and the absence of a Palestinian state. During the 1950s and the 1960s, over 6,000 Palestinian refugees were admitted to the United States under the *Refugee Relief Act* (Kayyli, 2006). Many Palestinians continued to emigrate to the United States once their relatives became U.S. citizens.

The children of second-wave immigrants were expected to succeed and establish themselves in the United States; in addition, they also carried the added burden of identifying as Arab in an American society. According to Haddad (2004), "many parents pressure[d] their sons to follow their footsteps. In the middle of the 1990s, the children of this group began to specialize in law, journalism, and the social sciences" (p.11). This new generation of Arabs was present in the United States during political, social and economic instability in their homelands. These Arabs struggled with clearly defined identities; namely they had a myriad of factors impacting their previous conceptions of identity. The prior legal battles that led to their newly-assigned racial classification of White, along with a new era of gender reform and cultural assimilation simultaneously impacting their identity perceptions. While this wave of Arab immigration led Arab Americans to form identities at the intersection of culture, race, religion and gender, the third wave of Arab immigration also led many immigrants to question their identities with complex conceptions of what it meant to be an Arab.

The Third Wave of Arab Immigration to the United States: 1965-Present

The third and current wave of Arab immigration to the United States occurred

between 1965 to the present. This wave stimulated the immigration of more than

400,000 Arab immigrants to the United States, which more than doubled the number

of second-wave immigrants and far exceeded the first wave of immigration. The third

wave of Arab immigration occurred as restrictions on immigration were shifting in

the United States. Amid Arab symbolic pride, many Arabs had high hopes for their

countries but were let down because of wars, political strife, economic poverty, and

social restrictions in their native countries (Kayyali, 2006). As a result, the United

States was very alluring to these immigrants.

The third wave of Arab immigration saw a burst of different Arab groups

coming to the United States; "since 1967, economic policies and wars have

encouraged a cross-section of Arabs to emigrate" (Kayyali, 2006, p. 33). While they

were hopeful that their respective nations would come out of their hardships, these

Arab immigrants were armed with education as a mode of advancement. As with the

second-wave immigrants, many of the third-wave immigrants were highly advanced

and possessed a higher level of education because of the British and French invasions.

Although they had institutions of higher education in their native homelands, the lure

of financial security and a place to provide opportunity for their children outweighed

their desire to remain in their Arab country. These Arab immigrants were highly

skilled and created an atmosphere for their children that laid out clear expectations for

education (Kayyali, 2006). The early third-wave immigrants also believed, as other

Arab immigrant waves believed, in education as a means of upwards social mobility.

However, in contrast to their earlier counterparts, the children of third-wave immigrants were expected to attend college rather than given a choice (Kayyali, 2006).

Wars in many Arab nations prompted immigration from varying countries. With the first indications of a civil war in Lebanon in 1975, there was an influx of Lebanese war refugees to the United States. The Lebanese, along with Palestinian refugees, came with their families to the United States and were predominately Muslim, unlike the first wave of Lebanese immigrants. Another significant factor influencing the immigration of Muslims to the United States was the 1978 overthrow of Shah Mohammed Reza and the Islamic Revolution in Iran, which resulted in a large influx of Persian immigrants (Bozorgmehr & Sabagh, 1996). This overthrow was followed by the subsequent governance of Ayatollah Khomeini, a highly religious Shiia leader which diminished the westernization of the country (Bozorgmehr & Sabagh, 1996). Although Iranians do not speak Arabic and are predominately Shiia, they are often lumped into the collective of Arab ancestry by researchers and U.S. Census data alike (Bozorgmehr & Sabagh, 1996).

Early third-wave immigrants were pushed from their homelands for political and economic reasons and saw the lure of the social freedoms that the United States offered. Many immigrants appreciated the tenants of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and respected their ability to freely practice their respective faiths in the United States. Later immigrant populations were encouraged to come to the United States as a result of direct U.S. involvement in the First Gulf War in the early 1990s. Third-wave Arab immigrants forged communities in the United States and became

well-known in California and Michigan; as an example, Dearborn, Michigan, which has the largest Arab population outside of the Middle East, became a virtual Mecca for Arab immigrants. According to the most recent U.S. Census report on Arab immigrants (2000), "[t]he proportion of the population that was Arab was highest in Michigan. Arabs accounted for 1.2 percent of the total population in Michigan by 2000" (p.4). The Arab shops, large bilingual communities, and familiar faces were enticing to newly-immigrated Arab peoples; "new grocery stores, bakeries, restaurants, and clothing stores opened, whose diverse ownership included Yeminis, Lebanese, Palestinians, and Iraqis. Arab American lawyers, doctors, and pharmacists began to serve clients in the area and established thriving practices" (Ameri, 2012, p. 19). This type of community is considered by many educational researchers as examples of social and cultural capital which have helped Arab American first generation children offset the biases encountered after the events of September 11, 2001.

This third wave of Arab immigration was also influenced by the events that transpired after September 11, 2001. Although the restrictions imposed on Arab emigration to the U.S. were lifted prior to this date, immigration policies have steadily changed over the past ten years. After 9/11, the U.S. government adopted more stringent immigration policies which slowed the early influx of Arabs. The adoption of the *U.S. Patriot Act in 2001* became a *de facto* mode of tracking and profiling immigrant populations. According to Ameri (2012):

These laws, most of which are still in effect today, allow for mass arrests, secret detentions, closed-door hearings, mandatory deportation interviews,

background checks, detention at borders, and no-fly lists. Taken together they

created a very strong anti-immigrant climate. They also amplified insecurity

and fear in Arab American immigrant communities, especially among those

who had arrived recently, whether because they felt under scrutiny themselves

or because they had friends and relatives who were wrongly victimized by

these new laws. (p. 21)

The third wave of Arab immigration was the largest, luring many skilled and diverse

Arab families from their countries. Although it remains the most difficult time for

Arabs to be in the United States with the rise of Anti-Arab sentiment and the current

Arab spring upheavals, many new Arab immigrants are at a standstill of resident

status -- unable to return to their homelands but also feeling persecution and

insecurity in the United States (Ameri, 2012). Consequently, many younger Arab

Americans are conflicted with their identities and feel the push to assimilate (Ameri,

2012). Although younger generations of Arab Americans face an internal struggle

with assimilation versus heritage, this daily burden is also reflected in their daily

interactions and their educational experiences.

   Arab American Academic Attainment. According to the 2008-2010

American Community Survey on Arab Americans, 89% of Arab Americans aged 25

and older have obtained at least a high school diploma in the United States (U.S.

Census, 2012). This number is higher than the overall U.S. population (85%; U.S.

Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2012). Further, the percent

of male and female Arab American high school graduates is 90% and 87.0%,

Table 1. Academic participation of Arab Americans in the U.S. – Selected Statistics: 2008-2010

Subject	N	% Population
Population 3 years and over enrolled in school	539,610	
Male 3 years and over enrolled in school		53.0%
Female 3 years and over enrolled in school		47.0%
Percentage of students by grade band		
Nursery school, preschool		6.4%
Kindergarten		5.1%
Elementary school (grades 1-8)		36.8%
High School		17.7%
Percent male enrolled in kindergarten to grade 12		58.8%
Percent female enrolled in kindergarten to grade 12		60.4%
College or graduate school		34.0%
Percent male enrolled in college		34.8%
Percent female enrolled in college		33.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2010 American Community Survey (2012)

respectively. Academic participation data on specific Arab American subgroups in

U.S. schools is outlined in Table 1.

Arab Americans in the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Area. While most

Arabs do not reside in Washington, D.C., and its surrounding suburbs, the financial

and educational lures of the nation's capital have attracted many Arab immigrants to

the region. According to Cohn and Cohen (2001),

Washington's Middle Eastern community was the nation's wealthiest. As of

the 1990 Census, Middle Easterners settling in the area tend to prefer

Northern Virginia. Fairfax ranks seventh among U.S. counties in the number

of green cards issued to Middle Eastern immigrants settling there in the 1990s;

Montgomery County ranks 15th (para. 12).

In total, the Arab population in the District of Columbia metropolitan area, including

surrounding suburbs in Maryland and Virginia area (DMV), is approximately 64,536

or 5.4% of the total area population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Although there is no

measure of the population of Arab American children attending schools in the DMV,

there are numerous Arabic restaurants, stores, mosques and community centers

owned by Arabs in Northern Virginia. Of note, there are approximately eight Muslim-

centered schools in the DMV that have both a traditional curriculum and an Islamic

curriculum. These statistics are imperative as they offer additional context for the

present study.

Identity Perceptions

The self-concept of minority and immigrant students is considered

multifaceted. Arab American youth undergo struggles in how they perceive their

identities with cultural nuances that non-Arab American children may not face:

Young adolescent Arab Americans or Arab immigrants may face a conflict

between personal identity and cultural identity. When young adolescents from

cultures that place a high value on family loyalty come to the U.S. and try to

adapt to the majority culture, they often have difficulties adjusting to the

emphasis that Americans place on individual competence and "competition"

(Al-Hazza &Bucher, 2010, p. 5).

Many Arab Muslims experience situational conflict, where what is considered normal Arab identity taught in the home does not align with identities in the schools (Sarroub, 2005).

In research conducted by Berry, Phinney, Sam, and Vedder (2006), the perceptions of immigrant youth identity were characterized by how ethnic youth became acculturated and how well they adapted to their host country. The authors defined acculturation, an essential component of identity perception, as "the process of cultural and psychological change that follows intercultural contact" (p. 305). In their large-scale study of 13 immigrant-receiving countries, Berry et al assessed 7,997 adolescents – 61% of immigrant status and 39% from national groups. The primary foci of their research was to question the process of how ethnic youth live between two culture; how they deal with intercultural situations and to determine if there were patterns of relationships between how adolescent youth engage in intercultural relationships and how they eventually assimilate. After distributing questionnaires, researchers developed an eight-pronged scale to measure responses. Included in this scale were measures of *acculturation attitudes, cultural identity, acculturation behaviors, family relationship values, perceived discrimination, psychological problems and sociocultural problems.* Researchers found that youth developed their identities based on varying levels of assimilation and acculturation. The findings were congruent with their initial hypotheses that immigrant children assimilate at high intervals but struggle with sociocultural and psychological adaptations. It was also noted that, when instances of perceived discrimination were present, youth had poorer experiences with social adaptation. Berry et al., (2006) stated that, "perceived

discrimination was negatively related to psychological adaptation and contributed to poorer sociocultural adaptation. It also had a strong effect on ethnic contact, indicating that perceived discrimination increases immigrants' orientation toward their own group" (p. 322). While this study did not specifically represent experiences of Arab American middle school boys, findings may be comparable to experiences of Arab American youth.

As the prior study contextualized the relationship between acculturation and the ability to formulate one's ethnic identity, Crocker and Major's (1989) discuss how group stigma as it relates to into individual ethnic identity may inform the identity perception for Arab American students. According to Crocker and Major (1989), "for members of stigmatized groups, attributing negative outcomes or negative feedback to internal, stable, and global causes such as lack of ability should lead to lowered self-esteem, whereas attributing these same outcomes to external causes should protect self-esteem" (p. 613). The authors conclude that there is no consistency amongst stigmatized groups with lowered self-esteem. This may also be the case for Arab American middle school boys; however, there are external protective factors that may assist how they perceive their identities related to their cultures.

The authors purport that there are three mechanisms that stigmatized populations use to protect themselves against cultural bias:

- Attributing negative feedback to prejudice against their group;
- Selectively comparing their outcomes with those members of their own group (how in group members compare to other in group members) and;

- Selectively devaluing those attributes on which their group typically

  fared poorly and valuing those attributes on which their group excels.

  (Crocker & Major, 1989, p. 609)

In-group members are likely to use one of these protective mechanisms to overcome

purported bias. For example, the authors discussed an example of an African-

American student blaming poor grades on racism. Although these protective

mechanisms exist, many students are still subject to the effects of stigmatization

which lead to lowered self-image. Crocker and Major (1989) provide multiple

variables that mitigate the protective mechanisms mentioned above:

- How concealable the stigma is;

- Time since the stigma occurred;

- Acceptance of stigma towards group;

- Token or Solo Status (Crocker & Major, 1989, p. 619-621)

Crocker and Major found that these variables help to explain why stigmatized groups

like Arab-American middle school boys are more likely to have lowered self-esteem

than their counterparts. However, due to phenotype, many Arab American students

cannot hide their cultural heritage. For example, some Arabs have features associated

with this cultural group, including darker hair color and skin tones (El-Badry, 1994).

If the individual accepts negative attitudes towards his or her own stigmatized group

(e.g., stereotypes), they will likely have lowered self-esteem. Additionally, if this

stigma rests at the core of the identity of the individual, it will likely have detrimental

effects. As young Arab Americans develop an awareness of self. they are often faced

with negative imagery of their ethnic and cultural backgrounds which can lead to lowered self-esteem.

To develop a more meaningful connection between self-perception and identity choices, Al- Khatab (1999) explored Arab American student's self-perceptions to determine if their academic performance was influenced by the imagery and perceptions advanced in mainstream society about Arabs. Al-Khatab (1999) proposed that "a significant fact in student's academic achievement and social adjustment is the way they perceive themselves, their abilities, and their self-worth" (p. 254). To test this supposition, the author sought to explain how Arab American students perceived themselves and their abilities as they acculturate into U.S. schools using six subscales of self-perception for children adapted from Harter's (1985) *Self-Perception Profile for Children* instrument; these include scholastic competence, social acceptance, athletic competence, physical appearance, behavior conduct, and global self-worth. Students were given two related descriptions for each subscale: one was a positive description and one was negative. They were then asked to select which descriptor most closely matched how they perceived themselves. The study population included 119 girls and 118 boys enrolled in Grades 6-12 in Detroit, Lexington, Kentucky and San Diego. The sampling was purposive and Al-Khatab (1999) noted that random sampling would have provided more generalizable data. Utilizing Chronbach's coefficient, there was no statistical significance which would have indicated lowered self-perception. Al-Khatab (1999) concluded that students of Arab ancestry did not seem to suffer from low self-perception regardless of cultural perceptions imposed by others or society; "within their community, they see

36

themselves accepted and valued" (Al-Khatab, 1999, p. 261). What this study seemingly lacked is a nuanced and explicit analysis of the varied levels of discrimination; Al-Khatab did not explicate the impact of a racial slur versus that of a microaggression. This reflects a rich form of cultural capital that can serve as a protective mechanism against negative factors,such as cultural bias and stereotyping.

Sarroub's (2005) ethnographic case study explores how Yemeni American Muslim girls construct their identities in the United States. Over the course of two years, Sarroub conducted an ethnography in Dearborn, Michigan, becoming a part of the Yemini community, of which she also identifies. She conducted both participant and non-participant observation in the community center, the mosque, schools, homes, and on nonacademic outings with the participants. Through this fieldwork, the author analyzed the lived experiences of 6 Yemeni Muslim girls called the *Hijabat.*[6] She used Ogbu's (1983) cultural-ecological model as part of her theoretical grounding and stated that, although the cultural-ecological model does not speak specifically to gendered experiences, she deemed that the model explained an important aspect of assimilation in American society.

Saroub viewed gender and cultural factors as determinants of educational aspirations, stating that "school represents a form of liberation, as it does for young Muslim girls in Europe and for the Yemini American girls in Dearborn" (Sarroub, 2005, p. 10). Rather than viewing these participants as Arabs, girls, or Muslims, Sarroub determined that it was their multifaceted identity perception which drew a more complete picture. Their ability to achieve in school was not a factor solely tied

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[6] *Hijabat* is a definitional Islamic term for one who covers her hair. In the case of Sarroub's ethnography, she ultimately focused on this constituency to ascertain their unique personal experiences.

to their religious obligations; rather, their duty as a good Arab girl also contributed to their ability to achieve academically. Finally, because gendered ethnic expectations excluded these girls from most typical high school scenes such as athletics and school dances, Yemeni American girls' focus was on school and, thus, they were expected to have good grades.

Additionally, Sarroub (2005) incorporates social and cultural capital to situate the factors that encouraged the girls' success. Although the parents of these *hijabat* never attended formal school, they maintained the desire for their children to exceed their own educational attainment; this was seen as a form of social capital. The students performed on par or better than their White peers:

> "Although the parents of the *hijabat* had not received much formal schooling, they took seriously their daughters' and sons' education. They sent their children to public school and to Arabic school on the weekends- most of the Yemeni children in the community attended school seven days a week" (Sarroub, 2005, p. 33).

The Yemini parents were considered extremely vested in their children's educational pursuits yet they drew a clear line in their daughters' identity perceptions. The *hijibat* were forced to adopt their identities through parental influence. Although the girls' identities were a duality forcing them to exist as two people at once, they understood this duality was only temporary within the walls of school as "the girls maintained dual identities, which bifurcated according to the gendered, economic, and cultural spaces they inhabited" (p. 44).

In using ethnography, Sarroub obtained rich research which helped construct a story illuminating the experiences of these young *hijabat.* While the author desired to study both boys and girls, she choose to focus the research on the girls because of her positionality (she conducted initial interviews with two Yemini boys). She found her positionality as a non-Yemeni woman restricted her access into the community and rendered her attempts to recruit participants difficult at first, but over time this became easer. Recognizing outsider-insider positionality is important to identify in this type of study as it illuminates cultural nuances.

As Sarroub (2005) attempted to gain a deeper understanding of the personal experiences of a group of young Yemini girls, she eventually gained an understanding of cultural conflict that many Arab youth endure. The girls were high-achieving, maintaining a higher-than-average GPA, and adhered to an ethnic identity that required their continued adherence to religious and cultural factors (including the wearing of the hijab). As sources of social and cultural capital, they drew on community, family, and religion, which provided mechanisms that protected them from negative self-images but also limited their future aspirations. The Yemini girls' religious identities, gendered identities, and cultural identities were all factors that intersected to impact their visions of and choices for success and achievement through schooling. This poignant and relevant study explores and validates the importance of culture as it relates to schooling and the need to study populations that are compromised by cultural stereotypes. The varied experiences of Arab American Muslim girls are not readily available, and Sarroub articulates the differential experiences that influence each girl's life.

Discrimination and Identity Perception

According to Britto (2008), "since September 11, 2001, there have been increasing reports of schools becoming a milieu of discrimination, bullying, and exclusion of Arab Muslim students" (p. 854). These daily interactions structure the identities of these children and influence their personal academic choices. In addition to struggles that these youth experience, experiences with bias are apparent in the curriculum. Moreover, "recent work has indicated that the curricula students are exposed to may be biased in how information about Islam is being taught in schools. Negative or incorrect information at school not only may register as personally problematic for youths in their school environment but also can have repercussions at home" (Britto, 2008, p. 855). Finally, in Britto's brief analysis of Arab student experiences, the author acknowledges the necessity to conceptualize models of ethnic identity formation that build upon yet are different from the traditional models. While the classical models of identity formation reduce identity to a "national identity, American National identity, hyphenate American identity and panethnic identity" (Britto, 2008, p. 856), many Arab children cannot conform to simply one; Arab Americans are ethnically and racially diverse with class differences that they inherit from their parents and clear gendered characteristics that are not always in line with traditional identity categories. Although societal representations of Arabs deduce that Arab Muslim women are passive and powerless while Arab Muslim men maintain authority and power, the religion teaches otherwise. The prophet Mohammed's first wife Khadija was a business owner, a symbol of power in a time were women were

subservient. She was also 15 years older than him and was among the first to believe in Islam. These factors point to nuance within the Arab American Muslim identity that further identifies gaps in perceptions that cause Arab Muslims to be othered and experience enhanced instances of oppression.

The process of acculturation and identity perception are fluid. The identities of Arabs and the role of gender in the formation of Arab identities are factors that prior models may not consider. Rightfully, Britto concludes that a clear demarcation exists between Muslim girls' and Muslim boys' experiences and gendered behavioral expectations. Boys are expected to be dominant and lead families while girls are often expected to get married and be the keeper of the home even in modern times. Consequently, Britto calls on academic researchers to work towards a deeper understanding of the many factors influencing identity.

In her chapter addressing Arab Americans and the American educational system, Terry (2012) looks at impacts of discrimination among Arab American Students. She determines, as many scholars before her, that Arabs place a heavy emphasis on education regardless of the attainment of the parents:

> Two aspects of education are important in understanding the daily life of Arab Americans. First, Arab Americans have disproportionately high levels of education, compared to the national average, which helps them assimilate as immigrants and achieve economic success. Secondly, education has been an area where Arab Americans have both encountered and fought prejudice (Terry, 2012).

Also, students with traditionally Arab and Muslim names are ostracized and stigmatized by peers and teachers. For example, according to a Washington Post (2015) article, Texas high-school student Ahmed Mohamed was arrested for suspicion of bringing in a bomb. Later, it was determined that his teacher felt threatened by this 14-year-old boy who brought in a clock to impress the teachers.

These two factors -- heavy emphasis on education and experiences with stigmatization -- are crucial in addressing the needs and complex situations that many Arab American youth face. As Terry (2012) notes in an interview with a student, education is spoken of in the household as a necessity not a choice, stating that "as a third-generation Arab American Muslim woman, my parents saw my education as more than a rite of passage, a degree or a formality; it was essential to cultivating my identity" (p. 117). The identity formation of many Arab students is centered on their experiences in the home, which conflict with experiences in school at times. Religious obligations, cultural expectations, and clear gender lines often clash with modern middle-school norms. Islam expressly limits the intermingling of boys and girls, specifically in environments such as school dances, social functions, and other events in which individuals might cross gendered boundaries. Additionally, the Muslim religion requires prayer five times a day and prohibits alcohol & pre-marital sexual relations. To avoid the internalization of negative cultural perceptions and stereotypes, Terry (2012) cited the importance of curriculum reform, stating that, "despite complaints by parents or political and religious groups, most school systems and many teachers have made proactive attempts to include objective material on Islam and Arab history and culture in the curriculums" (p. 120). This summary of

Arab American student experiences provides educational researchers qualitative data to better understand this population.

Although many immigrants are judged by their ability to assimilate to U.S. society, the extent to which students assimilate may impact their experiences and performance in the classroom. Naser (1984) sought to determine the extent of assimilation of Arab college students. Over the course of two semesters, the author distributed surveys to 121 Arab male college students and conducted open ended interviews as a mode of qualifying the survey findings. Naser (1994) believes that assimilation is "the process of transferring values from a dominant culture to subculture" (p. 56) According to Naser's (1984) dissertation research on the assimilation of Arab male college students, a focus on cultural and social factors can reveal the extent of assimilation and show how identity is constructed. Using the assimilation scale developed by Nasser (1975), the author tested five factors which influence the process of assimilation: human nature, man-nature, time in the U.S., involvement in college activity, and relationship status. The author hypothesized that the weight of each of these factors would determine how much each student assimilated and, consequently, be more academically advanced. The extent of assimilation is found to be directly impacted by cultural and social factors, such as religious adherence and the familial impact experienced by Arab Students in U.S. institutions. Naser (1984) concluded from his research that "[Arab student] attitudes were a function of both the student's pre-arrival attitudes and general perceptions toward the United States" (p. 140). In this case, Arab American students who have positive perceptions of the United States tend to assimilate quickly and without

43

hesitation. Although the authors offer significant reflections on the identity

perceptions of Arab American students, more research should be conducted to better

understand the current experiences of Arab students and how gender, culture, and

social class impact identity development and perception. It is necessary to understand

the relevance of adolescence and the fluidity of identity perceptions in Arab

American middle school boys.

Middle School and Arab American Boys

The present study also examines factors impacting psychosocial development

during the middle-school years of Arab American boys; according to Martinez

(2014), "the transition to middle school can have tremendous psychological effects on

students which can be associated with decreased academic performance and increased

emotional stress" (p. 11). True for some students, a student may be sheltered and

made to feel part of a family unit in elementary school for six years. When the

transition to middle school occurs, some boys experience difficulty feeling a part of a

unit (as they did in elementary school), which correlates with low-test scores among

minority students (Martinez, 2014). Additionally, students transitioning to middle

school report that teachers and students are not as engaged in their lives. If students

do not have the means to engage both socially and academically, they face higher

instances of psychological stress; "lack of engagement can lead to the development of

low self-esteem and lack of confidence in their academic ability" (Martinez, 2014, p.

12). Consequently, understanding the ways in which Arab American boys perceive

their identities through their middle school years is crucial as it contextualizes the ways in which they grow to view themselves within society.

Intersectionality

> *"Race, class, and gender were once seen as separate issues for members of both dominant and subordinate groups. Now, scholars generally agree that these issues, as well as ethnicity, nation, age, and sexuality and how they intersect are integral to individuals' positions in the social world" (Berger & Guidroz, 2009, p. 1)*

Using intersectionality theory to understand the ways in which Arab American boys operationalize their identities and how those identities grapple with power and are simultaneously oppressed, is necessary. While definitions of the theory are varied, an intersectionality lens purports that the varied identities of an individual – for example, one's race, gender, and class -- cannot be viewed in silos; rather, the various components of an individual's identity should be assessed simultaneously to understand oppression and power dynamics. One-dimensional depictions of specific populations do not consider factors that impact individual power dynamics. For example, examining an Arab American Muslim boy in an additive, non-intersectional way diminishes the power of other aspects of his identity. When an Arab American Muslim boy is viewed only for his ability to speak Arabic and his racialized identities or religious identities are ignored, representative experiences cannot be interpreted in an accurate manner. However, in assessing the Arab American male population using an intersectional lens, an observer could see that their religion and culture work in

opposition to their gendered and racialized categories which oppress them. Arab Muslims are White yet do not experience privilege associated with this racialized identity that non-Arab, non-Muslim White men experience. The present study's intersectionality lens looks at the identity perceptions of Arab Muslim boys and allows for a multidimensional analysis of how they perceive themselves as they simultaneously experience the various facets of their identities.

According to Collins (2015), "the term *intersectionality* references the critical insight that race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age operate not as unitary, mutually exclusive entities, but as reciprocally constructing phenomena that in turn shape complex social inequalities" (p. 2). Rather than individually assessing an Arab American boy as being defined by one identity, it assists in operationalizing the structural nature of social inequalities, how they experience these identities in various spaces, homes, their schools and as they are othered by society generally.

Additionally, use of intersectionality theory assists in further representing the many facets of Arab American Muslim school boys as they relate to self-identity compared to societal perceptions. This theoretical approach is linked to theorists from many different disciplines (Collins, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989; Phelan, 1991) who explore the legal and sociological intersections of race, gender, and class. Intersectionality theory helps to inform us of minority and immigrant students' academic achievement, adjustment to host culture, and identity perception.

Intersectionality as a theory can be applied in addressing the lived experience and multiple identities that Arab Muslim American boys experience. In Phelan,

Davidson and Cao (1991) researchers approached the multiple identities of middle and high school students; more specifically how these multiple identities showed up and operationalized around family, school and in peer worlds. They sought out to understand how these various conceptualizations of identities affected student engagement and how students perceived when and where boundaries were drawn and how they coped with these shifts. Here researchers interviewed 54 students in four different schools. This consisted of 3 in-depth interviews each, informal conversations and class observations. The Multiple world model that this study uses to analyze data categories identities as intersectional and fluid. "It is neither ethnic, achievement, or gender specific, but transcends these categories to consider multiple worlds, boundary crossing, and adaptation for all students" (Phelan, et. al, 6, 1991).

In this study, researchers concluded that students experience their multiple identities in four patterns, Type I: Congruent Worlds/Smooth Transitions meaning students do not have difficulty navigating their identities, race, class, gender, cultural when different boundaries present. Type II: Different Worlds/Boundary Crossing Managed, meaning students have nuanced differences but are able to manage the shifts. Type III: Different Worlds/Boundary Crossings Hazardous, where there are major cultural, religious, racial differences and students find it difficult to manage and react to crossing borders. Type IV: Borders are Impenetrable/Boundary Crossing Insurmountable where clear difference is experienced and negotiating the crossing of boundaries is not possible. Given the intersectional nature of these identities, when looking at students who are minoritized and othered they typically fall into Type III and IV where crossing boundaries often leads to times where not feeling part of the in

group is a given (Phelan, et.al, 1991). Arab boys navigate these multiple and concurrently intersecting worlds in very nuanced ways. They may have times where they are able to cross boundaries because of perceptions of others; but are stifled when they present their authentic selves, namely their religious and cultural markers. Hence the necessity to explore the intersectional identities, rather than situating them interdependently.

Intersectionality has been used by researchers to gain insight into the health impacts of immigration as a result of structural racism (Viruell-Fuentes, Miranda & Abdulrahim, 2012) and to understand and identify systematic domestic violence against women within immigrant communities (Sokoloff, 2008). Though intersectionality has been traditionally used to delve into complexities of gender which nuance experiences of privilege and oppression, its ability to dig into the ways power can be represented by the multifaced identities is beneficial. When a boy also experiences another oppressive state due to their race or culture, middle school boys' privilege can be overturned because of societal beliefs about their race or culture. In Juelskjær's (2008) study of intersections of gender and academic position, high-school-aged boys were followed as they made transitions from one school to another. Their positionality as they experienced variations of power was assessed through three perspectives: non-additive intersectionality, where not all intersecting categories are equal in how they impact the individual; a process of majoritization and minoritization which details how society has constructed levels of power and resistance; and the impact of temporality on research, which involves conducting segmented research to mirror the transitions in the lives of these participants.

According to the author, intersectionality with regards to categories such as race and gender are better suited to a non-additive approach which "may grasp complexities and contradictions on the small scale without a predefined hierarchy of categories. Through such an approach it is possible to see how inventive the ongoing constitutions of categories are" (Juelskjær's, 2008, p. 55).

Because of the ever-changing categorization of Arab boys due to media misrepresentations and temporal issues, it is appropriate to approach their identity perceptions with fluidity and contextual research lens, hence the appropriateness of intersectionality for the present study on middle school boys. As middle school presents complexities of identities, use of intersectionality theory gives a comprehensive perspective to analysis of the individual and the institutional structures that augment systems of power and oppression. Additionally, Juelskjær (2008) states that categories which are inherently fixed and binary prevent a thorough analysis of an individual's identities, thus "it is crucial not to consider categories within a fixed matrix of combination, since this will freeze the possibilities of the analysis whereby it is fixed, what might be understood as 'resistance', as well as 'domination'" (pg. 55). Varying approaches to assessing individual perception should be reliant on a fluid construct. Due to the dearth of literature on Arab American boys, there are few representations of how intersectionality might be used to explicate the identity and academic experiences of Arab American boys in middle schools.

In Abu El-Haj's (2006) article on the intersections of race, politics and Arab American identity, she focuses on a child's ability to assimilate and to form a positive connection between the immigrant identity and the host identity. This study shows

that the political definitions of the Palestinian state and a non-state disconnects

Palestinian youth from American culture. Moreover, "racially and/or ethnically

oppressed groups within modern nation-states, for example, have had a tenuous

relationship to this imagined community, being symbolically framed as less than the

ideal citizen or as perpetual foreigners" (Abu El-Haj, 2006, p. 288). She focuses on

the differences between traditional theories of identity that purport ethnic identity is

based on the ability for each individual to assimilate into the dominant culture.

In this three-year ethnographic study of Palestinian and Arab youth, Abu El-

Haj found that her insider status opened the door for deeply personal and rich

storytelling opportunities. This particular study focuses on data collected from one

specific high school where the community was predominantly comprised of

immigrant Palestinian families. The immigrant students struggled with identity as it

was heavily contingent upon how they connected to their nation-state. Some students

saw a significant difference between the American identity and their Arab identity.

Another relevant factor in their identity perceptions was the cultured ways in which

both boys and girls experienced gender. Boys refused to participate in afterschool

clubs which involved women and most boys believed girls should cover their hair.

Through interviews with teachers and students, community observations, and more

focal observations, four students were purposefully chosen. Of importance is the way

in which these students constructed their identities:

> The parameters of that identity reflected the process of cultural production --
>
> that is, these youths are constructing variable ways of being Palestinian within
>
> and through everyday practices to that draw on their experiences living within

and across multiple communities and national spaces (Abu El-Haj, 2007, p. 294).

The focus on just one characteristic -- for example, culture -- oversimplifies the ways in which these Palestinian students produce their identities. In Abu El-Haj's (2007) study, students did not feel that they belonged to any nation-state but felt they were members of multiple identities and nation-states. The author uses an intersectional lens, one that defines all of the nuances that may produce a power dynamic. In Abu El-Haj's example, the students struggled with their sense of belonging, an integral part of ethnic identity perception, because of the ways in which their school, communities and sociopolitical experiences defined their citizenship status. These emotional consequences blur the lines between individual and culture representations for Arab students. In Abu El-Haj's approach to addressing Arab Americans, she offers three key focal points for educators to deal with potential situations: violence against those perceived to be Arab Muslim, state politics impacting Arab Muslims, and practices that "other" Arab Muslims. She also furthers the notion that identity is not a singular process; rather, many differing socio-political factors influence both the individual identity formation of students and the perceptions of identity that others have of them.

In their study, Zaal, Salah, and Fine (2007) sought to address the hyphenated identities of young Muslim women and to understand how they identified in hyper-sensitive New York City post-9/11. Fifteen Muslim-American women who varied in culture and lived in the New York metro area were recruited through Muslim student groups and ranged in age from 18-24. Research included surveys, identity maps for

each individual, and focus groups. The researchers pursued the following question: "How do these young women represent, discursively and in their [identity] maps, the relation of their many identities in terms of ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, community, and family?" (Zaal, Salah & Fine, 2007, p.166)

Researchers drew from intersectionality and critical race theories. To accurately analyze the findings, researchers relied on Patricia Hill Collins (1991) work, looking for "common/core experiences articulated by the women, and the diverse subjective consciousness and reactions" (p. 167). Findings by Zaal et al. (2007) indicated strength in the association between culture, religion, and gender but participants also noted a sense of fear around describing their multiple identity markers:

> Like other second-generation immigrant youth in the U.S. the young Muslim-American women in this study demonstrated with great variation the malleable identities they chose. As Muslim-American women, however, they have to negotiate their sense of self in a highly-politicized context marred by intolerance from outside their communities and, at times, from within (p. 168).

Zaal et al's literature on Arab Muslim women coincides with the notion that Arab American Muslim middle school boys navigate multiple identities simultaneously. In the Zaal et al. (2007) study, women saw their multiple identities (gender, religion and culture) working in unison to situate an oppressed status imposed upon them by a society which was operationalized through discrimination. The researchers' understandings of their positionality demonstrated interplay between power and

oppression as defined by society and within their own internal community, thus impacting their perceptions of self. With the present study on Arab American middle school boys, an intersectional narrative allows for clearer understanding of lived experiences and future choices that impact these boys. The varied lives that they live as framed by their race, gender, culture and religion all intersect to explicate how they experience power and privilege contextually. It also lends to explain changes in how they experience oppression and power as impacted by belonging to certain ethnic, cultural, and religious groups.

Arab American students undergo a different identity formulation process as compared to non-Arabs, according to Wingfield (2006), because of their unique categorization. For example, "Arabs, like Hispanics, are a linguistic and cultural community, not a racial or religious group" (p. 253). Societal misrepresentation of this population, specifically because of complex and dynamic racial classification, leads to an inability to comprehend the unique power dynamic and struggles of Arab American boys as they navigate masculinity, religion, culture, and race. As Arab Americans are racially classified as White, their challenges are not addressed with the urgency as those who classify as minorities. For example:

> Arab Americans live with an anomalous situation. They are an officially 'White' ethnic group from the Third World, a large part of which is assimilated and/or affluent and highly educated. Yet they are widely perceived as culturally alien, may be treated as Other if not Enemy, and are vulnerable to discrimination and violence" (Wingfield, 2006, p. 255).

In his analysis of Arab American students, Wingfield (2006) discovers that discrimination affects the perceptions and identity formation of these students. While school may serve as a refuge for some students to express their personal identities, it should also be noted that schools are a location where cultural and political struggles are highlighted. Wingfield (2006) analyzed reports to Arab-American and Muslim organizations by victims of bias and their families. Although he mentioned that the data was anecdotal, his research reflected Arab students' experiences as they relate to their everyday school lives. In one instance, a biracial student of Palestinian and African-American descent denied his Arab heritage because of the negative perception of the culture (Wingfield, 2006). These reports also highlighted that "too often Arabs and Muslims are made visible in schools in ways that are merely 'folkloric' and superficial. Tense political issues are avoided and the discussion is rendered innocuous" (Wingfield, 2006, p. 258). According to Wingfield (2006), addressing the negative outcomes of this type of bias on Arab students requires an overhaul of curriculum.

Whiteness, a traditionally-privileged social identity, is often not seen as requiring the type of social justice analysis applied to minority identities. More specifically, through the lens of intersectionality, it is clear that a strong binary has been created where certain groups defined by a particular identity are seen as privileged while other groups are oppressed. When examining the power dynamic created between intersecting categories, it is important to note that:

> Race, class and gender are historically and geographically/globally-specific
> socially-constructed power relations of dominance and subordination among

social groups competing for societies scares valued resources in the economic

ideological and political domains. The structures of oppression and group's

differences within systems vary over time and in different social locations

(Weber, 2001, p. 92)

Where boys traditionally have dominance in the forms of privilege, advantage,

and superiority in certain spheres, the added layers of religion, race, and culture cause

boys to experience oppression. Thus, looking at masculinity as a separate sphere of

analysis in understanding how Arab boys possibly internalize stereotypes and

construct identities is inaccurate. While the construct of identity based on intersecting

characteristics will help define the experiences of Arab American middle school boys,

their ability to succeed or fail academically is situated within their access and ability

to activate forms of social and cultural capital.

The Social and Cultural Capital of Immigrant Minority Students

The following section highlights existing literature examining the experiences

of immigrants' access to cultural and social capital as a protective mechanism against

experiences of oppression. While some theorists have used these terms

interchangeably, both social and cultural capital have distinctive implications in

addressing academic achievement. While extant literature exists on other minority

groups and their levels of achievement based on access to cultural and social capital,

literature on Arab Americans and capital is minimal.

Cultural Capital

Cultural capital exists within distinctive family units and is a set of unique characteristics which may propel a student to excel academically (Bourdieu, 1986). While cultural capital does not present itself in one specific form, it is often represented as parental desire to acquire the intellect, skills, linguistic accessibility, and knowledge that society deems necessary to succeed (Bourdieu, 1986). Regarding their sons' schooling experiences, parents of Arab American boys talk about the expectations that teachers and principals have of them to be involved in their sons' educational lives. Additionally, the ability to navigate the schooling system presents as an extremely important facet of success and achievement. Under the auspicious of the Arab American community, parental desire to achieve, children's ability to navigate the nuances of school and self-motivation would constitute forms of cultural capital. Cultural capital has often eluded researchers because of its inability to be quantified. Consequently, students that may have forms of cultural capital may not be presented to teachers as possessing capital because of a lack of understanding or recognition.

While cultural capital seems imperative to lifting an immigrant minority student out of an oppressed state, few researches narrate cultural capital as defined by these students. Yosso (2005) brings to light how preconceptions of cultural capital are marred by a limited scope that defines forms of capital from an economically-advantaged and White-centric perspective. Through a critical race theory lens, she defines six types of capital and discusses how communities of color use capital in varying ways that more clearly reflect success and achievement:

- *Aspirational capital:* the "ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers";

- *Linguistic capital*: "includes the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than language and/or style";

- *Familial capital:* "cultural knowledges nurtured among kin that carry a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition";

- *Social capital*: "networks of people and community resources";

- *Navigational capital*: gives students the ability to understand the nuances of school and academic achievement guiding them towards success; and

- *Resistant capital*: "knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality". (p. 77-80)

As related to the experiences of Arab Americans, familial capital and navigational capital seemed to present as predominating forms of capital that assist them in navigating the difficult landscape framed by experiences of cultural bias. Although some may perceive the linguistic variance that Arab American students have as a deficit, Yosso (2005) defines the ability for these students to reason and share lived experiences in many ways as an attribute. While Arab American students certainly undergo experiences that would necessitate the use of navigational capital, the struggles they undergo are relatively new and likely not well documented to activate this form of capital. These six conceptions of capital recognize the highly-nuanced experiences of Arab Americans and immigrant minority populations and can more clearly speak to understanding how this population defines success and achievement.

In a study completed by Ahmed, Kia-Keating, and Tsai (2011), researchers attempt to identify cultural resources which either aided or worked against Arab American high school students when approaching instances of racial discrimination. The cultural resources in this case were loosely defined as a student's access to religious support, religious coping skills, and positive associations with their ethnic identity. Given the current climate surrounding Arab American students, these authors sought to determine what different forms of cultural resources these students relied on, when faced with high-stress situations:

> Arab American youth face a notable bind, challenged with incidents of harassment, prejudice, discrimination, as well as often contending with stressors related to acculturation and the tension between adhering to cultural traditions and meeting mainstream cultural expectations in order to belong (p. 182).

The research was centered on 240 Arab American high school students between the ages of 13-18; at least 85% of the students were Muslim. Ahmed et al. (2011) adapted Phinney's (1993) *The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)* to "assess one's ethnic identity including ethnic affirmation, belongingness, pride and participation in ethnic group related activities"; Pargament's (1997) *Brief Religious Coping Measure (Brief RCOPE)* to measure positive and negative religious and coping attributes; and Fiala's (2002) *The Religious Support Scale (RSS)* to determine how students felt supported by religion.

Researchers found that certain forms of cultural capital – specifically, as access to religious support and positive associations with identity and religious

58

coping -- could be activated as forms of protection against internalizing impacts of

systematic racism; "cultural resources may counteract the effect of adversities by

serving a protective role, or they may play a promotive role by having a direct

positive effect on psychological health" (Ahmed et al., 2011, p. 184). Arab American

Muslim boys who repeatedly experience cultural bias rely on these forms of capital to

uplift them and protect them helping them with academic success:

> From a theoretical perspective, these findings imply that cultural resources
>
> might better be viewed as an asset than simply a buffer among Arab American
>
> adolescents, having a key (direct) effect on psychological distress levels
>
> among this group. (Ahmed et al., 2011, p. 189)

Although it is important to show connections between capital and the ability to thwart

discrimination, this study did not address impacts of the relationship between capital

and academic achievement.

Delgado-Gaitan (1992) clarifies the relationship that parental motivation and

community involvement have on the lives of Mexican-American elementary school

students. Over a nine-month period, Delgado-Gaitan conducted an ethnographic study

in Carpentaria, Mexico, where the 12,000 residents were considered demographically

heterogeneous (67% White, 31% Mexican, 1% Asian, and 1% other). To obtain

information on the types of and impacts of capital on children, Delgado-Gaitan

(1992) relied on the process of "parent-child value transmission" (p. 499) by

participating in the daily activities with family observing their interactions, household

demography, and physical setting. While researching in Carpentaria, she spent a

considerable amount of time with six families to clarify the extent and nature of

parental involvement as a form of social capital. Delgado-Gaitan, a Mexican immigrant herself, elaborates on the discursive nature of research regarding Mexican-American immigrant children, noting that the "socialization of Mexican-American children must be explained within the historical, socio-cultural, and socioeconomic conditions that impact Mexican-American families" (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992, p. 497). Delgado-Gaitan (1992) states that, in previous research of Mexican-American children, the use of deficit models (e.g., lack of linguistic resources or poverty) undermined the valuable forms of cultural capital present in these communities. This type of oversimplification of the definition of capital does not illuminate the complex structures that are created over time through varying forms of capital. Additionally, this type of singular vision often creates a critical view of this constituency, dismissing other components in a student's life which may help to show success.

A key component towards an understanding of the influence of cultural capital on an immigrant minority student's life is the ability to situate those being researched. She lived with the community members and adopted their lifestyle to understand their experiences. Different analyses regarding cultural capital delineate how lived experiences ultimately influence the forms, activation, and success of applying forms of cultural capital. This lack of comprehension on the part of teachers and school administrators has led to disproportionate underachievement for Latinos. In Delgado-Gaitan's study, Latinos were shown to have access to different forms of cultural capital such as the *physical environment*, which provided "[a] safe, comfortable and stable environment that was conducive to children's thinking positively about their schooling" (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992, p. 503), and *interpersonal interactions,* where

60

parents had community members available to ask questions about their children's schooling when they lacked personal knowledge. Emotional and motivational forms of capital were also prevalent even though parents did not all have access to their own education but high hopes for their children. Delgado-Gaitan coined this form of support as *parental aspiration*, which relates to Yosso's (2005) notion of aspirational capital. Teachers, however, may only identify dominant forms of success and economic capital, such as direct communication with parents and access to supplies.

In order to understand successful education in this community, Delgado-Gaitan showed the necessity to clarify a student's positionality within or more of their characteristics. She is successful in giving voice to this marginalized group; however, she does not delve into the influences of other forms of social capital that effect experiences of children. Her recommendations were pertinent and relevant to her research but may not be generalizable to other instances of minority student achievement.

Social Capital

While cultural capital may embody a student's individual aspirations and surrounding desire to achieve, social capital has clearly defined boundaries. Bourdieu (1986) states that social capital is defined as one's membership in a group. In addition, Coleman (1990) talks about the definition of social capital within the educational context and states that:

> Social capital is defined as closed systems of social networks inherent in the structure of relations between persons and among persons within a collectivity… the stability and the strength of a community's social structure

61

plays a vital role in supporting the growth of social capital in a family. Social

capital in a community, in turn, allows parents to establish norms and

reinforce each other's sanctioning of the children. Conformity to the

expectations of the family and the ethnic community endows individuals with

resources of support and direction (as cited in Bankston and Zhou, 1994, p.

824).

Much like the familial capital introduced by Yosso (2005), narratives of

family and community accountability serve as an important facet of social capital.

Bourdieu examines a student's ability to activate forms of social capital, called

habitus, to identify how teachers' expectations of parental involvement can be

furthered through personal cultural norms. Consequently, an individual's *habitus*, or

the dispositions that define his or her associations with the material and social outside

world, can shape if and how we activate forms of social capital (Bourdieu, 1977). An

example of *habitus* can include an Arab American middle school boy's culture, race,

gender, and religion and how they see themselves against how society represents

them.

Coleman (2006) researches the interconnectedness between social capital and

the construct of human capital. This connection shows how levels of access to these

various forms of capital can demarcate success or failure groups. While sociological

analysis encompasses the overarching effects of social capital on children and society

as a whole, educational researchers have cited the direct effects of social capital on

educational attainment (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Lareau, 1987; Zhou & Bankston,

1994). Different forms of social capital may directly influence immigrant students'

levels of achievement. For example, a parent's ability to assist with homework based on their prior knowledge and understanding of materials can drastically impact a student's performance. Other forms of social capital can sometimes have negative effects on the perceptions that teachers have regarding their students. Because parental involvement is considered an imperative type of capital, a parent's inability to be involved in their students' achievement, often by no fault of their own, may have negative impact on the teachers' perceptions of a particular student.

According to Bankston and Zhou (1994), examples of social capital include the social structures that surround a student – for example, places of worship, business/commerce, the community or environment in which these students reside, and educational attainment of family (p. 824). While many students have access to social capital, the deficit often exists in their ability to activate these forms of capital. Lareau and Horvat (1999) note that, although social capital may exist in a minority or immigrant's student's life, the child's social setting is often an overlooked fact; a student's environment may physically hinder a student from being able to access capital. A student in Baltimore may have many types of capital around them, such as businesses, universities, and churches; however, poverty may make it difficult to access these different types of social capital. In this case, the student's *habitus* is a self-fulfilling prophesy of failure. Valenzuela (1999) notes that social capital "comes into being whenever social interaction makes use of resources residing within the web of social relationships" (p. 27). Although a student may have access to various forms of social capital, if the student does not activate their available capital, the effectiveness of such capital is not apparent. For example, if a student has access to

free after-school tutoring at a local library but does not utilize this, they are not activating an effective form of social capital available to them. As a student grows and develops, so must the forms of social capital. Although a minority student may have parental or familial units around to help with homework in their early schooling, familial support may not suit their needs in advanced high school courses. Fluidity in capital sources is necessary for their effectiveness (Lareau & Horvat, 1999).

Zhou and Bankston (1994) analyze the various and complex forms of social capital in Asian immigrant students' educational experiences. In their analysis of first-generation Vietnamese students in New Orleans, they focus not only on levels of parental involvement but also how other forms of social capital influence success and self-perception. While employing a case study methodology to provide a foundation for their research, the researchers also incorporate survey analysis. This is done to understand how the larger collective of Vietnamese students in local high schools view the interconnectedness of community and schooling, affecting academic goals and self-image. Zhou and Bankston (1994) offer clarity on the complexities of the interrelationships between community, student, and families. By using case study and survey methods, the authors situate the complexities of interrelationships between the community, student, and families.

Zhou and Bankston (1994) deem that the case study reveals the foundational facets of Vietnamese-American students' success and the surveys allow for generalizations based upon the case study data. However, their conclusion that academic achievement of Vietnamese students is connected to the social capital provided by community involvement may have benefitted from additional examples

of these forms of social capital. They also conclude that, in some situations, these forms of social capital can be "more important than traditional human capital for the successful adaptation of younger-generation immigrants" (Zhou & Bankston, 1994, p. 842). Human capital has traditionally been defined as the individual skills that a student may have relative to the value that the society has placed on it. While Zhou's research focuses predominately on Asian populations, her literature is adaptive and appropriate in comprehending the influence of social capital on a minority student's achievement. The many manifestations of social capital serve to bolster immigrant youth access to more educational opportunities and provide them with opportunities outside of school. In many Arab American communities, even smaller ones, these forms of social capital exist: mosques, Arabic food stores, Islamic Schools and other resources that manifest into necessary social capital for these Arab American Muslim middle school boys.

Zhou (2003) discusses the importance of four differing forms of social capital. She defines social capital as "closed systems of social networks inherent in the structure of relations between persons and among persons within a social group to promote cooperative behavior and to serve specific needs of its group members" (Zhou, 2003, p. 5). Zhou highlights four different forms of social capital: (a) commercial activities such as shops and stores; (b) commercial and social activities such as community events; (c) privately-owned institutions such as religious schools, mosques with community language classes and community centers; and (d) ethnic and diverse businesses for create jobs and to serve as role models for youth. Students who experience cultural bias can benefit from access to differing forms of social

capital to thwart negative stigmas. Additionally, the benefit they obtain from being able to recognize and activate forms of cultural capital can protect, bolster, and help these boys with the complexities they experience with both identity formation and schooling.

Conceptual Framework

The concept map below represents my theoretical framework, which is grounded in the notion that Arab American middle school boys are impacted by multiple factors, including the intersections of their race, gender, religion, and culture (Collins, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989; Phelan, 1991), as well as access to social capital and cultural capital (Bankston & Zhou, 1994; Bourdieu, 1986; Yosso, 2005) both present and activated in their lives.

This framework emerged from a previously-conducted pilot study where Arab American male college students were interviewed. My original hypothesis was that Arab American male college students could suppress the negative impacts of cultural bias by relying on forms of social and cultural capital despite their exposure to discrimination. Although these students are excelling, Arab American male students are still worthy of study; often, their nuanced experiences are not adequately explicated leaving space for misrepresentation and self-interpretation. Of critical importance is the amount of media coverage this population has received. The effects of cultural bias, as a direct result of 9/11, has changed the attitudes of Arab Americans. The community ties that once improved their chances at higher educational attainment are threatened by the very country that welcomed them. The

participants in my pilot study corroborated my theory that, without social structures

such as families and mosques intact, they would succumb to many of the effects of

cultural bias, such as depression and lack of academic aspiration.

In the conceptual framework seen in Figure 2., I envision all the facets

included in this study working in alignment. At the center of this analysis is how Arab

American Muslim boys experiences their intersectional identities simultaneously.

These facets -- race, gender, religion and culture -- all impact each other while also

impacting Arab American Muslim boys' perceptions of their identities. While

experiencing these identities, they are simultaneously impacted by experiences with

cultural bias and protected by facets of social and cultural capital. These factors
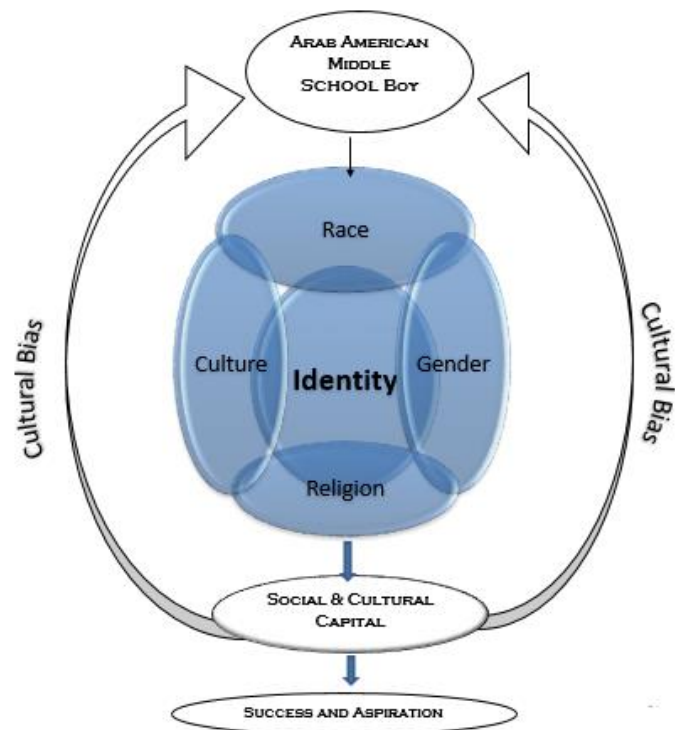
Figure 2. Conceptual model of the intersectional identities and aspirations of Arab American Muslim boys.

impact Arab American Muslim boys' definitions of success and future aspirations.

Summary

The above literature review reviews the current body of research on the collective experiences of Arabs immigrating to the United States. Each of the three waves of Arab immigration provide context to their positionality in the U.S. and gives rise to the needs to focus on experiences of young Arab Muslims who were born in the country after September 11, 2001. Additionally, this literature review provides perspective on three major buckets of research that inform the present study: identity, intersectionality, and social and cultural capital. While each particular group of literature provided insight into the gaps and how similarly situated social groups perceive their intersectional identities some of this was not essential in the furtherance of this research.

Initially literature was introduced that discussed how the social and cultural capital of each participant was impactful on their schooling experiences. While, this is not inaccurate the amount to which this frame was instrumental in the analysis of the findings was secondary. This study predominately centered on how participants perceived their intersecting identities in different power dynamics. The forms of capital that were present in the participants lives served often as a protective mechanism in the aggression situated around their religions and cultures, but was not imperative in their abilities to thwart this bias. Also, literature was introduced with discussion centered around microaggressions, however the experiences that participants had were macro-aggressive, more overt and not characterized as slights against this marginalized group.

68

To explicate Arab Muslim boys' identity perceptions, it is important to provide the context of previous research to inform the current study. The present study will fill the gap of telling stories on the lived experiences of Muslim and Arab boys and provide a clearer depiction of how they perceive their intersectional identities as framed by their experiences navigating cultural bias.

The following chapter will detail findings from a pilot study conducted that created a foundation for the present study focused on Arab Muslim boys' experiences. Additionally, the following chapter will detail the use of case study methodology (Yin, 2004) as an applicable research strategy for shedding light on the lived experiences and multiple variables that impact identity perceptions of Arab Muslim boys.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of the present study was to explore the lived experiences of Arab American Muslim middle school boys to better understand how they perceive their identity as it relates to their multifaceted characteristics and how their identity impacts their schooling experiences. This population has grown up in a post-9/11 America and their stories of achievement & identity formation are not adequately represented. Arab American boys have grown up in the United States with both phenotypical Arab traits and ethnolinguistic markers (e.g., names, religious identities) are hyper-scrutinized according to many media representations. The following questions guided my analysis of their experiences:

1. How do the social classifications of race, gender, culture, and religion impact Arab American middle school boys' identity conceptions?

2. How do Arab American middle school boys define success and achievement in relation to schooling?

3. How have Arab American middle school boys experienced and/or perceived cultural bias?

    a. To what extent do Arab American boys seek out resources (community, mosques, family, religion), through their social networks?

    b. How have they navigated schooling as framed by these experiences of cultural bias?

The present chapter begins with an overview of a prior pilot study aimed at Arab American Muslim college boys and their experiences with discrimination and academic

aspirations. Next, I discuss the research design of the present study, which was designed to uncover the details necessary to explicate the stories of these young boys. Later, I discuss my positionality and recruitment strategies for this study. Then, I describe the data sources, data analysis procedures, and consent protocols. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of validity and reliability, consent procedures, risks and benefits to participants, study limitations, and work plan.

Pilot Study

In a pilot study conducted in 2010, I sought to understand the factors that impacted the academic choices of Arab American Muslim college boys. The purpose of this pilot study mirrored some of the focus of my current study and was exploratory in nature. Questions I sought to answer through this research included:

(1) How have cultural stereotypes effected Arab American college aged perceptions of self-identity?

(2) How have these perceptions impacted academic performance, past and present?

Through semi-structured interviews, participants were asked questions about their experiences with discrimination and the factors that led them to choose college. After interviewing three participants, all of whom were University of Maryland undergraduate students, I developed key themes around religious aptitude and religious adherence and masculinity as an indicator of success. My conclusions about participants' lived experiences were as follows:

(1) The participants' ethnic identities were informed not only by what it means to be a man, but also by their religion;

(2) A more thorough analysis of the factors that impact their identity was needed, more specifically the notion intersectionality must play a role in future iterations of this study; and

(3) Prior research on Arab Americans seemed to be very linear and did not account for race, gender, ethnicity, and religion as intersecting components of individuals' identities.

Conducting this focus study gave me a glimpse of how these men experienced cultural bias and how they quantified success. Additionally, I was introduced to concepts that framed how each of these men conceptualized their intersectional identities framed based on their access to forms of social and cultural capital; the present study was designed to explore these notions.

Research Design

Using qualitative methodology, I sought to explore the rich and varied stories of Arab American Muslim boys' experiences. The major postulation of qualitative research, according to Merriam (1998), is that "all types of qualitative research are based on the view that reality is constructed by individuals intersecting with their social worlds" (p.6). Uncovering how Arab American Muslim middle schoolboys see their identities and conceptions of what it means to be successful is contingent upon their experiences within their world. Qualitative research methodology was well-suited to the phenomena I

sought to explore because a predominant purpose of this research was to amplify these boys' voices and make their lived experiences public and relatable.

According to Patton (1990), qualitative research aids "understand[ing] the nature of that setting - what it means for participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like, what's going on for them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that particular setting…" (p. 6). By engaging the communities in which these boys participate, I see how they manifest their individual characteristics. This type of research gives Arab American boys a chance to speak and illuminate this silent yet highly-politicized group.

The cases in the present study are Arab American Muslim middle school boys and I focus on making meaning of their experiences whilst living in a post-9/11 United States. Moreover, this research works to uncover their opinions about how they perceive their Arab American Muslim identity, their definitions of their own ethnic identity, the factors impacting their academic choices, and forms of support they access. To achieve this, I use multiple case studies to "investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 1994, p. 13). The four boys in my study represent various perspectives; their experiences in theorizing their identities and perceived academic achievement will provide context for conversations around power and privilege.

Recruitment

I adopted purposeful sampling during my recruitment efforts to locate participants who would openly share their stories, which would lead to rich and more robust case studies. Patton (1990) states that, "the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in

selecting information-rich cases for study in depth" (p. 169). Because this population is connected through mosques and community centers, I began my recruitment efforts by visiting several mosques as well as cultural and religious events in the area. To ascertain my participants, I specified that each participant (a) identified as Muslim; (b) identified as an Arab American; (c) was born in the United States after September 11, 2001; (d) identified as male; and (e) was enrolled in middle school grades 6, 7, or 8 during the time period of the study. I used snowball sampling to maximize recruitment efforts. According to Patton (1990), snowball sampling involves finding "cases of interest from people who know people who know people who know what cases are information-rich, that is, good examples for a study, good interview subjects" (p. 182). One advantage of my insider status as an Arab Muslim was the number of community connections at my disposal; my Muslim religion and my Arab linguistic capital allowed me to overcome the initial hurdle of access. Thereafter, my ability to reach other participants and their parents was facilitated by the trust the first family had in me and my insider status. I identified my first research participant through conversations with community members which, in turn, yielded my three additional research participants. Each of the participants' parents were required to complete consent forms prior to having their sons speak with me. Individual participants were also required to fill out a consent form. Participants were awarded $25 iTunes gift cards at the completion of all individual and focus group interviews.

Since my desire was to tell a robust story that elaborated on the lived experiences of a small sample of Arab American Muslim middle school boys instead of generalizing to the whole of the population, I chose to keep my sample size small and ended up conducting very robust interviews with four participants. I chose to interview a smaller

number of participants because I wanted to ensure they all lived in the same area where they could all attend the focus group and share similar stories. Since the purpose of this study was to understand how media-driven images and stereotypes of the Arab-Terrorist applies to identity choices and success narratives, I decided not to include girls in this study; the varied experiences of boys differ greatly from that of Arab Muslim girls' experiences in this country.

Participants

The present study followed four 12 to 13-year-old public school boys who self-identify as Muslim and Arab. The boys' families were acquainted with one another and lived within a 20-mile radius of one another. They all attended the same Muslim community center and shared in religious holiday gatherings, family gatherings, and celebrations. Two of the boys attended the same middle school, while the other two attended other local middle schools. Four participants were selected for this study to allow for thorough and deep dives in to shared experiences. According to Stake (2005), case studies include three major types, intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. When the central purpose is to discover phenomenon, Instrumental case study approach is most valuable. Multiple-case study or Collective Case study allows for concentration on multiple-cases using the same critical lens to investigate a shared subject. Finally, Intrinsic case study seeks out to learn more about the cases themselves. While a single case study focuses on an individual case, the collective case study has a focus of learning about a collective group or the "Quintain" according to Stake (2005). Case studies allow for more thorough and nuanced stories using the individual to understand the whole.

In conducting these case studies, I allocated a significant amount of time to understanding parents' perspectives and roles in each of the boys' homes. The parent component was significant in lending context to how each participant experienced these

Table 2. Parent Demographics*

Name	Gender	Age	Religion	Country of Origin	Immigration Age	Reason for Immigration	Race	Age and Gender of Children
Timothy	Male	43	Islam	Bosnia	25	Marriage	White	12/M, 15/F
Jo Mom	Female	50	Islam	Finland	23	University	White	12/M, 19/M, 23/F, 25/F
Jo Dad	Male	61	Islam	Palestine	18	University	White	12/M, 19/M, 23/F, 25/F
Zach Mom	Female	45	Islam	Jordan	25	University	Middle Eastern White	8/F, 12/M, 14/F
Sef Dad	Male	51	Islam	Kuwait	18	University	White	13/M, 14/F
Sef Mom	Female	37	Islam	Kuwait	7	Betterment of life	White	13/M, 14/F

* Pseudonyms were used to preserve participant and parent confidentiality.

lived experiences and contributing to each boys' access to forms of social and cultural capital; protective mechanisms impacting each boys' response to negative experiences with stereotypes. An overview of each of the parents' demographics can be found in Table 2.

Delineating the identities from which the participants would select was purposeful but I allowed for nuances in how they perceived these identities as well. Identity groups were initially ascribed. Participants who agreed to be part of this study identified as Arab, Muslim, American born males, while questions of race were only asked of the parents. As interviews progressed and as they boys opened up, nuances of these ascribed categories surfaced. For example, the bi-cultural representations were unintended findings and though participants identified as Arabs to begin, two participants Jo and

Timothy presented these identities as instrumental in their experiences with power, specifically centered around their ability to pass as White. While participants differed by individual characteristics, they shared numerous stories and experiences. The first contact with each of these participants happened during a preliminary focus group held at the home of one of the participants. During this focus group, each participant introduced themselves and was asked a series of brief probing questions. Also, during the initial focus group, participants were shown various images and asked as a group to detail their emotional responses and connections to the images. A short video was shown and participants had an opportunity to share thoughts. After this initial focus group interview, each of the participants completed two to three subsequent interviews, a parent interview, and a final activity meeting where each provided an illustration of their future career aspirations and individual identity maps.

Data Collection

Data for the present study included the following sources: semi-structured individual interviews with each participant, one focus group with all participants before the individual interviews, an identity mapping activity, a career dream drawing activity, parental interviews, and an interviewer log/notebook. These multiple primary sources combined to frame the experiences of each of these boys and detail the connections each participant has with the multi-categorical depictions of self. Both the identity map and the career dream drawings activities were followed by interpretive questions for each participant. Using multiple sources allowed for various measures of similar experiences and provide rich and more vivid accounts (Yin, 2009).

Focus Group Interviews

My original intention was to conduct two focus groups: one prior to the interviews and one at the succession of the interviews; however, each closing interview provided a natural conclusion. The initial focus group was 90 minutes long and took place in one of the participants' homes. At the onset of the focus group, I provided the parents and participants with a protocol which described the purpose of the focus group (see Appendix B). During the initial focus group, which took place in September of 2016, I initiated the conversation around my own lived experiences and give an opportunity for natural conversation to flow. Additionally, I was able to incorporate several cartoons and photographic images taken from historical representations, newspapers and several books manifesting the Arab American Muslim man (see Appendix C). I wanted this initial focus group to be organic and a catalyst for the more thorough individual interviews that would follow. The focus group findings were incorporated in the individual narratives as well as the cross-case chapters where I discuss the shared experiences of all participants.

Individual Interviews

Each participant participated in two to three individual interviews which lasted between 30-90 minutes each. I initiated the interviews by reading the interview protocol and semi-structured interview questions (Appendix D; adapted from Ayish, 2003) to guide the conversation. Audio recordings of each individual interviews were created and verified thoroughly. The interviews were later transcribed using a transcription service.

The audio recordings and transcripts were individually and collectively analyzed to gain insight into the participants' emotional spaces as it related to the notes collected in my researcher log book. Exploring their experiences growing up in a post-9/11 shed light into how they see their identities and moreover how these perceptions impact how they navigate schooling.

I relied on the interviews as a window into the experiences and worlds of these participants. "Interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them. It is also necessary to interview when we are interested in past events that are impossible to replicate" (Merriam, 1998, p. 72). During the interviews, I prompted the conversation with images that may have been familiar to the participants (e.g., events that occurred recently, election media from the Trump campaign in which their culture or religion was manifested in particular ways). During the first and second interviews, there were four major areas of questioning, including schooling experiences, experiences with stereotypes, ethnic identity constructs, and experiences of masculinity.

Identity Maps and Career Drawings

During the second or third interview, participants were given the opportunity to create an identity map through pictures and share perspective career dreams through career drawings. An identity map, per Sirin and Fine (2007), is a "pictoral description of their identity as a young person in the U.S." (p. 154). I asked the participants to draw a picture of how they see their individual identities as a boy living in the United States. Prior to the drawings, I encouraged them to think about the different facets of their

identity, including their race, religion, gender, and culture. Drawing on literature (Milgram, 1976; Sirin and Fine, 2010; Wilkinon, 1999), participants were asked to share an identity map or conceptions of their identity through these visual representations. I provided paper, pencils, and makers and described the process of identity mapping in order to prompt these boys to produce depictions of how they see their identities and all of the factors that impact that construct. After they completed these drawings, I asked them to elaborate on the different facets of the drawings and recorded their responses; later, I interpreted each of the components of these drawings. I was interested in situating the participants' definitions of what it meant to be successful and what they envisioned their future selves to look like based on their current identities.

I used prompts for both the career drawing and the identity map activity (Appendix E) to encourage the boys to individually produce a career dream drawing, using the same methodology proposed with the identity maps. The career dream drawings were reflective of how the boys see their future selves in graphic representations. I began by asking the boys to envision what they will be when they grow up. Next, I asked them to draw this picture of their dream career in that specific environment. This single activity occurred during the final individual interview and served as a platform for group conversation during the final focus group. According to Turner (2016), "career dream drawings are visual renderings of the professional identities and literacies that children envision taking up in their futures as adults" (p. 168). Using these career dreams, I delved into gendered choices, academic aspirations, and hopes through visual representations.

Parent Interviews and Surveys

Prior to conducting the individual and focus interviews, I was able to sit down with at least one of the parents of each of the respective participants. During these interviews, I asked a series of questions to the parents to understand how each of the boys experienced their cultures and religions at home as well as the gender constructs in the home. Additionally, I had parents complete a brief demographic survey to ascertain some basic information on each of the participant's home lives. This parental information was invaluable, as the participants were entirely reliant on their parents to provide financial, moral, and social support. This parental information also provided context for understanding the types and forms of social and cultural capital available for each participant.

Tertiary Sources

While conducting the present study, I maintained a log/notebook to document my perspective and possible biases during and in between interviews. I also used this researcher log/notebook to document questions, concerns, and possible points of contention that came up during the process. Since the interviews were semi-structured, I paid attention to lulls in conversation and used prompts from my notebook based on questions and concerns that surfaced. I also ascertained public records on each of the respective schools through school websites as well as additional commentary on student experiences from supplemental websites.

Data Analysis

As the present study involved multiple sources of data from interviews, focus groups, career dream drawings, identity maps and my research log, the study also required analytical tools suited to identifying trends. As I worked through each of the respective data sources, I built emerging themes and codes (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003). I thoroughly read each of the interview transcripts and related question. simultaneously listened to the audio sources as I build upon the emerging themes and codes. Initially, I planned to use Atlas.Ti software for my data analysis and to store and hold each of the interviews and other data sources. However, after much time using the software, I decided that I wanted t feel more intimately connected to each of the data sources. While Microsoft Word transcriptions were saved in folders in my private Dropbox account, I also began to dissect each transcription. I began looking at the transcriptions for general codes. My coding process was multi-tiered, initially I categorized my codes in response to each of my research questions. In excel, I created tabs which directly related to each of the questions. Within each tab I created columns that related to the medium, corresponding quote and question. Initially, I counted the instances where I phrase, word or quote was similar or identical. This initial count yielded four major categories. After, I color-coded interesting quotes to correspond with the respective research questions: identity (i.e., culture, religion, race, and gender); success and achievement, cultural bias; and navigating bias with cultural and social capital. Once complete, I compiled each of these codes and corresponding quotes into an Excel spreadsheet. After creating over 199 codes, I sought to condense these codes. I started first by searching for the duplicative codes and then creating tabs which became central themes that corresponded to the

research questions and related sub-codes. My initial thought in this analytical process was to be neutral in searching for commonalities. However, the more I dove into the transcripts the redundancies were apparent and it became easier to know what I was searching for.

Since there were multiple case studies, a cross-case analysis was completed to develop themes in experiences based on a modified analytic induction approach (Bodgan & Bilken, 2003). I began by analyzing the first case and then compared to the second case to find themes of commonalities and distinctions. Following, I analyzed each case study against the other, continuing to find commonalities and distinctions until the final case study had been incorporated. These processes allowed me to incrementally establish both commonalities and differences amongst each experience.

The image drawing activities were approached in similar ways. After each drawing activity, I asked each participant to share stories about what they had drawn. For the identity mapping activity, I directly linked their stories as introductions of who they were; a foundational element of their stories. The career dream drawings were a little more complex. I had a series of corresponding research questions that addressed their narratives of success and how these narratives related, or did not related to their career dream drawings. As I built the individual stories I shared these narratives and provided a frame for their definitions of success situated around their perceptions of self.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure that this study had validity and reliability, I approached the research through various lenses; "[v]alidity and reliability are concerns that can be approached

through careful attention to a study's conceptualization and the way in which the data were collected, analyzed and interpreted, and the way in which the findings are presented" (Merriam, 1998, p. 200). What facilitated validity for my study was the use of multimodal research strategies. I conducted focus groups, did multiple individual interviews, had participants participate in identity mapping and career dream drawings, had parent voices through parent interviews and questionnaires. Each of these tools individual may not hold validity, but through triangulation of data, validity of research is enhanced. Of importance is the recognition of my personal biases. My identity as an Arab woman had become evident in my everyday actions, especially when conducting this type of research. I grew up with a strong Arab identity instilled in me by my parents and, during the study, I found myself reflecting on our countless visits to the Middle East. Consequently, I have a strong connection with the issue and have experienced many of the same cultural stereotypes that these boys may have encountered. The difference in my case is that I am not phenotypically Arab and have the luxury to code-switch (Anderson, 2000) when I feel it necessary. This insider-outsider perspective, as delineated in Maykut and Morehouse (1994), prompted me to focus on participants and their experiences navigating culture, race, gender, and religion and attempt to mute my own conceptions.

With this in mind, I faced several challenges in attempting to remain unbiased. I used and relied on my researcher notebook/log to document my biases and so I could continue to focus on the participants' voices and stay reflexive. The primary purpose of my research was to advance a greater understanding of student's attitudes towards cultural stereotypes.

Finally, as I anticipated lending my perspective in the research, I did not want it to inundate the voice of the participants. The purpose of my research was to provide an opportunity for Arab American Muslim boys to validate their experiences and identities through dialogue. Accordingly, my voice in this research was an echo, providing a varied perspective and analysis.

To further focus on the internal validity of this research I extended on several strategies explored Merriam's (1999) research including triangulation, member checks, and observing researcher biases:

- *Triangulation*: I used multiple sources of data obtained via focus groups, career dream drawings, identity maps, and interviews to allow for a thorough investigation focused on cross-checking internal validity of data.

- *Member Checks:* While conducting interviews and focus groups, I filtered through data to ensure the align with the themes I discovered.

- *Researcher Biases:* I notated personal opinions and perspectives in the researcher log. This allowed pure focus on the participants while conducing this research.

Consent

Because the participants were minors during the study period, I obtained a signed consent form from each student and a signed consent form from at least one parent of each student (see Appendix F). I took care in explaining the nature of consent and elaborated on the purpose of study, possible risks, and confidentiality concerns. Students and parents were also informed of the proposed time frame of research and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Positionality

I am an Arab American Muslim woman who has experienced many of the same lived experiences as many of the participants. One major distinction, however, was that I was born in Libya and, as a girl, was sheltered by my religious parents. Relating to the socially-acceptable behaviors of Muslim girls, I did speak to boys, partake in traditional Western activities in the school, and dressed in a manner that did not attract attention. It was not until college that I began to question my identity and ethnicity as it related to societal definitions of race. As a young person, I saw myself as a Muslim Arab girl. When I was in college, however, I found myself belonging and fitting in with multiple groups, including African-Americans, Arab Americans and Africans.

Many of the boys in our community, including my brother and male cousins, had a much different experience around conceptualizing their identities. There was more freedom and flexibility for them to talk to members of the opposite sex, to stay out later, and to explore social environments, clubs, and sports. The community's opinion of girls was more guarded and precious and, consequently, the boys were left to discover who they were without restriction.

All of this was important as I watched many boys in my community grapple with their identities: how they fit in, which social group they should associate with, conceptions of religious adherence, and questioning of the parameters of faith. Although I went through many of these identity struggles during college, it was a general belief that girls do not have this struggle while boys consistently do.

During my pilot study, I spent time walking around the University of Maryland looking for phenotypical Arabs (e.g., women in *hijab*, men speaking Arabic around

campus) and would converse with them to spark interest in my study. This brought up

notions of the outsider-insider dichotomy; although I am an Arab, I am also a female and,

as such, could not freely approach Arab males to converse. Much of my recruitment

strategies included a snowball sampling through my own friends. One of my subjects was

a student referred to me by a faculty member, while the others were referred by that

student. As noted in Maykut and Morehouse (1994), this internal struggle is a paradoxical

one:

> The qualitative researcher's perspective is perhaps a paradoxical one: it is to be
>
> acutely tuned-in to the experiences and meaning systems of others—to indwell—
>
> and at the same time to be aware of how one's own biases and preconceptions
>
> may be influencing what one is trying to understand (p. 12).

As a Muslim Arab American woman, I was at a paradox in how I approached this

research and my participants. I understood the need for openness and visibility and, as

such, was willing to conduct all interviews in a public library setting as well as focus

groups.

Self-Reflexivity

As an Arab American Muslim woman, I was challenged in how I both assessed

participants, the nuances that situated how I categorized their identity perceptions, as well

my process of evaluating their stories. In many ways, this process was as much about me

situating my own identity as it was my participants. My positionality as an Arab Muslim

woman both inhibited my study as did it enhance it. While I came at this study with the

understanding I would be limited in my access in understanding middle school boys'

lived experiences, I still choose this population and found ways to test thwart these

87

boundaries. I was given access to this constituency by my very identity as a Muslim Woman. The parents of my participants trusted my intentions and gave me free reign to delve into the lives of their sons. I told stories of growing up Arab and Muslim in this society and the boys shared my sentiment in many of the silly or relative experiences that I had. Often, however, I found myself cutting stories of my identity short, to not cloud the vision of my participants. In preparing to meet the boys for the first time I questioned whether I should have included a male co-researcher to get a deeper dive into the lived experiences of teenaged boys.

Many of the methodological tools I decide to include were impactful in thwarting the bias that may have come up. I conducted parent interviews, questionnaires, individual interviews, focus groups, identity mapping activities and career dream drawings. Each of these tools alone may show bias, however collectively and through triangulation both increase validity and remove some of my insider bias. Where bias was apparent were the limiting of the narratives that were shared. The questions I asked, probed the boys just enough to elicit response and feedback. Had I probed further and with additional resources, such as a male-coresearcher, some findings may have been more intrusive and less ideal. Additionally, as the interviews and focus groups were all conducted in the homes of each participant, I feel that this limited some of the authenticity behind the stories. Many times, during my study the parents would filter in and out of the space, almost monitoring their stories. When I found moments alone with the participants, this is when the details surfaced that jarred the narrative of the typical Arab Muslim boy. They spoke about rap music, girls and dating and how if they told their parents everything they experienced in school they would likely get into trouble.

I often repeated questions regarding the identities of the individual participants to give them time to self-reflect and redirect their responses if they choose to. This strategic meaning making activity, also gave me space to take a moment in their responses and reflect on how I interpreted their responses. My voice often became the litmus test for reliability, at which point I would attempt to draw my voice out with my reflective journals.

Summary

The narratives that follow give insight into the lived experiences of each of these boys as framed by their individual stories, career aspirations, religion, culture and gender allocations discussed in the context of home, school, and other social interactions. Moreover, these narratives are introduced in relation to various levels of cultural, religious and racial identifiers. Namely, two participants viewed themselves as Arab Muslim, followed by two participants who considered themselves multi-ethnic and identified their Muslim identities, prior to other identifiers.

Chapter 4: Sef the Architect
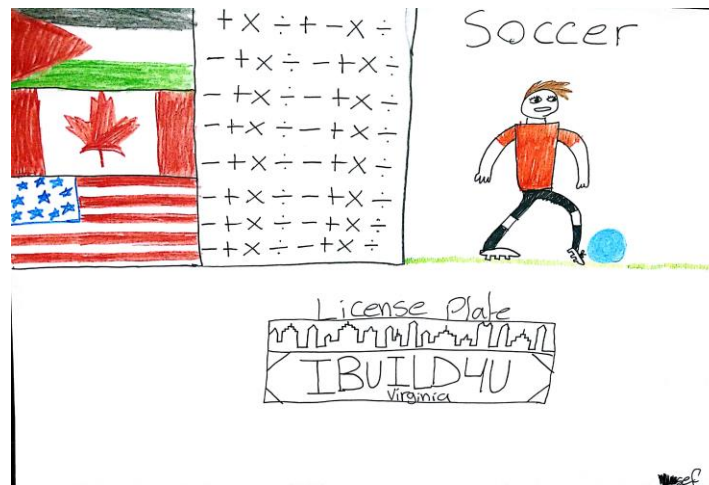
Figure 3. Sef's identity Map.

"I have my Palestinian flag, the Canadian flag, and the US flag. I'm a mathematician and an intellectual (that's why I drew +'s and –'s). I think it's important to be smart for my future. Soccer is my obsession, and I guess I feel like a genuinely a happy kid. I'm really proud of my hope to be an architect so I want to show it off" (Sef Individual Interview, 1/5/2017).

Meeting Sef for the first-time ignited memories from my youth. He immediately reminded me of many boys I had come to know from my childhood. Sef has straight, coarse, dark brown hair with dark brown eyes and profound eyelashes. Both Sef's mother and father are Palestinian. During our interviews, Sef often mentioned that people would say that his features mirrored those of individuals from the Middle East. Notable during our first meeting was his Nike athletic wear, which typified his soccer obsession. Not only did Sef enjoy watching soccer but he also plays soccer and hoped to play on the high school team someday. Sef was not shy; he greeted me warmly, shook my hand and began to ask me several questions about what his mother was like growing up.

I have known Sef's mother, Julia, for over 30 years. We grew up together in London, Ontario, Canada. Later, she moved with her husband to Virginia, where she

had her two children, Sef and Nia. Sef attempted to pry information out of me about his mom as a teenager. I was able to share some pictures of both Julia and me when we were around Sef's age. These photographs allowed me to ease into questions about Sef's own identity; they were especially important in leading Sef to realize that his mom experienced similar struggles with understanding her identity growing up in North America.

Sef's house was a beautiful single-family home on the corner of a quiet cul-de-sac in a large affluent neighborhood. Halloween decorations were placed outside of the door and pumpkins adorned their front lawn. The family had just welcomed a new member to their family -- a kitten named Hercules. After I walked in, I could sense both Sef and his sister Nia were concerned that their cat would not stop meowing. Having two cats myself, I tried to help by picking Hercules up to try and sooth him, only to have him vomit all over my arm. Hercules was the icebreaker that gave me access to Sef and allowed him to feel comfortable talking to me. Eventually, both Sef and his sister convinced Julia to keep this kitten and his care improved.

Sef lives in an overwhelmingly homogenous neighborhood per his own opinions. He said that there was not an extraordinary amount of diversity in his neighborhood and the population at his school also seemed moderately ethnically homogeneous with only 7% of students considered economically disadvantaged and 8% of students as English language learners (Table 3). Although these statistics are

Table 3. Battle Ridge Middle School Demographics

Ethnicity/Race	N Students	% Students
American Indian	*	*
Asian	247	20.16%
Black/African-American	96	7.84 %
Hispanic	111	9.06%
Multi-Racial	69	6.63%
Pacific Islander	*	*
White	700	57.15%

* Signifies less than 2% of the population

important in elucidating the narratives of how Sef qualifies his gender, culture, religion, and race, Sef did not believe that his school's demographics significant impacted his academic achievements. He attested that his friends are all "A" students and he considered them smart and future-driven.

Sef noted that his academic achievement is part of his identity and his ability to attain life goals is directly related to his achievement. He also believes that his academic capabilities are apparent:

> My grades are pretty good. I have one "B" which I am not happy about. Math is probably my favorite class so far. It is difficult but I like it. I am in Algebra I. I'm one year ahead because I took this test in fifth grade and, since I aced that, I am one math course ahead of everyone else in the grade. Some people in that class are with me too. (Sef Individual Interview, 12/9/16)

Sef's mother believes that Sef is smart even though he doesn't always put significant effort into his daily academic endeavors. Explicating further, she said:

Yusuf sometimes just doesn't do any homework. He listens in class and just

gets an "A-plus". He will easily get hundreds [on his schoolwork]. He is a

very smart boy. In the past couple of weeks, I've noticed his grades slipping.

He is an "A-plus" student and he got a "B-minus". I [asked Sef], "What is

this?" He [said], "Oh yeah. I got a 'D' on one of my tests because I just didn't

do any homework." There are formative and summative [assessments]. He is

not submitting what is not being graded and that's homework. That's how

you're learning how to do it. (Sef Parent Interview, 1/5/17)

Sef is a good student and, as such, his parents give him flexibility with his

experiences at school. He belongs to what he considers to be a popular group of

students and is allowed to attend social functions and participate in activities and

events at his middle school. Overall, these experiences shape his identity and weigh

on Sef's schooling experiences. Sef and his mother have a close relationship; they

talk about concerns that he may be having in school and even chooses to go to his

mother when experiencing personal strife at school. In our interview, Sef's mother

said she wanted him to experience different things so he can make the right choices

about his identity. Sef's mother wants him to have experiences in school that do not

force him to choose between his own personal identity constructs situated along

various identity components:

I want him to experience certain things and be more of a– You learn a lot of

things about yourself when you're able to have an experience with a friend

from the opposite gender or whatever… Say it's *haram* or forbidden or all of

that but it's not. It doesn't have to be *haram*. He should be able to talk to and

communicate with a female and then know more things about her so he can

make a good choice when he's older. I want him to have that. (Sef Parent

Interview, 1/5/17)

As a boy experiencing Phase 2 of his ethnic identity construct (Phinney, 1995), Sef's

experiences within his surroundings and positive associations with his own cultural

and religious identity will impact the long-term constructs and eventual

determinations of his identity.

Sef the Architect

Among the first participants to be involved in the present study were Sef and

his family. Sef is one of the most self-assured 12-year-olds that I have ever met. He

was extremely poised and sure of his future career direction. Prior to my introduction

of the career dream drawing activity to Sef, he spoke about his desire to create

something from scratch: "In my personality, I like designing and like building stuff

generally. I have a ton of LEGOs. I have Minecraft. I love to design my own

buildings, so I think it's fun" (Sef Individual Interview, 1/5/17). Sef mentioned that

architecture was something he has envisioned for the past two years. He felt that

architecture suited his personality as a creative and confident young man:

I've known I wanted to be an architect for two years. For a while, I was

debating between a mechanical engineer and architect but I– My personality

more points to being an architect, so I want to be an architect. (Sef Individual

Interview, 1/5/17)

His descriptions of the processes and requirements to become an architect were

explicit. It appeared from the interviews that he had spent time researching what he

needed to accomplish to make his career aspiration a reality-. Drawing his career

dream (Figure 4) was an innate process for Sef; he did not need any prompting

surrounding what to include in the telling of this story:

> This is my dream career. I've known for the past 2 years that I wanted to be an
> architect. I love the idea of creating something that other people will love and
> that makes me and my family proud. Taking care of my family is very
> important to me. They provide for me so I want to provide for them. I want to
> buy my dad a Lamborghini. I also want to make a lot of money and build a
> famous building will help me with that (Sef Individual Interview, 1/5/17).

Figure 4. Sef's career dream.

Notable components of this picture are Sef as an architect surrounded by

money-- something Sef said would result from his amazing creations. In this image,

he has a blueprint next to him and the final product, a skyscraper, is in the distance.

He also notes the grades he desires to achieve which will lead to his success. He is

smiling in the picture, showing his contentment with his creation. Sef was the only participant who incorporated color and clear expressions in his career dream drawings. When I asked him why he put so much emphasis into his career dream, he told me that wanted me to see how happy it would make him achieve his dream. Sef articulated the importance of financial stability during this activity and even spoke of his desire to sustain his current family with his sizable earnings. Financial stability was one definition of success he employed and his father held a similar definition of success:

> The words that came out of my dad's mouth yesterday. He was defining success to me when I was looking at big houses. When we were driving to Maryland, we saw nice big houses. So I said, "I like that house. I want to give you a Lamborghini and I want to have my own helicopter." He said, "Then you just have to be successful." He gave me a whole definition about [what] success is. I tell my dad constantly that I'm going to give him like a Lamborghini. I'd like to give him his own personal private jet. (Sef Individual Interview, 1/5/17)

Although Sef equated success with financial contentment, he also constructed his future identity through his interpretations of the responsibilities of men. The sense of responsibility placed on him as a young Muslim Arab boy are born out of his father's modeled behavior and through religious connotations. When Sef thinks about this responsibility he says, "So mostly how I feel like when I think about being a boy. In my house, I consider my dad the head of the house" (Sef Indvidiual Interview 1/5/2017).

96

Another factor that impacts Sef's beliefs about his career trajectory is his family. During our first meeting, Sef's mother spoke of her expectations as it relates to Sef's future, saying, "We say your job right now is to do well in school. You have nothing. I don't make you work. You don't– Your job is to do well. Sef is so smart" (Sef Parent Interview, 1/5/17). Sef currently has a 4.0 GPA and does so seamlessly. it relates to the impact of family on future career choices, Sef's parents have their own agenda for how they hope his life will turn out and have pushed their son in this direction. In his career dream drawing, there was a clear connection between achievement in schooling as evidenced by the 4.4 GPA and his ability to succeed as an architect. Sef's drive to excel and succeed is ingrained in his personality, his identity construct, and his connection with faith.

Sef as Muslim

Sef was the first participant to discuss his religious identity. When I asked the focus group what they considered themselves, Sef's explanation was, "I say I'm Muslim as a religion and then I say I'm American and Canadian" (Sef Individual Interview, 12/9/17). Sef needed some time to think through his identity constructs and did elaborate further in subsequent meetings. In one individual interview, Sef spoke of Islam as a guiding principle in how he made choices in his life, including the future goals he has set for himself. He stated in regard to Islam, "I'm proud that I'm Muslim and I will carry it down and I won't change my religion at all" (Sef Individual Interview, 12/9/17). His mother also spoke of including Islamic teachings in everyday life. As an example, she cited an Islamic *Hadith*, which spoke of the responsibilities of men as fathers and caregivers: "Man is the guardian of his family

and every guardian has responsibilities towards those under his guardianship"

(Mustadrak, 353, 550)**.**

While Sef's mother stated they were not religious -- they do not pray five times a day and do not attend regular religious services -- Sef is confident in his religious affiliation. He has much pride in his religion and uses it to guide his life choices and decisions: "I'm Muslim at first. I'm happy because my parents are Muslim. All my family is [Muslim]. I don't know why I'm proud but I'm proud" (Sef Individual Interview, 12/9/16).

During the focus group, discussions centered on narratives of what it meant to be Muslim and the sociopolitical ramifications of being Muslim in the United States. These discussions also produced emotional responses from Sef regarding the ways in which others view Muslims:

> Sometimes when they say I'm Muslim, they yell out a word. They say "*Allahu
> Akbar"* because we're all ISIS. When they kill people, they just yell out
> "*Allahu Akbar*" and start killing random people. People look at me differently
> after I tell them. (Sef in focus group, 10/22/16).

When discussing these experiences with Sef's mother after the focus group, she was shocked to learn that he had experiences that impacted his Muslim identity. Shortly after the political events which catapulted Donald Trump into the U.S. presidency, Sef was forced to consider a new line of thinking. As he explained, "I'm now wondering if people would react differently to me if I told them I was Muslim" (Sef Individual Interview, 12/9/17). He felt it almost obligatory to withdraw his vehement

proclamations of faith, as he feared those around him perceiving him in a different light.

Othering of Sef

At 12 years, old, Sef has spent time at school dispelling myths and correcting the cultural and religious misrepresentations of both Muslims and Arabs propagated by outsiders. This is impactful and has influenced Sef's positive associations with being a Muslim Arab boy. When asked for positive associations or opinions of Muslims, Sef was silent; however, when I asked him to think of examples of Muslims portrayed negatively in media, movies, and television, his one-word response spoke of this dichotomy -- "easily."

Sef was keenly aware of the result of othering and realized the consequences of his own membership in this scrutinized Arab culture and Muslim religion. Throughout the interview, Sef spoke about his friends and confirmed that many of them were American, not Arab. He explained, "There some Muslim and Arab people in my school but they are not really my friends" (Sef Individual Interview, 1/5/17). Sef's identity is heavily steeped in peer influence. He sees himself as a typical American kid who likes very typical American things -- rap music, girls, sports and burgers. At the same time, Sef mentioned the impact of his parents on his identity choices. During the parent interview, Julia mentioned how she thought her son was building his identity based on two important facets -- friends and family:

> I'm really trying to put a conscious effort that I need him to be involved in our culture. I don't want him to think he's not Arab... I think the parents have a

humongous impact, a huge impact… more than you know it (Sef Parent

Interview, 1/5/17).

Sef's mom agreed that her son's environment will impact his identity choices but,

from her perspective, parents' views and the ways in which they see their own

identities ultimately impact their children. Julia and her husband Ade both have

tremendous pride in their Palestinian heritage and Islamic faith; Julia and Ade attempt

to instill this sentiment in both of their children. They do this by remaining close with

their large families, visiting Palestine often, and keeping cultural traditions such as

food and musical relatable. Sef is close with his family and spoke about his uncle as a

symbol of pride and fame, especially analogous to his Arab culture: "My Uncle

Khalid is famous. You know how he does Geothermal stuff, was on Forbes

[magazine] and he is a member of UCI" (Sef Individual Interview, 1/5/17). Sef spoke

of his uncle's achievements as something he could one day attain and how his uncle's

success impacted his views of being a Palestinian Muslim male. On the other hand,

Sef noted his uncle's struggles as a Muslim Arab man and shared his discontentment

on the intentional treatment of Arabs at airport checkpoints:

If you go to Israel, like my uncle Khalid, he– Every time he tries to get the

pass, they always bring him in for questioning interrogation for five hours. He

sat in the airport till midnight. It's terrible. (Sef Individual Interview, 1/5/17)

Both positive and negative associations with being an Arab Muslim male have

impacted the ways Sef views his own personal identity. His fear of being the

outsider-other was inherent in the ways he represented his own identity to others. He

often spoke of his fear of how others would view him and possibly judge him based

on who he was: "I think because I'm maybe a darker skin color and stuff like that that I'm asked more [about what I am] because maybe I look different than others" (Sef Individual Interview, 1/5/17). His interpretation of cultural and religious identity is rooted in his surroundings -- both how others view him and how he sees himself.

During one individual interview with Sef, he broached his understanding of how he views himself racially -- not how he viewed others' representations of himself but his own self-representations:

> I am a White kid who is Arab. Well, I don't speak Arabic. I wouldn't call myself Arabic… because I don't speak Arabic. I'm tanned. If it were back in the segregation time when Black people were slaves and stuff and people were segregated, I think I'd be White, right? (Sef Individual Interview, 12/9/16)

Although he previously acknowledged his skin color as "tanned," he views himself as White, as Arabs are racially classified in the United States Census. The very nature of his response is rooted in an understanding of the dominant narrative of privilege and power, especially in context to citizenship. Sef recognized it and was aware of this privilege:

> If I looked on YouTube, I see these [stereotypes] a lot, even on the news. There is always– If a woman in a hijab walks in a store -- a lot of times you see them on YouTube -- they're like, "Oh, you're Muslim, get out of the country, you don't belong here and blah, blah, blah". And then she will give a whole speech on how she is an American citizen and she has rights and stuff. (Sef Individual Interview 1/5/17)

His experiences with feeling different correspond with the ways he presents himself. He sees examples of othering around him and it begins to exemplify the biases surrounding Muslims and Arabs.

Sef considers himself to be very popular and friends with most kids. Speaking about his experiences during the beginning of the school year, he said he often experiences an initial singling out because of the teacher's inability to pronounce his name, "When I start a new school semester and my teachers go down the list and they start asking if people are here, sometimes I have heard Yeesef. I have heard Yoosef. My Spanish teacher calls me Jusef." He states that these interactions turn him into an outsider, open the door for other kids to tease, and misrepresent who he is as a person. Sef spoke of experiences of stereotyping while at school and how these encounters have impacted the people he associates with and the way he presents himself:

> I recall feeling uncomfortable about being Muslim Arab when people say that Arabs are terrorists; besides that, nothing. I have heard that every day. Mostly I hear that from kids. If they are with someone like me who is Muslim and Arab-- I am friends with them but sometimes they will just yell "*Allahu Akbar*" and just say that Muslims are terrorists sometimes. I am really not offended by that because I know they are not referring to me because I am their friend. I usually just say that that is not cool because not all Muslims are terrorists. (Sef Individual Interview, 12/9/17)

While he spoke about the people around him uttering these misrepresentations as jokes, Sef's trembling voice and the fearful tone of his response demonstrated that he has been impacted by these events and internalized what it means to hear these

misrepresentations on a continual basis, especially given his uncle's experiences with stereotypes and othering. When talking about these events during our interviews, he continually retorted stating that these comments were not about him because he wasn't *really* Arab. Several times during our conversations, casually and during the interviews, he reiterated his status as American versus Arab. He did, however, seem confident in his religious identity and spoke of another moment in school when he found himself defending the misrepresentations of his faith:

> Sometimes my friends are like, "Allah isn't like God." They think Allah isn't God but I say, "No, no, no. Allah means God but in Arabic." They didn't think that we worshiped the one God because they misunderstood. They say, "I don't know," but I say, "It's pretty much the same as Christianity but there are some different beliefs. We worship the same God." That's what they mess up most of the time. (Sef Individual Interview, 12/9/17)

He experinces these manifestations of confusion often and is left in the situation were he must become the spokesperson of the Islamic faith. As one facet of his identity, Islam also prescribes how Men should behave and aspire as future husbands and fathers.

Sef as Muslim Arab Male

While broaching Sef's interpretations of manhood, he spoke of common misinterpretations regarding gender roles and later spoke of his own family's explanation of gender roles:

> I'd say that I would define a man like… I don't know. You know how they used to have what defines a man and a woman a long time ago; women had

103

fewer rights than men, so men would be considered as tough and all those words you said. They would be considered all of those [words] because that's the typical man. But a woman is… I don't know. She cleans the house and all that stuff. (Sef Individual Interview, 12/9/16)

Although Sef may have his own interpretive understanding of what it means to be a man or a woman, his gender identity constructs are heavily rooted in his own family's presentation of gender. Sef's mother is quite successful and began her own business where his father now works. When asking Sef who he felt was the head of household, he stated his dad was the head of the household but also noted his mother's role as equally necessary for the functioning of the household:

I have to clean my room. I have to sometimes clean the basement or change Hercules' litter box or wake up in the morning and feed him. Nia cleans her room and sometimes cleans the basement. And my mom? She works. She just cleans house in general. She cooks meals for us. And dad? Dad doesn't really do anything. Sometimes he vacuums but he is working in the office and he goes shopping every Friday for the house. (Sef Individual Interview, 1/5/17).

Sef is surrounded by typical representations of expectations of gendered responsibilities. His sister is expected to do chores and his mother is expected to cook and clean. However, when discussing gender roles with Sef's mother, she was explicit in her intentions to prepare Sef for self-reliance and self-sufficiency but placed an equal emphasis on helping him understand gender requirements through her eyes:

My brothers did nothing. We were four girls and older sisters. They did

squat…. Now that [one of my brothers] lives on his own and he has his own

house, he is taking care of all of that and he cooks. He is forced to [do it]. It's

amazing. It's a transformation; he's cooking, cleaning, and doing his own

things. I think it has to do with your personality. I want to instill that in Yusuf.

He can cook if he wants to [cook]. He can be an awesome baker..… It doesn't

mean he can't come into the kitchen because he is a male. Hell no. (Sef Parent

Interview, 1/5/17)

The factors influencing Sef's understanding of the role of men also influence his

conceptions of masculinity. He is driven to represent himself as tough and perform

masculinity in accordance with societal representations of masculinity -- what he sees

on television, from his peers, and representations solidified by both his mother and

father:

Maybe people a long time ago thought men and women were different in a lot

of ways, so they just came up with two words -- masculine and feminine.

People who had the manly traits would be considered masculine because they

were strong or aggressive and had sports and stuff. But people who were

cleaning houses have as much rights as men do. (Sef Individual Interview,

1/5/17)

While Sef sees himself through a lens of a multi-layered identity, these various

representations of identity are in flux and seem to be fluid. Sef has begun exploring

the complexities and implications of his associations, With intensified experiences

with stereotypes, instances of feeling otherered and the necessity to upload his

105

masculine identifiers, Sef's identity is beginning to coagulate. He has confidence in

the ways and means of how he represents himself and how he discusses his Muslim

and Arab identities with others but is impacted by those around him.

Chapter 5: Zach the Surgeon

Figure 5. Zach's Identity Map.

"In this picture, the pieces of my identity include how I want to do well I in school and in soccer. I think that working hard in school and sports is important. I don't have a job so this is my job. I also drew a picture of the dream car I'd love to own one day. I think that if I want to achieve this dream I must go to college. I also have 4 words that are part of my everyday life including religion, soccer, education and college. These are important pieces of my puzzle" (Zach Individual Interview, 1/5/2017).

Out of all the participants in my case study, Zach was my quietest and most difficult participant to read during interviews and in the focus group. When I met Zach during the focus group, I knew immediately that it would be tough to get him to speak, let alone voice an opinion. He joked during the focus group about the pseudonym that he would select for himself, being very sarcastic and avoiding much of the serious talk about politics, religion, and culture. Although he didn't speak a lot, when he did, especially in the first encounter during the focus group, his words were deliberate and thoughtful. Among all four participants, Zach had the greatest grasp on the Arab culture, the practice of Islam, it's tenants and pillars, as well as the Arabic language, "I am proud to be an Arab Muslim in middle school. It's my heritage, it's where I come from. It makes me who I am" (Zach Individual Interview, 12/16/2016).

Even further, among only two participants, Zach respond to the question of identity with cultural associations, "Jordanian and Arab." This offered a brief glimpse into the underpinnings of Zach's identity manifestations and the hierarchies of his personal narrative of identity.

Zach has short, dark brown hair with very dark brown eyes and darker skin, especially in comparison to the other study participants. He is the middle of three children; his older sister is 16 years old and his younger sister is eight years old. Zach's mother and father identify as Jordanian and Muslim, respectively. Zach's house is a traditional single-family home with multiple cultural and religious artifacts present at first glance. I immediately noticed copies of the *Qur'an* within arm's reach. Tapestries with *Qur'anic* verses appeared in various places throughout the living room, dining room and kitchen. Brightly-colored paintings representing life in Jordan were also present in the home. The dining room table, noticeably used as a home office for Zach's parents and a homework station for the children, was covered with multiple Arabic lesson plans, stories, and completed assignments.

In our first interview, Zach's mom insisted that I come to their house to conduct the interview in the "comfort of their home." They had recently returned from a three-week trip to Jordan to visit extended family. Their home was riddled with suitcases and many kids of varying ages. Zach's eldest sister, Sef's sister, and Timothy's sister were there. Additionally, on that particular Friday, Sef and Timothy were also there. The house was bustling house and everyone was spirited and happy. I was welcomed to Zach's family home with tea and *Khakh*, a traditional Eid cookie, in the same manner that Sef's family welcomed me to their home. As I waited for Zach

to come downstairs, I talked to the girls and spoke to them about my project. They were very interested, all saying they had experienced varying levels of stereotypes in their respective high schools. Zach was quiet to start but we started our conversation around some of the things he loved to do, specifically playing soccer: "I like to play soccer… I'm good. I can play right-back, right-mid and striker [positions]" (Zach Individual Interview, 12/15/16). We talked about his hopes for soccer and how he desires to play on the high school team. He also stated that his older sister is quite good at soccer; consequently, he looks to her to help him improve his soccer skills.

Zach's parents speak predominately Arabic in the home but he and his siblings respond in English, as many second-generation children do. When I was growing up, my mother would speak to us in Arabic and we would respond in a combination of English and Arabic words to try to maintain our mother's satisfaction with our level of comfort with the language. During the first interview on a Friday, besides the muffled sounds of other teenagers and kids in the house, the *Adhan* call to prayer sounded to signify time for *Dhuhr* (afternoon prayer). When I spoke to Zach about this, he said:

> My mom always has the *Adhan* on no matter what day it is and what time it is. It used to bother me but now it has become something that is just part of what I'm used to, I guess. (Zach Individual Interview, 12/15/2016)

He recognized the symbolism of the *Adhan* early on and stated that his father and mother pray at each *Adhan*. Also, since the interview day was a Friday, a day when Muslim men are expected to go to prayer, Zach's father took his friends to Friday prayer at the local mosque during our interview; Zach's mom and sister stayed home.

109

Religious adherence, such as making time to attend Friday prayers and the *Adhan* that plays at the home, influences Zach's Muslim identity and weighs on the choices he subsequently makes.

Zach attends City View Middle School with his friend Timothy and 5categorizes the demographic makeup of his school (noted in Table 4) as "mixed up," which he states is comparable to the makeup of his neighborhood. While City View

Table 4. City View Middle School Demographics

Ethnicity/Race	N Students	% Students
American Indian	*	*
Asian	286	25.98%
Black/African-American	107	9.72%
Hispanic	149	13.53%
Multi-Racial	50	4.54%
Pacific Islander	*	*
White	504	45.78%

* Signifies less than 2% of the population

Middle School is racially and ethnically diverse, 14% of students identify as economically disadvantaged and 11% of

students are English Language Learners. None of these statistics alone present any significant differences or challenges; however, online student and parent message boards shed light on the excessive bullying that has happened at City View Middle School. One parent reported, "The strong get stronger and the weak get weaker. *Lots of running and screaming in the hallways, rampant bullying*…. We've all learned to stop reporting because no one really cares" (Good Schools, 2016, emphasis in

original). The significance of these statements lie in the experiences that Zach has in expressing his own personal Muslim and Arab identities. He has experienced bullying and stereotyping in varying degrees.

During several conversations, Zach spoke of his experiences with feeling out of place when other students recognized his Islamic religion and Arab cultural affiliation: "In school, when some people talk about ISIS and stuff, whenever they see like me– I don't know. It's kind of like a stereotype" (Zach Individual Interview, 1/5/2017). He struggled with our conversations about his negative experiences at school; the more we delved into a discussion of discomfort, the more he retreated. Although these school encounters were profound and impactful, he considers himself a popular student. Zach openly talked about the nuances of being popular in his school, including being "good at sports and his sense of humor" (Zach Individual Interview, 1/5/2017). Since Zach sees himself as one of the more popular kids in school, his status dampens the impact of micro-aggressions on his self-esteem. He emanates an air of confidence at school which he hides behind a layer of quiet reservation at home.

Listening to Zach speak and discuss how people perceive him and the double-consciousness he embraces in his home and school lives mirrored my own experiences growing up. During the interview, Zach spoke about a small transgression where he had decided to watch *Deadpool* without his mother's permission: "One time, I watched a bad movie knowing that I wasn't supposed to watch it. She didn't punish me. She just talked to me about it" (Zach Individual Interview, 1/5/2017). This small act seemed like a larger contravention in Zach's

eyes. He values the opinions of his parents; their influence is apparent in many of the decisions he has made in his young life. Despite his parents' influence, Zach desires to live outside of his boundary lines and seems to portray a different character at home than he does at school.

During the parent interview, Zach's mom spoke of the dissonance she experienced with Zach's older sister and the rules she'll impose on Zach as he grows and questions boundaries:

> With activities or time spent outside of school, unless I know the other parents and I agree for [Zach or his sister] to spend time with those kids, I say, "Sweetie, this won't work." They know that there are certain things that they can do that I would approve and other things I won't approve of. (Zach Parent Interview, 1/5/2016)

In a way, Zach's experiences with these boundaries and seeing his sister's experience with these boundaries have created an identity that Zach portrays one aspect of himself at home and another at school. When I asked Zach if he was as quiet at school as he is at home, he laughed and simply said, "No, not at all." His discussion around what he desires in life is centered around these two polar perspectives: he adheres to the rules at home and around family but maintains his status as one of the popular kids at school because of his humor and outgoing nature.

Zach the Surgeon

Zach has profound compassion and is driven by helping others. He spoke often of his desire to help children who are sick and make a sizable income doing it.

His motivation to help others also merges with his desire to help his parents and support his future family.

Figure 6. Zach's career dream.

> This picture [Figure 6] hows me as a successful surgeon working in a community hospital. I'm operating on a child and have all the tools that I require to perform the surgery on the surgical table in the background…. My house will be right next to the hospital to make it easier to go home to be with my family. I guess this is a career dream because I don't really know if I can achieve it but I'm going to work very hard to try and achieve it. (Zach Individual Interview, 1/5/2017)

Zach is the surgeon in this image with a mask on. He is performing the surgery on a child and his future family is living in the home across the street. Currently, he spends a lot of time with his family. Zach's mother works from home when she is not traveling for work. Because of his mother's work, Zach has realized the importance and necessity to remain near and close to his future family. The various details in this

workplace show the decisive nature and inherent understanding of what it means to be a surgeon. He has his patient in front of him and he is preparing for an operation.

Zach also enumerated his successes through achievements and future career choices. He realizes the work necessary to accomplish his goals. He realizes the amount of effort he will need to achieve his career dream and long-term goals. We spoke about the requirements of becoming a medical doctor and the additional steps necessary to specialize in surgery. He is a great student, with an "A" average in all his classes. Zach is highly driven by his older sister's ability to do well in school and his parent's expectations: "My parents drive me to succeed. My parents talk to me and tell me to study well before tests so I can get good grades" (Zach Individual Interview, 1/5/2017). In agreement, Zach's mother echoed these high expectations for her son to achieve both academically and professionally:

> [My husband and] I try and guide {Zach and his sister] through what we would expect from them. There is the school stuff, the academic stuff… We expect them to have "A" [grades] all the time and to do their best in any possible way….The other one in terms of behavioral or different practices -- being respectful, being kind, being considerate, being caring -- these are the things that I try to instill and encourage in them. When I see it in action, I try to encourage them. "That really is a nice thing that you have done." (Zach Parent Interview, 1/5/2017)

Zach also expresses his future career choice as a pragmatic decision. While explaining the constructs of his identity, he also sees himself as a soccer player -- a part of his life that truly defines who he is as a person. During the interview, however,

he stated that soccer "was just a fun activity and nothing that I could make money doing" (Zach Individual Interview, 1/5/2017). His realization of the need for security stems partially from the societal and parental pressures that drive him away from idealism and what some would say are childhood dreams.

Zach as Muslim

In speaking with Zach about his religious convictions and associations, it became clear that he has had periods of immense pride in his Muslim faith and periods of hesitation to share his religious identity. In the focus group, Zach did not hesitate when surrounded by his Muslim friends to attest to his faith and conviction. Conversely, when discussing his peer group's understandings of his faith, Zach responded by saying, "Well, most of my friends know but not everyone knows I am Muslim" (Zach Individual Interview, 1/5/2017). A slight fear presented when answering this question. He began to fidget with his shirt and looked everywhere except directly at me when responding to my question. He later attested that, if asked, he would not be embarrassed to associate himself with both Islam and Arab Culture.

When discussing religion with Zach's mother, she spoke about her reliance on religion and how she and her husband use it in the rearing of their children:

> I don't know if I rely too much on the religion part but I do like to use some quotes from the Qur'an. The words I have been using are more about the relationship with the parents and with the mom. One of the *Hadith* I say -- if your finger hurts, it's like your whole-body aches -- is like the relationships [we have] with family members. So, I would touch on a minimum base as it

relates [to the Muslim faith] but I don't make a conscious effort to talk about

it. (Zach Parent interview, 1/5/2017)

The Islamic scriptures that appeared around the living room and dining room, along

with various copies of the Qur'an, made it apparent that Zach has a clear

understanding of the requirements of his faith and adheres to these requirements at

home with little defiance. Additionally, the fact that Zach's parents have invested so

much energy into maintaining his religious identity through hiring Arab language and

writing tutors and having Zach learn the written language of the Qur'an has kept his

familiarity with Islam consistent. This knowledge of Islam also categorizes him as a

variable that others him and leads to the stigma of not being as 'American' as his

peers.

Othering of Zach

Zach recognizes he is different from other kids his age at his school. He

retreated during the interview and was discernably impacted, as evidenced by his

grimace when he spoke about these experiences. Despite being my quietest

participant, Zach did not hesitate to share his concerns about how his friends view

Arabs and Muslims:

A couple of days ago, in history [class], we were talking about the election

and then we started talking about gay rights and other things. Religion didn't

come up at all…. But it made me feel a little uncomfortable because I thought

they were going to go in the direction of talking about Arabs and Muslims.

(Zach Individual Interview, 1/5/2017)

116

Although the class was redirected and Zach's fear did not solidify, the notion that Zach exists in a space that forces him to question the identities that define him are daunting for anyone, yet alone a 12-year-old boy. Even further, Zach talked about how he could understand why others' perceptions of Muslim Arabs are acceptable, sighting that "Arabs and Muslims are typically portrayed in the movies or on television or in the news like terrorists, bad guys" (Zach Individual Interview, 1/5/2017). He believes that if people are consistently exposed to those negative representations of Muslim Arab men, they will eventually believe them. This inadvertently creates, for Zach, an internalized system of power and oppression based on the othering of Muslim Arab men.

During the focus group, I showed several images of stereotypes of Arab Muslim men to the four participants. Zach's response was not one of anger or aggression; rather, sadness overcame him when he realized that the men in the image have been questioned in life (see Appendix C). As Zach was the only one who relayed such an emotional response, I liken his response to the ways in which he has experienced being an outsider. When discussing previous experiences as the outsider, Zach said that images he sees regularly on the news and in the media "annoy me; they are stereotyped [images] put in public and everyone sees them" (Zach Individual Interview, 1/5/2017). Although he did not say if his father experienced instances of stereotyping, Zach has experienced iterations of hatred.

Zach as Muslim Arab Male

When I asked Zach what a "typical" boy looks like, his response opened the door to show his beliefs on the requisites for masculinity: "Boys are more extroverted

117

instead of quiet; they talk like they're all around, they talk to everyone, stuff like that"
(Zach Individual Interview, 1/5/2017). Ironically, this is Zach's character outside of
the house, he purports. He desires to be recognized by others and his need for
popularity, in his perspective, is directly correlated with the ways in which boys
should behave. He spoke even further when we talked about some of the major
characteristics he sees as necessary to be a man:

> Men should be confident. You should be outgoing and you must like try new
> things if you haven't tried them before. I also think it's important for a man to
> be logical. In everyday life, you have to think about what you do before you
> do it and what you say. (Zach Individual Interview, 1/5/2017)

This quotation not only explains the quiet reservation behind Zach's at-home
personality; it also speaks to the strategies he has activated that allow him to thwart
the negative implications of stereotypes of Muslim Arab men and even change others'
perceptions of how Arab Muslim boys & men should act. When Zach discussed his
views of Arab Muslim men as they pertain to certain typecasts, he said that "Arab
Muslim males have characteristics [such as aggression] more so than American males
as a result of the environment that they were raised in" (Zach Individual Interview,
1/5/2017).

Zach agrees that his mother and father share equal roles in the home but sees
his father as the head of the house: "My mom usually does stuff in the house. She
tells us to do laundry and stuff. If something is broken or we need to fix something,
[my dad] buys it and stuff like that" (Zach Individual Interview, 1/5/2017). His
masculine traditionalist perspectives possibly bolster the ways in he approaches

women's roles and, notably, the depth to which he shared his views with me during our interviews. Zach's mother spoke of how she wants to empower her daughters with the skills that are often anticipated for a son:

> I truly think as you empower the boys and give them the exposure, you should equally empower the girls. It may end up being that the girls would benefit more from this skill or this kind of edge more than the boys. (Zach Parent Interview, 1/5/2017)

As it relates to Zach's future roles as a man as evidenced by his career dream drawings, Zach believes his masculine identity drives and propels him to succeed. His definitions of success are grounded in his ability to support his future family and to protect those who he will be obligated to protect. Zach's mother solidified this point, stating her expectations for Zach daily as it relates to being a member of the family and protecting his sisters:

> The way I present it or engage Zach is in terms of him being a member of the family, especially with his sisters. He should always be protective wherever he is. No matter how much of a difference he has with his sister, he should stand out for her. He should watch out for them. He has been extremely nice and caring, especially when I travel. I travel a lot and he takes a good amount of responsibility. (Zach Parent Interview, 1/5/2017)

Zach mentioned that he has never found himself in a position where he had to protect his sisters but he sees the importance in his daily ritual of walking his younger sister to elementary school.

Zach's multiple identities are predominately impacted by affirmations from others. He is driven by the positive implications of popularity at his middle school, resulting in his own varied identity depictions. He is popular, talkative and athletic at school and has a solid group of friends that follow him around. In the same vein, he desires to have the acceptance of his mother and father and strives to please them. Of all the participants, Zach had the greatest affinity towards his Arab culture and was most versed. He could speak, read and write Arabic and knew about all the customs and foods associated with the culture. Additionally, there were multiple artifacts that I observed in my visit to his home that impact Zach's understanding of the cultural and religious requisites including the *Adhan* that would sound at each of the five daily prayer times, several tapestries that lined the inside of the home, visible Qur'ans throughout the first level of the home, and weekly Arabic language classes accompanied by several Arabic and Muslim artifacts. Another detail that was a reminder of the religious convictions of Zach and his family was the built-in bidet in the toilet to properly prepare for *Wudu,* the cleansing prior to prayer.

Zach is surrounded by representations of the common imagery of Arab hyper-masculinity -- images on the news which his parents regularly watch and regular travels to Jordan to visit relatives that fit the stereotype. At school, Zach sees himself as distinctive from these misconceptions and inaccuracies of Arab Muslim men despite his Muslim religious identity and his connection to Arab culture. He is keenly aware of the of the ways in which Arab Muslim men are scrutinized and stereotyped in the media. For example, when Zach was shown stereotypical images of Arab Muslim men, he could recognize what the stereotypes were and agreed they were

grounded in overgeneralizations on the part of media and environmental factors that impact these masculine stereotypes. Zach's drawings and representations of his future are heavily impacted by his desire to lead his future family as a Muslim Arab man and continually thwart the negative depictions of Muslim Arab men portrayed in the greater society.

Chapter 6: *Jo the Gamer*

Figure 7. Jo's identity Map.

"This is a picture of me with my two best friends, one is White and the other is Asian. I made sure you could tell who the Asian kid was by coloring his face in yellow. I think it's important to tell the difference, because my Asian friend, "gets it" and my White friend is sometimes on a different planet. Ok the most important thing in this picture is the giant plate of grape leaves. I LOVE GRAPE LEAVES and it's a small part of my culture. Even though I'm half Arab, my mother (who's from Finland) cooks Arabic food. I guess that's me" (Jo Individual Interview, 1/5/2017).

Funny, kind, open and honest are the first words I would use to describe Jo, my most vocal participant. As with the other participants, I met Jo during the focus group and very quickly realized his insight would be crucial. He never held back his opinions on culture, religion, race, and gender. Another interesting point that I discovered after interviewing Jo was that he was one of two of the participants who were bi-cultural; his father is Palestinian and mother is Finnish. Very early on, Jo vocalized his disdain for the "orange man," as he referred to President Trump, and vocalized emotional responses when discussing the issue of the nation-state of Palestine. He loves cartoons and lives for hip-hop music, but will immediately respond to the question of identity by professing his religious identity as a Muslim.

Jo is the youngest of four kids and very unsure of his future. He has two elder sisters -- one an attorney who will marry a prominent and equally-successful

Palestinian geothermal engineer (who happens to be Sef's uncle), the other a soon-to-be a doctor -- and an older brother who recently began college. They reside in a beautiful, grand home in Northern Virginia. Jo's mother is the primary breadwinner of the household, currently employed at a prominent international aid firm. Arab Cultural influences and Islamic influences appeared throughout the lobby of the home. An evil eye, an Arab cultural artifact meant to ward off negative karma, hung in the kitchen. Other small representations around the home demonstrated how Jo's mother and father are vested in maintaining cultural religious pride. The pressure on Jo to succeed and to do as well as his siblings is mounting; he feels an immense burden to fulfill his parent's hopes and to prove others around him wrong. During one of our conversations, Jo pointed to an experience related to school where he felt inferior based on his academic skillset:

> I felt different because I was struggling with reading during kindergarten. My kindergarten teacher was really good at teaching reading and I didn't learn much. I thought I was different from everybody. I went to first grade without knowing reading, so I had to learn it in first grade. (Jo Individual Interview, 12/5/2016)

His recollections of feeling different at an early age showed Jo's predisposition to understanding what it means to be judged by others. When we talked about these inadequacies, he believed they were legitimate and he didn't believe he was overly intellectual; despite his critical self-evaluation, I found Jo to be rather intellectual for a 13-year-old and capable of conceptualizing the sociopolitical implications of his culture, religion, and race.

When I first met Jo's mother, Susanna, she struck me as a fair-skinned Arab woman. I met her during the focus group where I spoke to Zach and Sef's mom in Arabic. Jo's mom understood what I was saying and, although her accent was unfamiliar, I assumed she was also Arab. When the participants spoke about their respective identities during the focus group, Jo articulated his multi-cultural identities: Palestinian, Finnish and Muslim. Even more importantly, when I asked him about his personal school experiences, he said, "Yeah, I have a couple of Arab of friends, but it's mostly just normal" (Jo, Focus Group, 12/5/2016). I was struck by the comment as he alluded to the abnormality of his Arab culture and Muslim religion.

More importantly, I was curious about his families' conceptions of their culture, religion, and race. I spent time speaking with Jo's mother about her background and her upbringing. She was raised in Finland and came to the United States for college where she later met and married Jo's father. She converted to Islam and slowly learned the language along with customs, foods, and requisites of the Palestinian culture. After my first individual interview with Jo, I sat with Susanna and had coffee and cake. Her depth of understanding about the Palestinian cultural and Islamic religious requirements was obvious. She spoke about her experiences with sending her daughters and eldest son to Islamic school:

> Well, the girls went to an all-girls schools, so there was no problem… but there would have been a problem if they were in a public school, I think. Especially from our side, it would have been a problem. I think it was a big motivation just for him [Jo's father] to have them in the Islamic school. Also, for Jo's older brother and Jo, he never wanted them to go out except he went

to a prom -- his junior prom. He said he wanted to go and I felt like "I do not

need to tell him not to go because he is a good kid." So, I bought him this suit.

He was criticizing me for doing that but I was like, "You know, this is just one

event and it's a part of high school." I do not want him to feel like he missed

out or something. (Jo Parent Interview, 1/10/2017).

Unlike his elder sisters and brother, Jo has attended public school for the eight years

that he has been in school. His current middle school, Langwell Middle School (Table

5) is the least diverse of all other middle schools in this study; approximately 6% of

the student population are deemed Limited English Proficient and only 6% of

students qualify for free or reduced-priced meals. These demographic charactersitics

explain Jo's determinations of culture and religion while in school and at home. Jo,

however, had a different experience as he grew up in the public-school system; the

Table 5. Langwell Middle School Demographics

Ethnicity/Race	*N Students*	*% Students*
American Indian	*	*
Asian	368	27.26%
Black/African-American	107	3.42%
Hispanic	149	8.15%
White	504	53.85%

* Signifies less than 2% of the population

leniency both his mother and father displayed by placing Jo in a traditional public

school are a sign of growth in understanding how parental decisions impact the

children's lived experiences. Jo's mother voiced a desire for Jo to not feel left out: "Jo

is the youngest. I think everything changes just because of experience. Also, their

personalities are different" (Jo Parent Interview, 1/10/2017). The results of this shift

of openness and leniency is apparent as Jo openly discusses, in front of his mother,

envisioning his future life with his crush: "The only time I really do [think about my

future] is with my crush. I envision marrying her, but that's never going to happen."

As with any typical teenager, Jo displays teenage crushes and the unattainable reality

they usher in. Jo the youngest of four kids, has the most reign with his life choices,

and has his mother's support in his ventures.

Jo's phenotype is Caucasian. He has blond hair, fair skin and blue eyes from

his mixed heritage -- half Palestinian and half Finnish. He does not attest to being

athletic or academic; Jo only sees himself as an avid and lifelong gamer. Jo will spend

hours existing within the world of video games and YouTube. The friends that he

does associate with are either in the online gaming community or at school. He

associates with a small group of diverse friends who relate to this gaming captivation.

He confirms that there are small numbers of diverse students at his middle school;

however, this does not impact his specific friend group which is among the most

diverse in the school:

> My friends… we are regional. It's not just white people. I have Caucasian, a
>
> Muslim, a Hispanic, we have a French…. The group is very different from the
>
> rest of the school. I normally see just like groups of Asians and I see groups of
>
> only white. I'm not sure how we ended up together (Jo Individual Interview,
>
> 1/5/2017).

He gravitates towards others who appear beyond the "normal," as he previously

stated; this convoluted understanding of representations of normal vs. atypical points

towards the climate and feeling of belonging Jo experiences at his middle school. He could recall numerous instances of stereotyping, racism and bullying because of race, religion, and culture occurring at his middle school, so much so that it had become ingrained in the expectations that Jo had of typical behavior:

Interviewee: My friends sometimes stereotype us but we're all racist. We all stereotype--

Interviewer: What does that means?

Interviewee: We all stereotype our culture.

Interviewer: Okay, give me some examples?

Interviewee: One time, he called me an ISIS supporter. Then I called him a Trump supporter. (Jo Individual Interview, 1/5/2017)

Taken out of context, these statements may seem innocent and speak to the maturity level of these young adults; however, given the experiences that Jo previously discussed, these statements impact how Jo represents himself and his identities at school. Jo spoke of another instance of racism on the part of a teacher at LF Middle school that impacted his older brother (who attended LF Middle School for one year) as well as his own perspective of teachers' representations of students:

My brother…he told me this. My brother is in college now but he used to go to LF Middle School. Basically, he had a racist teacher. There were posters saying like Muslims are all… all Muslims are terrorists. My dad got really pissed and I really wanted her to get fired. (Jo, Focus Group, 10/9/2016)

Although this experience did not impact Jo directly, he was familiar with the teacher and later admitted how angry this event made him. He did not understand the

127

necessity for this type of behavior and later stated: "I don't know why you would do that. If you really hate Muslims, you should just keep it to yourself" (Jo Individual Interview, 1/5/2017). His confusion about the teacher's behavior manifested during that school year; as he would see her often, he purposely ignored her walking down the hall and attempted to give her nasty looks.

In contrast to the ways in which he represents his culture as American, Jo discussed his Muslim identity without prompting. He deviated from calling himself an Arab because of his lack of Arabic linguistic capabilities, which he believes is an essential component that defines an association to the culture:

> I feel really bad about not seeing myself as an Arab. I feel really bad because, even though I'm not like a full Arab, I still defend my religion. Of course, I always defend it if anybody ever just comes up to me and say that it's who I am. (Jo Individual Interview, 1/5/2017)

Here, Jo merges culture and religion to create a level of complexity about his own self-identification. During the focus group interviews, he openly chose Muslim as a component of his identity and later stated in regard to his cultural association:

> I see myself as an American kid who loves to play video games and loves rap music. I make a lot of friends and just try to have fun in life. That's my objective -- to try to have fun in life. (Jo Individual Interview 1/5/2017)

Although he was conflicted about his cultural and ethnic identity, Jo was still able to clearly articulate a definitive response related to religious identity, a factor complicating the narrative of Jo's intersectional identity constructs.

Jo the Gamer

Jo is a gamer. He lives his life inside fabricated realities driving fanciful imagery of cultures, places, and races. When asking the group where stereotypes of Muslim Arabs exist, each responded with imagery of Muslim Arabs as villains within the world of video games. Jo spoke of his hope to shift this mentality burdening Arabs, at least in the gaming community. He dreams of a future filled with hours spent creating and playing these games:

Figure 8. Jo's career dream.

I am a YouTuber-slash-gamer in this picture [Figure 8]. I'm happy because I'm doing exactly what I love to do every day and making a lot of money doing it. In this picture specifically, I am playing a new version of Grand Theft Auto [video game] and I'm beating all of the playing levels. This is an Apple computer with a large screen and an external camera to communicate with my other friends who are playing with me. I think if I continue to keep

playing and practicing and working hard, I'll get good enough to make this

career dream a reality. (Jo Individual Interview, 1/5/2017)

Jo, the main subject of this image, is sitting at a custom desk using the newest Apple

computer to strategize and communicate with fellow gamers. He spoke about his role

in inventing and testing Grand Theft Auto as part of his future career dream and being

on top; the ability to make lots of money was especially important to him: "My

number one objective in life is getting money…. Step one, get money. Step two,

repeat step one. That's all you do." (Jo Individual Interview, 1/5/2017)

Jo represented the imagery of his career dream with extensive colors to

embody his knowledge of this "gamer world." All the specific details and nuances

show thought and talent around depictions and imagery around creating these virtual

realities. As he spoke about this rendering, he talked about the sheer satisfaction he

would have in pursuing this dream career. What does not appear in Jo's rendering are

his hopes for the future and how he anticipates such a job impacting him in the long

run. He sees gaming as a challenge, something that drives and motivates him: "It's

fun, challenging. I hang out. I get to spend time with my friends and stuff" (Jo

Individual Interview, 1/5/2017). As opposed to his career choice as a gamer which

requires minimal initiative, he believes his motivations to do well in school lie in

necessity: "you need to do it whether you like it or not" (Jo Individual Interview,

1/5/2017).

Jo feels impartial towards his schooling, citing boredom and lack of interest in

the subject matter. He often ebbs and flows in making connections between his long-

term goal of becoming a famous gamer and his performance in school. However, his

understanding of the requirements of becoming a gamer, such as knowing computer software programming, and even understanding math for coding, are apparent: "My dream job is probably a gaming engineer, maybe a computer engineer…. I would like to be one of those but it is not very clear in my head yet" (Jo Individual Interview, 1/5/2017). Jo understands what he needs to do in school to accomplish his long-term goal, namely doing well enough to be admitted to college, staying out of trouble, and not necessarily striving for popularity while in school:

> The popular kids… they are normally the ones who the girls find either attractive or-- In order to get popular in my school, you have to be a bad kid. You know why. It's because the more crap stuff you do in school, the more attention you gain. It's essentially all for attention. If you just stay in your friend group and you just go out of your friend group, that's how you get popular. To do that, you do not have to do bad things. While they might be popular, they do not have a good reputation with the teachers or with the kids.
>
> (Jo Individual Interview 1/5/2017)

The motivations that drive him in school are not founded in others' opinions of him; rather, a sense of self-satisfaction is wholly apparent in the ways he voices his personal opinions. Jo does not shy away from voicing who he is as a gamer and a future game engineer; however, he also prides himself in his religious identity, a facet that strengthens his identity construct.

Jo as Muslim

Throughout the focus group and individual interviews, Jo articulated his connection towards his Islamic identity and vowed to represent his beliefs if

questioned. As stated earlier, Jo does not delve into discussions on religious convictions or identity, especially with his friend group: "I'm very cool about it. People ask me but I don't really talk about my religion. I just say I'm a Muslim and then I just shut up" (Jo Individual Interview, 12/5/2017). Despite the ways in which others may view him as a White American kid, his Muslim-sounding name, Palestinian heritage, and conviction towards his Islamic faith may contradict a homogenous American identity.

When I was growing up, I remember attending a predominately White school where I was the only Muslim student in the entire school. I waivered in my religious commitment and the ways I spoke about my religious commitment in school, especially in elementary school. Often, nominal things like the pepperoni toppings on pizza or my fasting during Ramadan would make me feel othered and obscure when surrounded by American normality. In Jo's case, he has experienced similar contradictions in how he represents himself as a Muslim at school. We talked about feeling different in school and he talked about not being able to eat bacon:

> Everyone talks about bacon. They think bacon is fantastic, like how it's a godly food. I wonder what bacon tastes like. Turkey bacon is supposed to be good but that's the closest we get to. Have you ever eaten pork-- why am I asking you questions? I've eaten pork one time by accident. So, the time I ate it, we had a party and there was a bunch of stuff. There was rice and meat, so I put it on my plate. I carried on and I was like, "Mmm, this meat tastes different. Yeah, different and unusual." I told my friend and I was like, "Is this pork?" And he was like, "Oh, yeah." And I was like, "I thought I was

screwed." I was like, "Oh my God. I ate pork." (Jo Individual Interview 1/5/2017)

Although this may seem nominal on the surface, his inability to share experiences with his peers brings forth questions as he grows in his identity constructs. Jo's future religious and cultural identity pathways are grounded in parental guidance and convictions. During my interview with Jo's mother, she talked about her journey to Islam, stating that she was drawn to the faith and the practical components of the faith after she met her husband. Since marrying Jo's father, Susanna has strived to maintain this religious tradition in her home. During our interview, she specifically talked about expectations for both the boys and the girls in the home:

> I think [Islam] also has some influence… I mean, consciously because I'm not
> from the Arab culture myself. I'm a Muslim convert; so, in that sense, I
> always felt like the rules are the same for both girls and boys in terms of
> religion. (Jo Parent Interview 1/5/2017)

Although Jo's mother presents a very modernist Islamic perspective on the equality between boys and girls, my conversations with Jo's father were reminiscent of conversations with my own father. Jo's father, like my own, had very traditionalist perspectives and views. Per Jo's mother, it is expected that Jo's two sisters will marry Palestinian Muslim suitors. Likewise, one of Jo's sisters worked long and hard to convince her father to let her attend a university away from home. Jo's father does not seem to have the same requirements for his sons, purporting traditionalist Arab masculine versus feminist views, which is in stark contrast to Jo's mother who, in her children's accord, guides the home.

Othering of Jo

Jo navigates his own cultural and religious self-perceptions through the eyes of others and how they view him. He vacillates between feeling an immense push to be part of the dominant narrative and standing apart from it simultaneously. In Jo's school and surrounding communities, he feels different despite his fair skin, piercing blue eyes, and blond hair. In his neighborhood, Jo noted moments when he felt discomfort regardless of his phenotypical characteristics, particularly during the 2016 presidential election cycle:

> I feel a little bit uncomfortable when I'm near Trump supporters because I know they are Trump supporters. It's not like I'm calling all Trump supporters racist or anything. He talks a lot of shit about Muslims and stuff. I don't try to tell them my religion. (Jo Individual Interview, 12/5/2016)

Jo expressed concern about uncovering his truth around those who voice ideological hatred against persons of Muslim faith. His perspective is attuned to the gradual decline of his privilege, overshadowed by oppression and resulting in othering. Shortly after the election, we met again and had a deeper conversation about how he would approach being questioned on his faith: "I would hide it. I'd definitely hide it because I wouldn't want to go to one of those camps-- I wouldn't want to go to one of those" (Jo Individual Interview, 1/5/2017). His fear is not unwarranted; it is grounded in his experiences as well as his understanding of power and oppression. He considered how these behaviors impact the choices he makes surrounding identity.

Jo spoke about how others perceive him based on his name and his corresponding Palestinian cultural denotation. As with the other participants in the

study, both teachers and students alike find it difficult to pronounce his name. For Jo, he seems to take this in stride: "Yeah, some people make fun of my last name. I'm totally cool with it. They will say, 'Hello, the Musa. You're like a moose.' It's funny; a lot of people give me nicknames" (Jo Individual Interview, 1/5/2017). His perceptions of how others see him appear platonic, but it seems that Jo's tendency to retreat into his world of video games instead of befriending the students who other him is a façade. In discussions with Jo's elder sisters, their Arab identities are clearly apparent; they feel a connection to the culture and pride in describing this connection to their non-Arab friends. Possibly because he did not attend an Islamic school or parental emphasis on adherence to cultural norms had not been thoroughly applied, Jo does not share his sisters' beliefs when discussing his preferred group of friends:

> I want to be real honest here. I think I feel more comfortable with non-Arabs. Here is my reason: I am not an Arab. Like I told you, I am not *really* that Arab. It would be kind of awkward. When I first met [Sef], it was kind of awkward for me but when I meet someone like that from my school, I'm used to it because I'm raised in these white schools and I don't have much of an Arab background. I feel like I would fit in more with the other kids. (Jo Individual Interview, 1/5/2017)

This powerful proclamation asserts that Jo has decided not to be othered; rather, he chooses to exist in limbo where he addresses issues of contention regarding his dominant status on a case-by-case basis. Jo's decision to continue in the path of negotiating his cultural identity is contingent upon how he chooses to represent himself as he grows in his ethnic identity constructs. Jo's Muslim identity will also

have an influence on his perceptions of privilege and oppression; as he mentioned earlier, "He is Muslim" (Jo, Focus Group, 12/5/2016).

Jo as Muslim Male

Jo's family is unique. His mother is currently the primary breadwinner and is responsible for the upkeep of the home as well. When we discussed the role of head of the home, Jo did not hesitate in discussing his mother, "She is one that works and she is the one that makes all the money. She's also responsible for the [home] duties, I guess, and my dad… so, both of my parents" (Jo Individual Interview, 1/5/2017). Also unique to Jo's home is the fact that his mother's expectations of her children are equitable. She even spoke of having higher standards for her daughters so they wouldn't fall into the trap of misconceptions of gender of Arab Muslim girls:

> I think we had higher expectations for the girls. I think it's more because they were the older ones and, when the boys came along, it became more-- As long as they are doing okay-- It's not critical to get A's [laughter]… If you do not get an A, it's not a big deal. Maybe for the girls… It's like, "Why didn't you get like 100? What happened?" In that sense, I can see that they had higher academic expectations. (Jo Parent Interview, 1/10/2017).

Jo's own personal expectations of achievement in schooling are rooted in simple completion; it just needs to get done rather than strive for the A's. This does not necessarily explicate how gendered expectations impact Jo's achievement or performance but does shed light on how the home environment grounds expectations of girls and boys, which equally impacts the ways in which he views the roles of women. Jo's views on his mother's role in the home are contemporary, especially for

Muslim Arab homes. This will serve as a protective mechanism when faced with the stereotypes of Arab Muslim men. Jo also understands the views that others have of traditionalist Muslim men. He states in regards to traits of Muslim Arab men, that they are:

> Sometimes aggressive -- some are, some aren't. That's essentially what life is. Some people are aggressive. Some people are one thing and others aren't. So, maybe they think they are non-emotional also. They probably think they are risk-takers and they are suicide bombers and stuff…. Okay." (Jo Individual Interview, 1/5/2017)

When we spoke about how he developed these perceptions, specifically in regards to the non-emotional characteristics, he identified how he viewed his father and the expectations that his father has of him and his brother. Jo believes that his dad does not show emotion. Taking a cue from this perspective, Jo believes in self-reliance:

> No one is going to hold your hand in the future. You got to do it all by yourself. That's really about it, to be honest. You know, everyone obviously needs logic. You have to be logical. You got to be smart. But maybe you should also be independent in the future. You have to be independent in the future. (Jo Individual Interview 1/5/2017)

Jo sees logic and independence as predominant and positive attributes of masculinity. The characteristic of aggression which is often associated with Arab Muslim men is not desirable and he seems to avoid discussions around the validity of that stereotype. He speaks of the positive attributes – logic and independence -- as essential in forging a future life with a future family. Although he did not discuss his deep-seeded desire

137

to care for his future family as did the other participants, his ability to foreshadow what he needs to attain his career goals – including logic and independence -- equip him to be able to ascertain these future goals.

Of all my participants, Jo was the most complicated in terms of analyzing how he sees his identity as it relates to the multiple layers of himself. He considers himself a Muslim boy, a typical American boy, and an infrequent Arab because of his lack of linguistic capital; however, Jo is steadfast in his Arab identity when feeling othered. He is empowered by his ability to be recognized as unique but simultaneously oppressed by these identifiers as he sees the erroneous disadvantages of belonging. With less influence of his Arab culture around him, including the departure of this siblings and being surrounded by non-Arab friends at a predominately White school, he is shifting into a more homogenous albeit fabricated identity. As a young boy, Jo struggled with feeling like an outsider early on in his academic pursuits. Consequently, as a young adult, he retreats into a world of video games and lives within that realm of fantasy to thwart expectations and to avoid letting his family and the people around him down.

Chapter 7: *Timothy the Pilot*
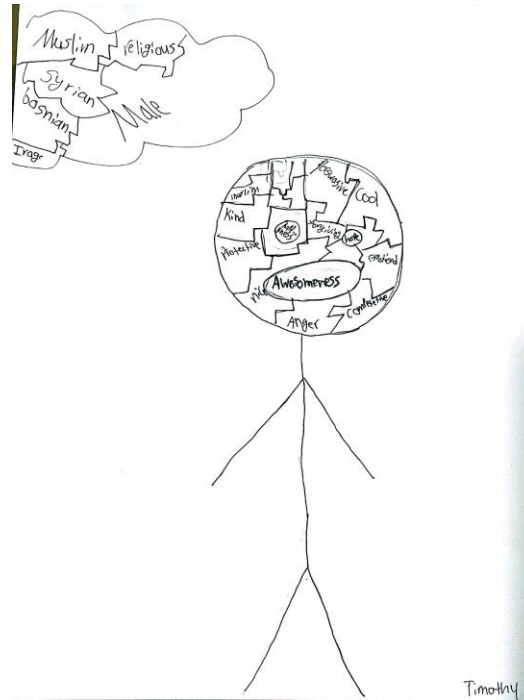
Figure 9. Timothy's identity Map.

"In this identity map, I choose to draw the words that are part of how me. I choose a variety of descriptive words including: Persuasive, cool, emotional, angry, nice, protective, kind forgiving, Muslim. In the left above my head are other pieces of my identity that make the descriptions a little clearer. These include: Muslim, religious, Syrian, male, Bosnian, Iraqi. If I were a female, the way I look at the world would be different" (Timothy Individual Interview, 1/5/2017).

I first met Timothy during the focus group held at Sef's house. He and Zach arrived together as they did during the other interviews. Both boys have regular interactions outside of the school they attend together; they play at each other's houses, participate on similar sports teams, and meet during family functions. Both boys are one of few Arab Muslim students at their respective middle schools which resulted in a "pairing up" by their parents; they now seem to be genuine friends. Dressed in jeans, a sweater hoodie, and dark-rimmed sports glasses, Timothy presented initially as the preeminently awkward teen. A tall and lanky boy, Timothy spoke with a slight lisp as his braces made it difficult to speak but not difficult enough to prevent him from participating. For his individual interviews, Timothy arrived in

his sports gear and elaborated on his soccer obsession, which he also discussed as a possible career choice. During the focus group, however, I did notice a unique facet of Timothy's sense of style: his high-taper fade haircut with extensive designs. The more time I spent with Timothy, the more I noticed that he wasn't the awkward teen I'd preconceived; rather, he was fun and interesting.

I arrived at Timothy's home for the final interview and parent interview. It was snowing that morning and their house, in a quaint townhouse community right next to the middle school. I took my boots off, as they were covered in snow, but I doubted Timothy's very easygoing dad would have made me remove them. When I walked upstairs, my eyes were immediately drawn to the many cultural artifacts throughout their home -- symbolic of ties to both Timothy's Bosnian and Syrian heritages. For example, something you would likely find in most Arab and Muslim homes is some piece of Qur'anic verse on the wall; in Timothy's home, this Islamic scripture decorated the walls and further indicated the family's connection to the religion. I sat on the dining room table with Timothy during the interviews and subsequent drawing activities while Timothy's father sat close by in the living room or kitchen. Timothy's model airplane collection was scattered throughout the living room, reminding me of his obsession with piloting and airplanes.

When I asked him about his earliest memories, Timothy spoke about a specific scenario where he got in trouble when he hid from teachers to secure a safe space during inclement weather.

I don't know my age but I remember there was really bad weather at my school; all the windows were broken and all that. I remember that I hid in the

kitchen in the cabinet and they were all looking for me while I was in the

cabinet the whole time (Timothy Individual Interview, 1/5/2017).

This scenario didn't necessarily match with his persona and the impression he had

given me of what kind of kid he was. Throughout my meetings with Timothy, his

father spoke of his son as a good kid who didn't get into trouble: "I don't speak with

my son's principals or vice principals about anything other than academics. he's a

good boy" (Timothy Parent Interview, 1/5/2017). His father related many of the

behaviors he did as a child to demonstrate that Timothy behaved in quite the opposite

way. His good behavior also gave Timothy's father trust, which gave Timothy free

reign to explore his surroundings and, thus, his identity. His father encouraged

Timothy to attend social functions at school and partake in out-of-school functions

like dances:

> If he would like to go, it's up to him, honestly. He's like Liyam [his sister]. I
>
> told him, "If you want to, you can but if you don't want to...." I want him to
>
> be surrounded by friends. I know where it is with the right people. I would
>
> like to know his friends. I do know the majority of them; all of them, actually
>
> (Timothy Parent Interview, 1/5/2017).

Giving him free reign to explore his identity outside of the home presented a level of

complexity that showed a clear generational mindset shift.

Timothy's current public school has a varied constituency, providing

opportunities for multiple categories of identities to flourish. Timothy's middle

school, which is the same as Zach's, (Table 4) includes 13% of students who

considered economically disadvantaged and 12% of students fitting within the

141

category of English language learners. His middle school is diverse but, per

Timothy's perspective, lacked a large Arab and Muslim population. He did mention

that there was a larger, more visible Asian population which he believed his teachers

would often lump Arabs, including himself and Zach, into.

Adding to facets which allowed Timothy to explore his identity, he presents as

phenotypically White. His fair complexion and light brownish-blond hair cause many

outsiders assuming he is a White American teenager. When others ask about his

ethnicity, religion, and culture, he verbally articulates his differences and does not

hesitate to speak when asked a question or opinion specifically about his Muslim

faith. What struck me was his ability to pronounce Arabic words such as *Qur'an* and

haram (forbidden) with ease even though his father was Bosnian and his mother does

not live with him. At one point during our meeting, Timothy made an important

distinction between how he viewed ethnicity and culture:

> I think ethnicity is basically on where you are from, what makes you you;
>
> culture is what you get traits from. Like, you get a specific taste for certain
>
> foods like *tabbouleh*[7] or *kofta*[8], something like that. (Timothy Interview
>
> 1/5/2017)

The cultural characteristics that Timothy adopted from both his father and mother are

tangible. He can clearly articulate to others what it meant to be Muslim, Arab, and

Bosnian. His cultural knowledge also forced me to reconsider how I approached other

participants during interviews and dispel my preconceptions that the participants

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[7] *Taboulleh:* An Arab salad.
[8] *Kofta*: An Egyptian beef dish.

would be fully Americanized based on country of birth and integration within the U.S. public school system.

Also, atypical in the Arab culture is Timothy's parental environment. He is the only participant whose parents were no longer together; he presently resides with his father and sister. Divorce is almost unheard of in Arabic culture and even considered taboo but Timothy's family status has not impacted his levels of confidence around his intersectional identity markers. Although he spoke of his mother during the interview, she did not participate in the parent interview; she does not see them as often as their father. During one of the interviews, Timothy said his mother was purchasing a home close by so she could spend more time with Timothy and his sister. The impact of Timothy's mother on his self-identity, namely his association with his Arab heritage and culture, signified the importance she plays in these constructs.

Timothy sees himself as an average student despite his parents' academic expectations of him. According to Timothy's father, he could be an "A" to "B" student when he puts forth the effort. In regard to his academic expectations of his son that he desires his son to put the effort forth and considers this more relevant than grades, Timothy's father stated:

> I don't care about grades, honestly. That's not to me that you 'have to' have "A". I'm not going to punish you or anything like that. I don't care as long as he tries; he gets a "B" or "C," whatever but he tried. What I don't like is when he will not even try, or "I got a C for this" or whatever. He doesn't-- He's really a good student. He's an honest student, so it's really good but if-- He

will come and say, "Oh, I didn't do anything, I didn't want to blah, blah, blah." That's what's more [of a problem] for me. If you're trying, you'll get a better grade. (Timothy Parent Interview, 1/5/17)

When asked the same question about his definition of what he believes is the most important facet of his schooling success, Timothy said his mother had more stringent and more numerically-grounded expectations than his father around his academic success.

I feel good about my education, yeah. My sister and I have to work really hard and we are not allowed to get "B's". My dad doesn't really have high expectations but my mom does. My dad is like-- I don't know about my dad but my mom always pushes me." (Timothy Individual Interview 11/22/16)

The differences in expectations did not necessarily have an impact on how Timothy conceptualized success or what it meant to be a successful student. He is grounded in the reality that he needed to be successful in school to achieve his long-term goals. Timothy didn't necessary tout many friends but had a good solid core of friends. He spoke about their interactions at the lunch table:

One day, we had to sit on our specific class – "A" day -- so we have to sit in a specific class. On "B" day, you can sit wherever you want. So, "A" day, I have to sit with Mr. Dowson's history class. I usually sit where all the boys are at the end and we just talk. On B-day, I sit with Darren and some other people. We just talk about how things are doing. The last lunchtime was about me because I talked about me and how I cracked my head open when a wardrobe fell on me. (Timothy Interview 1/5/2017)

At his father's insistence, Timothy has also become close to Zach, one of the only other Arab boys at his school. Often, they hang out together at school because Timothy lives closer to the school. They also spend time together during religious celebrations and at Friday prayer when there is no school. They love to play video games together, as well as talk about and play soccer when it's warm outside. Timothy did make it a point, however, to say that Zach is one of the cooler kids at school and he tries to lift his status by hanging out with him and his friends. Like many other boys his age, he loves soccer and considers himself a good player.

Timothy identifies as multi-ethnic, his mother originating from Syria and his father from Bosnia. At one point, Timothy stated that his mother used to wear a *hijab* and has since removed it. I'm quite familiar with this fluid religious conception, as my mother went through phases of wearing the *hijab* after performing *Hajj*[9] and subsequently stopped wearing the *hijab* with her increasing age. Both Timothy's father and mother have had both cultural and religious impacts on his shifting ideologies and the pathways to identity construct. As mentioned, Timothy's father made attempts to introduce and strengthen religion in the home, such as fasting during Ramadan and taking Timothy to Friday prayer when school was off. Timothy also spoke about his visits to Syria with his mother and knew some of the family that remained. Overall, the ways in which Timothy experienced his family and the differing facets of his upbringing all worked together to guide some of the ways he constructed his intersecting identities. Of note is Timothy's steadfast perserverence in denoting his future career choices through the imagery of flying planes, quite literally transporting himself to another world.

9 *Hajj*: pilgrimage to Mecca

Timothy the Pilot

Timothy has always dreamed of being a pilot. His career choice was undisputable when I asked him, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" During the first individual interview, he spoke in detail about his extensive model airplane collection and his new growing collection of remote control planes. This recreational facet of Timothy's life served as a reminder of his privilege based on his career-motivating factors and his resolve for the career dream to become a reality. Timothy initially began thinking about his career dream as simply the pilot. During our first meeting, he spoke of his desire to one day be a commercial pilot: "I want to be a real pilot -- not a cargo pilot but a passenger pilot. I would go for an A380…. Yeah, a nice big plane" (Timothy Individual Interview, 1/5/2017). After meeting for the second time, he changed his career choice based on his realization that decisions in life should be centered on practicality -- something he had heard consistently from family, friends, and educators in the school. In the end, he decided that he would draw four dream careers with the understanding they would be ranked per the first choice to the fourth choice (Figure 10). In all four images, Timothy is the

main subject with supporting subjects appearing in the pilot, surgeon and

soccer player images:

Here are my dream careers! I have drawn four of them because I want to make

sure that I have a backup in case my original plan doesn't work. The first

choice is what I would love to do: a pilot! I have always wanted to be a pilot
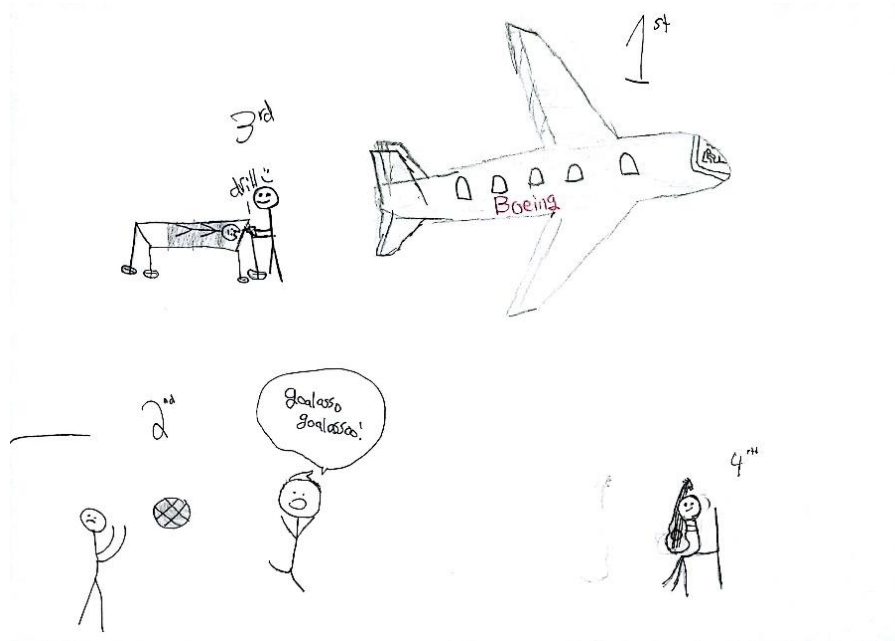
Figure 10. Timothy's career dream.

and I own four model planes right now that I fly all the time. Pilots are

respected and I think they make good money. It's important to make money to

support yourself and family. I would like to fly people, maybe even in a

Boeing 747. Those things are huge. My second career dream is a soccer

player. I'm pretty good! My sister and I go to soccer and my father works with

us on agility and speed. Who knows; maybe I'll be a famous soccer player one

day. My third career dream is a surgeon. I am smart enough to do this. I'm

just not sure because I don't really like blood or looking at blood. Finally, if

147

all else fails, I'll be a guitar player. I can play okay right now but, if I get

better, that's a possibility. (Timothy Individual Interview 1/5/17)

Since Timothy decided to be pragmatic and have alternative options for his

future career choices, he laid out several workspaces. In his first choice, the pilot, he

appears as the sole pilot flying in the cockpit of the airplane. His rendering of the

airplane shows an understanding of the mechanisms of an airplane. In the second

career choice, soccer player, Timothy shows himself scoring a goal on the field and

being cheered on by a fan. In the third image, Timothy is a surgeon in an operating

room with a drill in his hand performing brain surgery. The image contains a surgical

table with a patient as well as a one-word description of what is happening:

"GOALSSSS". The final image is of Timothy as a guitar player performing in front

of an audience. He is playing *Oud,* an Arabic guitar -- an instrument that he has in his

home.

His second-choice careers -- soccer player, surgeon, and musician were -- all

beyond the realm of what he truly believed to be possible but he talked about those

choices as dreams and hopes:

Since this is a career dream activity, I may as well include some dreams of

mine. I would love to be a surgeon because I would be able to afford whatever

I wanted. A musician would be famous and everyone would adore him, just a

like a soccer player. I'm not even sure if I could do any of those things but I

would love to try any of them. (Timothy Interview, 1/5/17)

While Timothy was clear in his desire to be a pilot, his alternative career

choices showed a confidence in and insistence on stability for the future. As he

played both soccer and guitar recreationally, his everyday activities lent to this archetypal teenage fantasy. He had dreams far beyond what was considered commonplace, expanding on the quintessential teen persona. On the other hand, his inability to choose one specific career was also situated in his indecisive persona, ensuring that there will always be options if one fails. He mentioned that, if you go into his garage, there were a variety of different sports equipment that remained untouched for the most part. This deliberate personality was also evident when he delved into his Muslim identity, specifically during the focus groups when I encountered him for the first time.

Timothy as Muslim

After discussing whether his religious associations differentiate Timothy, he clearly articulated his religious identity as a Muslim and had no hesitation with this association. Timothy recognized this facet as one that distinguishes him from his American friends, a crucial part of his identity construct. He simultaneously expressed solidarity with his friends based on shared interests even though he views himself as Muslim: "I feel like I blend in with everyone else because I'm no different than them. I just have a different religion we practice but, other than that, I'm the same." (Timothy Individual Interview, 1/5/2017)

When I asked about his family's religious convictions, Timothy's father confessed to attempting to help his children maintain their Muslim religious identity, stating that "both kids have attempted to fast during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan and attend prayers during Muslim religious holidays." Ironically, when discussing religion with Timothy, this facet of his identity presented as a preeminent

characteristic. During the focus group, Timothy expressed his religious convictions and spoke of how he approached others who questioned his faith. Partially, this persistence in identifying his faith served as an indicator of his convictions when faced with challenges of his morality.

For his elementary school years, Timothy attended a conservative Islamic private school twenty miles away. He was surrounded by Muslims with a curriculum centered around the teachings of Islam, daily prayers, and classes which included learning *Hadith*[10]. His father cited proximity to their home and finances as the predominant reason for pulling both Timothy and his sister Liyam out of the Islamic School.

> First of all, Liyam was out [there], so he was out [there]. She was in public and everything; it was so much easier. You have to drive down, you have to come back and all that stuff…. It was really tough. This way, he walks to school [nearby]. She takes the bus, so it's much more convenient for me…. (Timothy Parent Interview 1/5/2017)

The impact of the Islamic school on Timothy was less invasive, as he left prior to the completion of middle school and only discussed faint details when he recalled it. He later mentioned that he did not recall many of the differences because he was unhappy there and just wanted to "get out of that place and attend a normal school" (Timothy Individual Interview, 1/5/2017). His conceptions of what was normal were based on conversations he had had with friends in his new neighborhood about what middle school was like. The impact on his sister, however, was more obvious as she adopted a shy, quiet demeanor that their father hoped she would grow

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[10] *Hadith*: Stories of the prophet.

150

out of in public school. When asked about his experiences in private Islamic school, Timothy did speak of the stark contrast between the students around him in Islamic school versus those in public schools:

> I attended [Islamic school] until this year. This year is different but at [the Islamic school] they teach Islamic studies and all that stuff. So, it's new how everyone is saying all that stuff [about Muslims] now. My sister is in high school. She is taking religion class and they are on an Arab unit and the Muslim unit. Everyone looks at her and says that Arabs didn't look like that because they think they should look another way – Muslims being terrorists not being people. My sister is not defending; she is learning. She knows everyone else is surprised by how Muslims are supposed to act versus how terrorists act. (Timothy Individual Interview, 11/22/16)

Othering of Timothy

Timothy is often reminded that he is different based on his religious views, shifting the power from him to those who surround him: "People look at me differently after I tell them. When you say you're Muslim, they just look at you differently, thinking that you're weird or something different" (Timothy Individual Interview, 11/22/16). On the other end of the spectrum, Timothy talked about his appearance as an important function of his attempt to garner popularity and feel like he belongs to the dominant group. Although he considers his good friends more important than status, he desires to fit in with the popular group. To him, the kids at school whom he considers to the be the "more popular kids" are Christian. This is an

151

important distinction as he garners power through becoming embedded in the world of the other, almost disguising his own othered status. To improve his status, he attempts to "tag along" with those kids:

> Well, I think like most of [the popular kids] are Christian and they are popular; there is one kid named Darren who is Mormon. So, when all the popular people go over there, I walk with them in the back so it brings up to my status. What is important to me is good friends, not people who don't know how to help someone else but someone who could help me. (Timothy Individual Interview 1/5/17)

Stories of a teacher's consistent inability to pronounce Timothy's name resonated in his head; this teacher's mispronunciations impacts how he presents his name in social climates. Timothy chose to shift the syllable from the beginning of his name to the ending syllable when the school year began. Ironically, the individuals responsible for some of the instances of Arab stereotyping that Timothy experienced in school were other minority students as well:

> I recall feeling uncomfortable about being Muslim in school when they keep on saying "Allahu Akbar." They don't say it to me; they just say it out loud. It happens all the time. like three times a day. (Timothy Interview 12/15/2017)

He often feels awkward and disengaged when these scenarios occur; sometimes, these instances have motivated Timothy to disguise his Arab Muslim identity. These scenarios have impacted the ways that Timothy identifies himself to others and how others have perceived him; however, when forced with a choice, he has held steadfast to his confident association with his Muslim identity.

Timothy as Arab Muslim Male

A unique facet to how Timothy constructs his identity is his family environment. When asked to identify the head of household, Timothy clearly articulated, "the male elder," which was his father. This articulation of antiquated gender norms may have resulted from his parents no longer being together and the influences that Timothy experienced daily. Ironically, the very same characteristics Timothy thinks are necessary for manhood -- confidence and competitiveness -- are apparent in his father's desires for his sister. Timothy's father expressed a desire for his daughter to adopt characteristics of confidence and toughness. His interpretations of how his son and daughter should perform their gender were not typical of the Arab culture and Muslim religion. Admittedly, Timothy's father even saw himself in his religious convictions as moderate: "I'm not going to say I'm extremely religious or something like that. I think I consider myself more like a moderate Muslim" (Timothy Parent Interview, 1/5/2017).

Timothy positioned his future goals around his own interpretations of the gendered roles of pilots as competitive, confident, and highly respected, all characteristics he believed were necessary components of masculinity. He discussed that the salary could provide a comfortable life for him and his potential future family. According to Timothy, these characteristics were necessary for manhood: "My name actually is like a sheath for swords, so it kind of means protector" (Timothy Individual Interview, 11/22/16). Timothy's interpretation of masculinity is grounded in his views of Muslim and Arab culture; his name literally means a protector. Additionally, thinking about how his future career will have a direct impact

153

on his future family displays his thinking around being a father figure. In discussing potential career choices and future hopes for his sons, Timothy's father talked about the type of man he would like to see his son become: 'I just want him to be a good person, a good human being. I would love him to finish college and have a good career and a family" (Timothy Parent Interview 1/5/2017).

Although his father has a desire for him to be successful by going to college and having a family, his insistence on Timothy being a good human being resonated as the major facet of how he defined success. Looking at the impact of Timothy's primary career choice on the conceptions that he has his own identity, he sees and values the importance of security and his future role as a father figure much like his own father.

Timothy is complex. He is phenotypically White and simultaneously presents himself as a Muslim with both Syrian and Bosnian cultural associations. These identity functions work in unison and intersect to provide a multidimensional perspective on how Timothy approaches scenarios such as the stereotypes he often experiences. With these dimensions, it is also necessary to look at how he represents himself as a Muslim male; his associations with being a protector and a role model help him thwart oppressive scenarios. He is empowered by his Arab Muslim identity but struggles with how and when to activate it for fear of being typecast as an outsider even further.

Chapter 8: Cross-Case Analysis of Themes

The preceding four chapters provided an overview of each of the four participants personal narratives. Focus was given to the overarching research question exploring how: *Key intersecting social classifications, specifically race, gender, culture, and religion inform Arab American school boys' identity perceptions.* The following sub-questions will be addressed throughout my analysis, including:

- How do these boys define success and achievement in relation to schooling?

- How have middle school Arab American boys experienced cultural bias/or how have they perceived cultural bias?

- To what extent do Arab American boys seek out resources (community, mosques, family, religion), through their social networks?

- How have they navigated schooling as framed by these experiences of cultural bias?

Although each students' individual narrative is specifically driven by their individual interpretations of culture, religion, schooling experiences, career aspirations, and views of masculinity, there are commonalities amongst participants. Four major themes surfaced across the research: *religion, culture, masculinity,* and *race*. I will examine each of the themes and corresponding questions with a lens on addressing how the participants perceived their identities as framed by experiences of power and oppression; namely, I will look at the social institutions that have fabricated the cultural and racial underpinnings of Arab Muslims in America looking at how the boys perceived their intersecting identities (Collins, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989; Phelan, 1991). Embedded within this analysis are glimpses of how social and

155

cultural capital theory (Yosso, 2005; Zhou & Bankston, 1994) served as a protective mechanism against experiences with bias for each of the participants.

Prior to addressing these narratives and the major themes that surfaced from the cross-case analysis of these narratives it is important to situated my place in this process. My self-reflexivity was discussed briefly in Chapter 3 where discussion centered around how my nuanced identities had impact on the intake of the stories as well as the ways in which I assigned identities to each of the participants. I found myself often having to shift my hats to address the clear power differential in the differing spaces. For example, when working with parents it was clear they saw me as an expert in helping their boys understand their perceptions of self. It was necessary for me to be clear that in my research, my role remained to tell authentic stories of the participants and make legitimate attempts not to sway their opinions of self. The parents framing of their sons because a guiding narrative, but not the sole indicator on how these boys perceived their identities. For example, in interviews conducted with the parents I asked how they perceived how their racial, cultural and religious identities intersect. This data was important as the parents painted a narrative of proper behavior around their sons. Additionally, when I met individually with the boys I was clear that they were not required to do this and I asked them to talk about why they did want to do this. The participants seemed genuinely interested in seeing what their friends had to say and how they compared to their friends. Additionally, the participants were also excited to be "part of this study" and often spoke of how cool it would be to be part of a book.

My outsider status also presented a set of difficulties when interviewing these participants. At one-point Sef began discussing his indiscretions as it relates to girls and dating, but stopped short because of a perceived comfort level and gendered environment. Additionally, during my analysis of the transcripts my inclination was to search for themes as they related to the questions. This initially impacted my findings limiting the codes to those which I could see. What provided clarity and multiple perspectives was a secondary analysis of my findings and data. The duplicative codes were clear, but delving deeper surfaced discoveries around racial identities and outsider status.

Religion

My Muslim Identity

During the focus group and first interactions with the four participants, the conversation centered around conceptions of self. Although each participant responded with unique configurations of cultural and racial definitions, all participants were adamant about their religious obligations and perceived religion as a major component of their individual identities. While each participant varied in the levels of Islamic conviction, all four participants noted religion in the initial description of their identity:

Interviewer: If someone asks you what you are, what do you guys say?

Sef: Muslim

Jo: Muslim

Interviewer: Okay. What about you? What's your name?

Timothy: Timothy. Muslim first.

Zach: Well, I say I'm… Muslim as a religion and then I say I'm American.

This collective response was certainly outside the purview of what I expected from this study. Based on previous findings and each of the parents bluntly saying their sons would rather present as typical American boys, their expressions of identity were impactful. The parents of each of the four participants professed liberal ideologies and who spoke of their own religious convictions as wavering and weak. As an example, Sef's mother felt an internal conflict with her varied approach to teaching her children about the tenants of Islam and even stated her desire to do better:

> We can't compare our community back in London, Ontario, with all the strong Arab community ties. So we started going to the Islamic Center, which is 20 minutes away… It's a lot of Pakistani & Afghani people, so it's a very different culture. The way you pronounce things is different. Sef came back home with stories of death and snakes in the grave and I was like, "What?" I learned to fear a lot of the religion and I said I'm not going to do this with my kids. I pulled him out and I said, "I'm not going to do this." And I started doing it [myself]. Rather than having a little bit of tutoring at home, Sef's dad did it. They hated it. [Sef's dad] was stressing out. I think he would have started screaming and shouting. Then we stopped and said, "No more." I got them a tutor when we were in Palestine about three years ago but that was for learning Arabic; I thought Arabic was going to be important. We kind of let it go. I don't know religion a little bit (Sef, Parent Interview 1/5/2017).

Personal convictions impacted Sef's mother and have resulted in Sef's conceptions of identity being laden with religious overtones. In fact, several times during the interviews and in the focus group, Sef merged his understanding of being Muslim with his cultural identities. At one point during the conversation, Sef's mother stated, "Sef, Islam, and Arab are not the same thing;" Sef disagreed, stating, "Everyone else sees it as the same thing." Timothy also merged his cultural and religious identity perceptions:

> *Timothy*: There is a lot of Arab customs like we have in common.
>
> *Interviewer:* Okay, like what?
>
> *Timothy:* Like the stuff we do normally, like we pray just Muslims, all and we also have like the same kind of Arab food like you would have.

Timothy and Sef's conceptions of their Muslim identities were imbedded deeply in their self-perception. They experienced their cultural and religious identities simultaneously. This also may be a result of the ways in which they have seen interpretations of Arabs and Muslims in society. Often, identities that intersect have an oppositional dynamic. According to Benet-Martinez, Leu and Lee (2002), "Although some bi-culturals perceive their cultural identities as compatible and complementary, others tend to describe them as oppositional and contradictory" (p. 493). For Christian Arabs, who make up the larger percentage of Arabs in the United States, the misaligned association with Islam results from a societal blurring of Arab culture with the Islamic faith and leads to experiences with an oppressive state. For Sef and Timothy, however, their experiences being Arab and Muslim are not

159

synonymous; rather, their identities intersect and create an oppositional dynamic based on their own identity experiences.

While Sef and Timothy displayed a tendency to amalgamate religion and culture, the other participants stated varying levels of comfort around sharing their religious associations. At the onset of the interviews and during focus groups, all four participants would defend Islam if questioned and would not back down if put in a situation where they would be forced to choose Islam over other components of their identities. After the 2016 elections and during the second interviews, participants did not necessary alter their perspectives but fear of talking openly about their Muslim faith was apparent. After Trump was elected president, Jo stated that he would consider hiding his Muslim faith if he was faced with the decision of an internment camp over his faith: "I'd definitely hide it because I wouldn't want to go in one of those." (Jo Individual Interview, 1/5/2017) While Jo would hide his faith when faced with peril as a result of his religious convictions, Zach noted that religious associations are fluid:

> I think [identities] change. I think what you are would change and would have a greater impact on what [outsiders] think about you. If you said you were a Muslim, they would maybe stereotype you or something like that depending on where you are. (Zach Individual Interview, 12/15/2017)

This fear was palpable when Sef noted his fears of what a Trump America could look like for Muslims:

> But Trump won't make a difference at all. He will just make everything worse. The Muslims in those Middle Eastern areas will get even more mad

and start a huge war with Trump. If Trump gets elected, he will start a huge

war. Obama now has peace with the Middle East, kind of; Trump will totally

destruct that with the Middle East. (Sef, Focus Group, 9/27/2016)

How each boy defined their religious identities denoted that they have perceived their

identities as multifaced. In their minds, this also gave rise to negative and binary

perceptions of the "right" versus the "wrong" religion.

Perceptions of Religion

Through the interviews, the four participants spoke of their congruence with

the ISIS Muslim stereotype and spoke of instances when they had to reiterate that

they were not ISIS or some restatement of a detrimental view of Muslims. This

seemed to be a common concern that the participants experienced: having to defend

that they are not the enemy. The media has long represented and encouraged

challenging societal constructs of Arab Muslims. Each of the boys can envision their

experiences with seeing how Arab Muslim men, specifically, are discussed in the

news media. From hyper-aggressive to the ever-salient terrorist persona, the 12- and

13-year-old boys in this study are confused and angered by how they are steadily

demonized. Jo mentioned his disdain for the media and the ways they ostracize

Muslim Arabs: "I hate Fox News. They do misinformation. They also get hacked all

the time." Besides Jo's perspective on how the media has represented Muslim Arabs,

societal bias in the present and the past has brought forth issues of citizenship and

corresponding power conventions. Sef stated that he has concern over the way his

father, uncles, and grandfather have been treated at border stoppings:

That's what they did to my grandpa. They did it every time. They wouldn't

stop. My dad hasn't been to Palestine in a while, but when my uncle goes he

always gets interrogated. "Who is your grandfather's father" and stuff like

that…. Crappy questions. (Sef Individual Interview, 1/5/2017)

Both Sef's father and uncle are Canadian citizens yet they experience the implications

of their Muslim names, Palestinian cultural identities, and corresponding birth

countries. Along with the ways that the media has sensationalized and garnered in a

new area of fearmongering, participants expressed their contempt for the behavior of

those who commit these transgressions. Showing differentiation between themselves

and terrorists, Jo stated:

These terrorists really need to stop; they really need to. That's what I'm

thinking. Everybody is now generalizing because it is these idiots who are

shooting down random people. Oh, I hate this so much. It ruins our name. (Jo

Individual Interview, 1/5/2017)

The participants in this study rejected categorizations as terrorists and expressed their

differences compared to the Arab Muslim terrorist throughout the individual and

focus group interviews. Other facets of the boys' lives served as mechanisms to help

them navigate these encounters with cultural bias, including cultural pride, religious

pride, and their support networks.

In their individual schooling and lived experiences, all four participants

discussed similarities in how others perceived them as terrorists because they are both

Muslim and Arab. Sef spoke obstinately about his concern about the villainization of

Muslims in video games and on television:

> In *Call of Duty* on Xbox, the Muslims are always the bad guys. In everything I see, they are always the bad guy and that is a stereotype. Muslims are always the bad guy. When you go to the theaters, they are always there: a Christian White guy and then some Muslim terrorist…. He is the bad guy. He always gets defeated. Why does the Arab guy always have to be the bad guy? Why can't this White dude from America who's Christian be the bad guy or in the mafia? (Sef Individual Interview, 1/5/2017)

Sef does not see of himself as this specific Muslim stereotype. He along with the other participants do not reduce their identities to this stereotype but realize those around them regularly do. Similarly, all four participants discussed how people perceived them differently when they introduced their Arab and Muslim identities. Jo spoke about his experiences with his classmates and their perceptions of Arab Muslims: "I bet they probably won't even know what Arab or Muslim means. They probably won't even know too much about it. If they jump the gun immediately and just say 'terrorists,' I wouldn't be surprised" (Jo Individual Interview, 12/5/2016). Zach stated that he recognized the public admonition of Muslims whenever he turns on the news:

> Well, sometimes in the news I see-- It's like when the news people go to the *masjid*[11] and talk with the Arabs and talk with the people there about how they feel and stuff, talking about them as the 'bad guys.' (Zach, Focus Group, 9/27/2017)

Although Timothy was not able to recall a specific instance where his associations could be perceived as a threat, he could gauge the popular consensus:

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[11] *Masjid*: mosque.

163

I don't remember a television show but I can only guess how they were

portrayed -- nothing nice. It was like a documentary about them that would

explain more deeply about Muslims and what they are supposed to do and

how long terrorists have been doing everything wrong. (Timothy Focus

Group, 9/27/2016)

The effect of this negative association on the participants was not immediately

evident but was impactful enough to resonate and can potentially impact all four

participants later on in life. As these comments were shared at the initial meeting with

the participants, they individually expressed their disdain for the negative

representations of Muslims in the media during later interviews.

In many cases, the participants operationalized their identities as outsiders to

prevent feeling entangled with experiences with cultural bias. During the individual

and focus group interviews, participants were asked how they perceived others'

perceptions of them as Arab Muslim boys. Each response mirrored the other:

aggressive, violent, terrorist. When discussing what their friends would say if they

were asked to describe an Arab Muslim male, Jo responded:

The first thing that comes to mind when an American, like my friend, hears

Arab is ISIS. ISIS is just-- Every time you turn on CNN, if it's not the

presidential election, it's this ISIS attack… ISIS attacks Paris. That's – I

guarantee you -- the first thing they think about. (Jo Individual Interview,

12/5/2017)

Although Jo knows and associates closely with these people, he believes they see his

pseudo-Arab Muslim identity as a terrorist. This is problematic. Besides Jo, the other

three participants also shared similar sentiments about how others perceive Arab

Muslims. In one interview with Sef, he stated that he believed "that people would

consider them to have more aggression because they're more scary-looking, more

aggressive" (Sef Individual Interview, 1/5/2017). Zach and Timothy also shared their

conceptions, citing they believe Americans see Arab Muslims as ISIS or Terrorists,

especially when they were shown stereotypical images of men who bore stark

similarities to their uncles and fathers. This perception has determinantal impacts on

these boys' own views of their own culture and race.

Experiences of Islam at School

The negative schooling experiences that each boy has encountered has pushed

each participant to their limits to thwart negative perceptions of Arab Muslim boys

and perform academically. Each of the four participants has experienced, either

directly or indirectly, adverse associations with being both Arab and Muslim in their

respective middle schools. During the focus groups, the boys collectively discussed

their school-based encounters with the negative stigmas associated with being

Muslim. Zach, Sef, and Timothy experienced microaggressions, albeit inadvertent, at

the hands of their friends around their Muslim and Arab identities. Separately, they

spoke of kids shouting "*Allahu Akbar*" while mimicking machine-gun sounds in the

hallways in a very matter-of-fact way. Each of these boys recounted numerous

instances where they were made to feel insignificant because of their Muslim religion

or Arab culture. Even Zach stated that it happened so regularly that it had become

commonplace and a joke: "It's not really to insult people but sometimes they go

"*Allah Akbar*" or something like that; they are just joking. They are not trying to insult anyone" (Zach Individual Interview, 1/5/2017). Although these do not present as immediate barriers because of the protective mechanisms they have in their current lives, these negative schooling experiences have an impact on their ethnic identity constructs. The impact manifest in the ways they choose to represent themselves. As mentioned earlier, these 12- and 13-year-old boys have experiences with negative implications simply because of their Arab Muslim culture. The term "othered" here signifies an oppression that is not mutually exclusive from other oppressors:

> Replacing additive models of oppression with interlocking ones creates possibilities for new paradigms. The significance of seeing race, class, and gender as interlocking systems of oppression is that such an approach fosters a paradigmatic shift of thinking inclusively about other oppressions, such as age, sexual orientation, religion, and ethnicity (Collins, 1990, p. 221).

Feeling othered has produced experiences with oppression among these four participants. They are in consensus that belonging to the Arab Muslim identity categories can be harmful, especially given current socio-political events. As a measure of their comfort level, the focus group produced examples that brought more questions to the participants than resolutions. At one point, a discussion ensued around President Trump's ideological underpinnings behind his war on Islam. When shows a clip of the president at a rally, the boys were appalled by what President Trump had to say about Muslims:

> I am calling for a complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our countries representatives can figure out what the hell is going on

166

[*crowd cheers*]. We have no choice… we have no choice. They want to

change your religion. I don't think so; it's not going to happen. Sharia

authorizes murder against non-believers who won't convert. They have said

that great harm will come against women, especially American [women]. We

can't continue to live like this. It's going to get worse and worse. We can be

politically correct and stupid. These people only believe in Jihad; they don't

want our system. They have no sense of reason or respect for human life.

(Donald J. Trump rally, 12/7/2015).

After consuming this patronizing media clip, Sef, Jo, Timothy, and Zach were visibly

and emotionally impacted. For a moment after the clip aired, Jo and Sef shook their

heads in disbelief as they sat next to one another. Zach, who was sitting behind me

and had said very little up to that point, came forth with a very insightful voice and

stated, "I think they support him because they're scared" (Zach, Focus Group,

9/27/2016). Similarly, when Sef had a chance to internalize and take in the content of

this video, he said the following about what Trump's perspective means:

He is practically an idiot. His only reason to stop terrorist groups is to say,

"Beat all Muslims. You know what? All of them are terrorists. I think all

Muslims are terrorists and let's not even have one. We don't need Mexicans.

We don't need freaking immigrants. They don't need anything. It's just

America." (Sef, Focus Group, 9/27/2016)

Jo, seemingly unbothered throughout most of the focus group interview, stuttered his

responses and seemed more withdrawn during this portion of the interview. He

fiddled with his fingers and started biting his nails. When I noticed Jo's behavior

167

change, I stopped the video and asked if they needed a break. The boys agreed and left to get some water. The very nature of their identities has and will continue to produce an oppressive feeling as they continue to be "othered."

Culture

Blurred cultural perceptions allude to the ways in which these boys intersect their identities given scenarios when they are forced to perform in a certain way or cause them to question their privilege. All four participants understand the many nuances of the Arab culture and cultural requisites -- for example, respecting elders, taking your shoes off at the door, and saying "*inshallah*"[12] prior to just about anything. Simultaneously, they are performing their American selves while surrounded by friends in school. The narrative of the fluidity of their identities shows an ability to define the power situated within a given identity construct. All four boys are able to conceptualize what it means to feel empowered; to not feel like an outsider. Conversely, they understand conceptions of what it means to feel oppressed based on situations and encounters that they have had. Feeling and belonging to the dominant group, the White Christian group, while in that group was important to each participant. The boys all spoke about what they do during their lunch periods. They all sat with their buddies and talked about typical pre-teen and teenaged topics: cars, technology, video games, and even girls. At home, each boy adhered to the specific cultural expectations, consolidating their identities into shifting and variable.

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[12] *Inshallah:* "God willing".

My Arab American Identity

Zach, whose parents were both Arab, had the largest connection to his Arab identity compared to the other participants. He was explicit in his convictions to denote his Arab identity:

Zach: I say I'm from Jordan because that's where my parents are from but I was born here [in Virginia], so I just tell them that sometimes… but mostly just Arab.

Interviewer: Do you consider yourself Arab or Arab-American?

Zach: Arab.

As I met with Zach as the last participant, his responses were striking. His elaboration on this topic included talk about the numerous encounters with his culture, as well as the positive associations and capital available to him. When discussing with whom Zach would rather associate, he stated Arabs because "I feel like they understand me more, like they are more like me." (Zach Individual Interview, 1/5/2017)

These convictions also influenced Zach's propensity to have a perceived "double consciousness," one that lived in the purview of his home and one that manifested while at school. At home, he conforms to the expectations of his mother and father: he is quiet, says "*inshallah"* in all conversations, and is reserved; outside of the home, he deviates from this persona, hanging out with his friends at the mall and joking about girls. Timothy even considers Zach one of the popular kids, stating that he follows Zach around to "lift his status up." (Zach Individual Interview, 1/5/2017)

During the individual and focus group interviews, I was fortunate to visit each of the participant's homes. As discussed in the individual narratives, each home was adorned with visual representations of the Arab culture. Sef, Jo, and Zach's mothers offered me traditional Arabic cookies when I came as a first-time guest. The homes were all heavily influenced by Arabic culture. Later, I was able to see pictures of Jo's mother, who is Finish, wearing traditional Palestinian *galabaya*[13]. During our interview, Zach's mother spoke of a situation where her son desired to share his Arab culture with the class but feared being stereotyped:

Zach had an event at school that was prepared by the history teacher to wear your traditional dress to school. Zach was debating, "Shall I do it or not?" I said, "Whatever you feel comfortable with. It is something that you should be proud of and it is something that you have that other people they don't have. So, if you can make it more interesting and exciting…" I felt like he was excited to do it but he is also concerned about doing it because… I don't know what. The kids may make fun of them and because it resembles something else that's stereotyped in the news, right? So, I sent the teacher an e-mail that day saying, "Thank you for arranging this. It is very exciting and it is an enriching experience. However, I should tell you that Zach was excited but he seemed nervous and I am very concerned. I want to make sure that the school is on top of it and watches out if the kids like they make fun or bullies him." He responded right away, saying that they were aware of that and they were anticipating the possibility of this happening and they were watching. He said that he talked to the principal. Everything was positive but he said I should let

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[13] *Galabaya:* Arab traditional dress

him know if I hear anything different from [Zach]. (Zach Parent Interview,

1/5/2017)

Zach's Arab pride allowed him to persist and gave him the confidence to wear the

traditional Jordanian dress without fear of any stereotypes. Zach's story resonated

with me, as I have seen this emotional and cultural gravitas around feeling accepted.

The mothers also discussed access to Skype and other technologies which

allowed the boys to connect to their relatives in the Middle East. Each of the boys had

visited their respective countries and have positive associations with these visits, even

for Timothy who is half Syrian and half Bosnian but does not live with his Syrian

mother. These cultural associations present as forms of capital that can be accessed

and presented as predominant themes which protect the boys from self-doubt. For

each of the four boys, facets of cultural capital continue to protect them as they are

flooded with negative imagery of their culture through media representations.

While both Sef and Zach highlighted their Arab identities as integral

components, Timothy and Jo, who share multi-cultural iterations of their identities,

share perspectives of their cultural associations with their identification as an

America as opposed to exclusively Arab or Arab American. Their association with

the Arab culture seemed to be secondary facets of who they represented themselves.

Jo's definitions of his identity centered around a very popular Arabic dish, *warah

aynab*[14], he mentioned that "it's weird that I love them so much even though I'm not

100% Arab." (Jo Individual Interview, 1/5/2017) His association was very superficial,

as was Timothy's; because Timothy lived his Bosnian father but not his Syrian

mother, he was not entirely exposed to the Arab culture.

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[14] Warah aynab: grape leaves.

My American Identity

Whereas each participant attested that they were Arab American, both Jo and Timothy leaned towards associations with their American identities when questioned about their cultural affiliation. In discussions about cultural identities, Jo stated:

> I see myself as an American kid who loves to play video games and loves rap music. I make a lot of friends and just try to have fun in life. That's my objective -- to try to have fun in life. (Jo Individual Interview, 1/5/2017).

Although he clearly articulated his connections to Arab culture in other meetings, he consistently alluded to his association and identity as an American kid. His Finnish mother has adopted the Arab culture as her own, even learning to make Arabic food, yet Jo does not have this same association. Jo's middle school, which enrolls predominately White students, alludes to simple inaccessibility to other Arabs, thus making connections to the Arab culture difficult. Additionally, Jo's blond hair and blue eyes make it possible for him to experience White privilege. What complicates Jo's narrative is his intersections with his Muslim identity.

Deviating from simply denoting an American or Arab cultural association, Timothy articulates his cultural associations based on his parent's countries of origin, Bosnia and Syria: "I say I am European and Syrian and Iraqi. I just say that" (Timothy Individual Interview, 1/5/2017), rather than state an explicit cultural association, Timothy defers to his parents' countries of origin. This complicated narrative of his identity is quite common in bi-racial, bi-cultural adolescents. In Benet-Martinez and Haritatos (2005), there is a distinction between how bi-cultural

172

adolescents experience multiple cultures in multiple ways -- either as compatible or oppositional. Looking at Timothy's bi-cultural identities, his American, Bosnian and Arab identities are oppositional based on place and setting. Within this cultural dynamic, Timothy also manifests concern for how he is perceived as a Muslim: "I wouldn't tell them. There is no point of telling them something. If they ask, then maybe. (Timothy Individual Interview, 1/5/2017)" Although Timothy does associate with his heritage related to these countries, he does not articulate that he is an Arab.

Zach and Sef both pride themselves as it relates to their American identities. They consider themselves American and love hip-hop music, traditional American foods and would also defend their Americanness if questioned, similar to their Arab identities. All four participants are American-born and speak of their love of this country. Yet, while they profess this connection, they also speak about their fear of being considered different or out of place. To an extent, all four participants have elements of their cultural identities they choose to hide and disguise if it is not beneficial to their personal interactions at school. Consequently, the lines that define their cultural identities become blurred during given encounters.

Cultural Associations Define Power

Although each boy recognizes his space and connection to the dominant culture -- the White American culture, in their perspective -- they feel consistently othered. The occasional inability of the four participants to feel like they belong has an impact on the ways they internalize cultural bias and how they choose to represent themselves in school. Jo, the least impacted by the conception of othering, chooses to

173

surrender his Arab heritage as result of his lack of linguistic acquisition. Jo does not believe he is a true Arab: "It's pretty hard to know how to be a proper Arab but I don't think I am a proper Arab yet. It's really hard learning another language" (Jo Individual Interview, 1/5/2017). This allows him to silence the many instances of cultural bias to which he has been exposed because he is "not quite Arab enough."

The other participants feel varying levels of othering around their Arab identities and experience fear and frustration around explicating their reasoning behind the "why". In one interview, Zach discussed how he feels ostracized when he discusses his Muslim religion or Arab culture, citing he feels that he maybe stereotyped if he discloses his identity to his buddies: "In school, when some people talk about ISIS and stuff, whenever they see me like– I don't know. It's kind of like a stereotype" (Zach Individual Interview, 1/5/2017). Similarly, Sef has undergone levels of confusion in regards to how he feels about his Arab Muslim identities and often vacillates between confusion and fear. He expressed previously that his darker skin color would elicit negative responses: "I think because I'm a darker skin color that I'm asked more because maybe I look different than others" (Sef Individual Interview, 1/5/2017). He wavers between his conceptions of what it means to be White as it relates to his Arab and Muslim identities. Clearly these identities meet at the matrix of domination (Collins, 2000) where they imply a complexity in self-perceptions and others' perceptions of what it means to be Arab Muslim in America.

Culture Guides Success

External perceptions of the participants' identities have an impact on their daily interactions and individual perceptions of their own identities. Another level of bias that was observed in this study yielded misconceptions surrounding cultural bias and its impact on the boys and their families.

Although many of the participants had negative experiences surrounding their Arab heritage, they had immense pride in their Arab culture which assisted them in navigating cultural bias. Zach, who spoke Arabic, could recall positive associations with his Arab culture, stating: "It's my heritage. It's where I come from. It makes me who I am." Even further, Zach spoke about feeling comfort in being around other Arabs because they understood him: "I feel like they understand me more like they are more-- I don't know." (Zach Individual Interview, 1/5/2017) Timothy, who considers himself Arab and Bosnian, recalled memories from his youth regarding positive associations with being Arab: "When I went to Syria a long time ago and watched movies there, they show [Arabs] in a good way but I don't usually see that here" (Timothy Individual Interview, 1/5/2017). His ability to recall those memories serves as a protective source of comfort when he experiences negative experiences with cultural bias.

Likewise, Sef's identity is heavily steeped in the positive associations he has with his Arab and Muslim identities. He has become an unofficial spokesperson in his school to represent the positive voice of what it means to be an Arab and Muslim in America:

We've done a stereotype lesson. She calls on random people and asks what's

the stereotype about you that you would want me to write up here. [The

students say],"Since I'm White, that means I like Starbucks;" that's a

stereotype. Just because I'm Arab Muslim doesn't mean I say "*Allahu Akbar*;"

that's a stereotype. (Sef Individual Interview, 12/5/2016)

He recognizes the intersectional nature of his own identity, even oversimplifying how

his identities as an Arab and American intersect with his Muslim Identity:

I'm going to tell them where I'm from. I'm from Palestine because my parents

are from Palestine. And what are you means what are you? Are you Muslim?

Are you Christian? Are you American and Canadian? That would fit in that

way but they are both connected. If I was asked "where are you from," I

would say Palestinian and then I would also say I'm American and Canadian.

If someone said "what are you," I would say Muslim. (Sef Individual

Interview 12/5/2016)

The factors contributing to the ways that Jo, Timothy, Sef and Zach speak into

existence their cultural and religious identities are situated in others' perspectives as

well as their personal experiences at home and with families. In the following section,

I will discuss how each participant's conceptualization of what it means to be a boy is

situated in their own interpretations of the responsibilities of a "man" as defined in

cultural, religious, and familial interpretations.

Gender

The concept of masculinity for each participant is characterized by age-appropriate conceptions of what it means to be a man coupled with cultural and religious interpretations of these responsibilities. They agreed that their gender impacted a multiplicity of factors related to their individual identities. Jo realizes that his role as a big brother is to "take care of his sister, to watch over her" (Jo Individual Interview, 12/5/2017) Similarly, although he laughed at Jo's comment, Timothy stated he "would protect her but there is really nothing to protect her from." (Timothy Individual Interview, 11/22/2017) Throughout the interviews, all four participants indicated their understanding of the roles of men: to provide and protect. This is evident in their career dream drawings, as all four participants discussed their career choices as centered around their future responsibilities as father figures for future families.

On the other hand, the four participants also had contemptuous discussions around negative gendered representations of Arab men and how these representations are perceived by themselves and American society in general. In discussions centered around stereotypical images of Arab men (Appendix C), the four participants noted that these men looked aggressive, mean, and even sad. Jo, Sef, Timothy and Zach do not differentiate their own cultural and ethnic constructs; they consider themselves the very thing they see: aggressive, mean, and sad. The media-driven representations of Arab men as aggressors are powerful instigators of fear in Americans, even Arab American boys.

Ironically, three participants -- Jo, Sef, and Zach -- have mothers who serve as a major source of financial income either as the sole breadwinner or in addition to their husband's income. In varying instances, these mothers spoke of their hopes to thwart the stereotypes of Arab men as reliant on their wives to care for the home and/or the sole "breadwinners." These mothers also were impassioned in creating positive conceptions of Arab manhood, reinforcing examples of Arab men as caregivers who are fully embedded in the rearing of their future families. Zach's mother talked of this hope in her individual interview:

> In principle, I would like to think that they are the same. The way I am trying to enforce different values and expectations is the same for [both my son and daughters]. So, I don't know whether in practice things gets a little bit changed. In principle, this is what I objectively like to think and to do. (Zach Parent Interview, 1/5/2016)

The families are hugely impactful on the gender constructs and ways that each of the boys will portray their roles as Arab Muslim men in society.

The Role of a Man: Success Defined as Financial Security

While success varies in its interpretations, the four participants in the study agreed that success in school was akin to their aptitude to be financial secure as men and as fathers to their future children. They articulated this in the career dream drawings; each participant discussed the need to provide financially for their respective future families and to be able to afford nice things. Jo was the most concerned about maintaining financial happiness in his future career goals: "Getting

money. Objective one in life? Get money. Step one: get money. Step two: repeat step one. That's all you do" (Jo Individual Interview, 1/5/2017). Along with Jo's narratives around success being directly correlated to financial success, Sef also believed that happiness and success were based on the amount of money he could produce as an adult male:

> A big job and you're not– You make easy money for your family and you can– You're not poor, I guess. You can supply yourself and your family…. You have a good job. You have nice house and stuff like that. That's my priority. (Sef Individual Interview, 12/9/2016)

At several points during the interviews, Sef also talked about how this financial success would guide his future goal of being able to provide for his parents. Zach, who wished to be a pilot, and Timothy, who had hopes of becoming a surgeon, both desired to make money to support their future families and uphold their obligations as men. According to Timothy:

> Success is when you achieve a life goal or a comfortable position where you can live your life and make enough money for a living. It is not entirely money-driven. If you don't have money, you are not going have that. You need to have money. If you have a good job, something you love and you can still walk around and you are flexible with all the things you can do, that is success. (Timothy Individual Interview, 1/5/2017)

This financially-driven definition of success guided the boys' individual career dream drawings introduced in their narratives (Chapters 4-7). All four boys were guided by a comprehension that their futures were contingent upon how they would be able to

provide a safe and consistent life for their future families and keep the preexisting

lifestyle to which they had grown accustomed. Being an Arab Muslim man posed a

different set of characteristics not evident in the interactions the boys had with their

White friends. While Zach spent time plotting his future around how he would be

able to provide stability for his family, he spoke about his friends "goofing off and

not being serious" (Zach Individual Interview, 12/15/2016).

Parental Roles and Family Dynamics in Gender

According to Timothy's father, his definitions of success do not focus

necessarily on Timothy's academic attributes; rather, he wishes his son to be a good

person (Timothy Parent Interview 1/5/2017). Paradoxically, Timothy shared that his

mother, who is not consistent in his life, has very high expectations of him to achieve

and have a good life for his family. Both Sef and Zach are driven academically and

bolstered by their parent's high expectations of their achievement and aspirations. Sef

is determined and has expectations of himself to aspire and achieve academically,

which he believes is in direct correlation to his future goals:

> In order to be successful, you need-- To get a nice job in the future, you need
>
> to learn to do certain subjects that your job needs. For example, a mechanical
>
> engineer or an architect relies on math. They need to do a lot of math in order
>
> to build and know where to do stuff. So, in school, you learn how to do math.
>
> In the future, you need that learning that you did a long time ago in order to be
>
> successful with your job. As a dad, you need to know how to work with it and
>
> stuff. (Sef Individual Interview, 12/9/2016)

Sef's mother also stated that his education is his primary responsibility now; he has no other major responsibility except to perform well in school so that he can have a good future. Additionally, Sef has the added burden of achieving comparable to his older sister, who performs very well in school with little to no prompting. Zach also has high expectations and aspirational goals to achieve in school. He is pushed and motivated by his mother's expectations and, like Sef, believes in the direct correlation between achievement and his future career goals. Zach even attested that he currently has a "B," which he was not happy about. Zach's mother stated in regards to her sons' expectations of self and performance:

> I don't think I have to push him. I think his transition from elementary to middle school-- There was a lot to do with him being on top of things and being able to manage his time and commitment and watch out for what he needs to do and when…. I believe that he was influenced by his older sister. (Zach Parent Interview, 1/5/2017)

All four boys are driven by parental influence in congruence to their own personal desire to achieve. The congruence between cultural and religious expectations merge with the understanding of how a man within the Arab and Muslim culture should lead and guide their respective families.

Complicating this preexisting perception of the role of Muslim Arab men was the fact that each participant had an older sister who performed very well academically and had similar expectations placed on them. These older sisters, I believe, are instrumental in providing leadership and filling the gaps of the boys' own self-determination. Parents held their sons accountable through the performance and

181

expectations of their older sisters. This burden proved simultaneously beneficial yet burdensome, placing the boys in positions of fear of failure and doubt of their abilities.

Each of the participants' parents emigrated to the United States from either European or Arab countries for multiple reasons. For Sef and Zach, their fathers emigrated to provide a better life for their respective families. They left their respective countries to seek better opportunities and a better life for their children. For Jo and Timothy, their parents came for academics and, after meeting their respective spouses, for marriage. This is not a simple transition and can prove to be extremely difficult when navigating cultural nuances and a new language. When I asked Timothy about his father's goals in life, Timothy realize the sacrifices that his father made to ensure a better life for his children:

> My dad has been an IT worker. He went to ST and then he went to CL for better things. He is going to AZN. There is too much travel. That is another reason why you have to say it because he could have gone to a much better job. (Timothy Parent Interview, 1/5/2017).

This form of cultural capital, while difficult to quantify, is familiar for many immigrant fathers' experiences. Leaving the comfort of their native countries to ensure a high quality of life for the next generation is something many Arab immigrant parents can talk about in great detail. Sef's mom talked about her father's experiences coming to Canada in the late 1970s as a non-English speaker: "They had it harder because they have lived in the Middle East." Julia's father desired to escape the Israeli occupation and raise his children in a country with opportunity. This

sacrifice became a facet of cultural capital that protected Julia growing up and now serves as a support system for Sef.

All four boys had male role models and family structures that served as protective mechanisms against experiences with bias. Additionally, all four boys felt protected and cared for by their families. When speaking with Jo about what he believed were the motivational factors that push him towards success, he said, "My parents and my friends. They all push me to succeed—not my friends but more my parents. They help me with this stuff. They help me figure things out" (Jo Individual Interview, 1/5/2017). Conversely, Zach's mother spoke about how being part of this family unit and caring for his sisters has protected and kept Zach on the right path. Zach confirmed that his household chores -- cleaning the kitchen, doing laundry, and walking his sister to school -- kept him focused on his responsibilities in general. These persistent and mutual understandings of the young male role ensure that the boys are adhering to parental requirements and consequently help with their performance in school. Family support serves as a form of capital and assists in facilitating comprehension about how these boys are protected when faced with challenging societal and stereotypical scenarios. On the other hand, their understandings of their own racialized identities prove to be inconsequential in their experiences with power and oppression.

Race

While each participant talked in detail about their experiences with culture, religious identities, and gendered expectations, few brought up conceptions of race.

The absence of this identifier is ironic and sheds light on the complexity of how Arab

Muslims see themselves as White or not White. During the focus group interview, a

brief conversation ensued about the U.S. Census classification of those with heritage

from North African and those from the Middle East as Caucasian. The boys were not

familiar with this construct and this made their perceptions of their own races even

murkier.

My Racialized Identity

Both Sef and Jo thought of their races and cultures as White and American,

respectively, although they maintained their religious connotations. In his narrative,

Sef spoke about his understanding of who he was as a White kid who was Arab. He

maintains being an Arab but holds onto the phenotype affording perceived White

privilege. Sef, who also has two Palestinian Arab parents, attests and confirms his

Arab ancestry when asked but is sure to differentiate racial components of how he

sees himself. Sef sees himself as "[a] White kid who is Arab" (Sef Individual

Interview, 1/5/2017). This is a powerful statement; Sef sees Arabs and their

respective races as mutually exclusive. During that conversation, Sef also mentioned

the fact that he also sees his skin as tanned, which confirms Sef's fluid conceptions of

racialized identities.

Similarly, Jo also disassociated himself from being Arab because of his lack

of linguistic accessibility. During the individual and focus group interviews, Jo said

that he did not consider himself fully Arab because he couldn't speak the language;

however, he made distinctions between what it meant to be American versus Other, a distinction that clearly included unintended racial underpinnings:

Interviewer: Okay. How would you describe an American male?

Jo: Someone who likes sports. I don't like sports, actually, but you're talking *White* White, then yeah.

Interviewer: What's the difference in White and *White* White though? [*laughter*] What's the difference?

Jo: Sometimes, they like sports. They play video games a lot. They are normally Christian because that's the most popular thing. They have an American accent. They're pretty calm. It's all that we see here.

Although both Jo and Sef purported these disassociations from non-White, they would defend their culture if questioned or faced with negative encounters; this would put them in the position of diminishing their own personal racial identifiers.

Although Sef and Jo were able to broach the subject of race through their interviews, both Timothy and Zach did not bring this identifier up when asked what they were or how they identified themselves. Even when given the opportunity to discuss their identities with representative identity maps, neither Zach nor Timothy choose to represent race as a facet of their identities. Two possible explanations exist around the hidden racial categories as part of their identities: first, the intersections of their religious and cultural identities in their perspective, suffice as representative characteristics defining them; alternatively, the complicated narrative around definitions of race have not been adequately discussed in their lives. The issue of race

is murky and not solidified, whether it is defined biologically or socially. Intersectionality theory can benefit from more robust interpretations of how to approach conceptions of race through racial formation theory Collins 2015), which "conceptualizes race as situated within the recursive relationship between social structures and cultural representations" (p. 4). Religious associations, on the other hand, are binary and the participants can clearly articulate and make connections as to what it means to belong to the Muslim culture.

Summary

Jo, Sef, Zach, and Timothy share similar and differing lived experiences as Arab Muslim boys. Religion appeared as a prominent theme in how these boys perceive themselves regardless of their level of religious accord. Cultural associations were varied between the boys; each grappled with self-perceptions of their Arab and American identities as they merged and intersected situationally. Gendered role perceptions were heavily impacted by the parental and familial examples presented in the home and via Islamic beliefs of the roles of men.

All four boys concurrently agree that experiences with cultural bias were consistent and commonplace in their middle schools. As evidenced above, the identity perceptions of these boys are varied and the process of navigating their intersectional identities cannot be easily qualified as positive. They demonstrate illustrations of oppression congruent with their experiences in school with cultural bias and have internalized these experiences. Perceived power associations with their

racial identities as White convolute and complicate discussions about how race is quantified and how Arab Americans are categorized as White.

In the final chapter, I will summarize the four major themes that resulted from this study including perceptions of: Religion, Culture, Gender and Race as intersectional in presenting the boys with varied levels of power and oppression. I will conclude with the implications of these findings follow a discussion as well on the limitations and recommendations for further study.

Chapter 9: Discussion

When I began this research, I wanted to tell several stories to explicate on the lived experiences of four Arab American Muslim middle school boys who were born in the United States after September 11, 2001. The purpose of this study was to elucidate how Arab Muslim boys perceive and experience their intersectional identities. To do that, I honed in on my central research question: *How key intersecting social classifications, specifically race, gender, culture, and religion inform Arab American school boys' ethnic identity constructs?* In this study, I drew from intersectionality theory (Collins, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989; Phelan, 1991) and framed experiences through social and cultural capital theory (Yosso, 2005; Zhou & Bankston, 1994) to gain a better understanding of how these boys see themselves and how they navigate their schooling experiences. I wanted to reveal how each participant conceptualized their privilege or experiences with oppression while in school. To investigate how these boys navigated their identities in American society, the following sub-questions were used to guide by inquiry:

- How do these boys define success and achievement in relation to schooling?

- How have they navigated schooling as framed by these experiences of cultural bias?

- How have middle school Arab American boys experienced cultural bias/or how have they perceived cultural bias?

- To what extent do Arab American boys seek out resources (community, mosques, family, religion), through their social networks?

As evidenced by the research, each participant experienced their identities in unique and nuanced ways yet shared multiple experiences that were similar. Jo, Sef, Zach, and Timothy shared an affinity towards their identities as Muslim boys and situated their identities within this religious identifier. They related to their religious identities although their levels of religious commitment and aptitude varied. However, although each of the boys originally cited their Arab identities as facets of who they were, each of them discovered during their interviews that they had different ways of distinguishing whether they were Arab or American. Of importance was the participants' experiences with varied levels of cultural bias. At the onset of the interview process, all of the participants' mothers were convinced that I would not discover that their sons had experience with Anti-Muslim, Anti-Arab rhetoric at such young ages. Each boy interviewed had not only indirectly experienced this rhetoric through media driven representations but had also experienced direct cultural bias. An important finding materialized when examining how each participant experienced and navigated cultural bias, including how they situated their own identities to thwart possible oppression and regain empowerment. Some participants chose to disguise facets of both their Muslim and Arab identities as it suited them; the others chose to operationalize their cultures as beneficial and hoped that their distinguishing identifiers would serve to their benefit. As an example, all four boys choose pseudonyms which were highly Americanized and differed vastly from their traditional names. This presented an initial sense of how each participant grappled with their multiple identities All in all, they were striving to become a part of the

189

dominant cultural group in their homogenized schools to attain some semblance of popularity, which is quite common of middle school boys.

Participants were similar in the ways they perceived negative experiences with cultural bias due to their activated forms of social and cultural capital. Each of the boys had parental support that propelled them to succeed. The boys' expectations of themselves to fulfill masculine roles in their futures appeared in each of the narratives. The career dream drawing activity shed light on a multiplicity of factors that impacted their gender construct. The ways their fathers impacted these experiences was crucial. Ironically, however, three of the four boys had mothers who were breadwinners and who worked feverishly to blur traditional Arab Muslim gender lines. As it relates to their masculine identities, the privilege associated with being a boy was not as readily experienced when intersecting their Muslim and Arab identities. Parental expectations led each participant to attest that external forces, such as their parents and family members, served as primary sources guiding their success. Additionally, the notion that they would be required to care and provide for their families in future roles as husbands and fathers was reinforced by the examples set by their fathers, uncles, and grandfathers. As such, all four participants noted that the sacrifices of their parents and grandparents helped them build their own character when suffering with modern challenges -- unbeknownst to their parents and grandparents. Finally, the participants' conceptions surrounding race were important to understanding how the boys saw themselves. According to Sef, he clearly articulated his identity as a White boy who was Arab; however, the other participants did not discuss their races when asked how they identified themselves. The absence

of a solidified discussion of race is important in denoting the factors that impede the development of this often-simplified biological construct. Surrounding Arab Americans, the conversation of race has been fluid from their first landing in the United States in the late 19th century to current 21st century perceptions of Arabs as Caucasian.

In this study, I used an intersecting identity lens (Collins, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989; Phelan, 1991) to address perceptions of American Muslim middle school boys' individual identities and how these perceptions interacted with their experiences of power and privilege. I decided against using Phinney's (1993) ethnic identity construct as the methodological approach because the findings did not speak to the process of construct; rather, the findings spoke to the internalized perceptions that intersect to form individual identities. Given the opportunity to reassess the framework on identity, there are frameworks which may provide nuanced understandings of identity and how they assess power differentials, such as Phelan (1991) Multiple World frame.

The boys who participated in the present study live in a tumultuous time where they are fearful of being othered. Their difficulty fitting in with American culture has shifted the ways in which these boys have all chosen to represent their respective identities. To borrow from W.E.B Dubois' (2013) theory of double consciousness, participants in this study are developing their own identities in an environment where there is "the sense of looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (Shaw, 2013, p. 41). For the participants, being an Arab Muslim

boy in 2017 has manifested as an ability to vacillate between belonging to their

American identities and their Muslim Arab identities. Similarly, the blurred

conceptions of race and the ability to pass as a White American can weigh on

experiences with privilege.

The following sections of this chapter will discuss study limitations, as well as

implications for policymakers, school teachers, and administrators. Finally, I will

discuss recommendations for addressing and unpacking the narratives of Arab

American Muslim boys that can be used tangibly by those willing to step outside of

the purview of preconception.

Limitations

The intention of this study was never to make it generalizable. I always

intended to keep the participant size small; however, I ended up with four participants

and their parents. I believe more participants this study could have led to a more

robust investigation and the stories that the participants told more overarching. My

initial attempts to secure participants happened in Summer 2016 when I began

distributing materials at mosques, community events, and on Facebook. Contact with

the first mother, a friend of mine from childhood, produced three more participants

who all lived within a 20-mile radius and attended similar community functions

within the same Arab friend group. Having the boys be part of the same community

was important, especially given concerns that they would not remain in this study for

focus groups or the final activities. After obtaining consent, I proceeded to conduct

focus groups and interviews between September 2016 and January 2017. As an

addendum to my original IRB application, I added parent interviews because the surveys did not produce enough information surrounding gendered conceptions and expectations for each boy.

Another limitation was the inability to observe the boys while in school. Obtaining county permission to observe these boys would have changed the basis of this study. While I did drive by each of the boys' middle schools and research their respective middle schools online through county-administered and third-party websites, I was not able to observe what was reported by the participants or partake in their daily interactions. This information would have provided additional context to participants' school-based experiences with cultural bias, internalized perceptions of masculinity, and understandings of how schools provided space for cultural differences.

The study was conducted over a five-month time span. I met with them numerous times between September 2016 and January 2017. A longer study period would have allowed me to build up more rapport with the participants, allowing for deeper and more involved conversations.

An unexpected facet of the interviews and focus groups that presented was the election-year effect. In initiating these interviews, I did not presume to understand the impact of Trump's election as president on these boys. A phenomenological study would allow for an in-depth and in-the-moment analysis of the lived experiences of the boys and their families as this election was happening.

Implications for Policymakers, School Teachers, and Administrators

Results of the present study have very serious and long-term implications for policymakers, school teachers, and administrators who are responsible for the indirect effects that their daily interactions have on Arab American students.

The U.S. Census has accepted a proposal to introduce a MENA (Middle Eastern, North-African) categorization box on the 2020 Census. This poses both positive and negative policy implications. For many years, the Arab American community has fought for legal recognition for categorization to receive social services tailored specifically to this population. Recently, however, categorization has become a very daunting and negative association. In January 2017, President Donald Trump passed a travel ban that would limit citizens of seven predominately Muslim countries from entering the United States. For policymakers considering the addition of the MENA category, this will most certainly increase the scrutiny imposed upon Arab Muslims in the United States and may explode surveillance measures tenfold. As a policymaker driven by the need to understand the lives of Muslims and Arabs living in or emigrating to the United States, this study serves as a glimpse into the nuanced lives of young Arab Muslim boys to better inform these very impactful initiatives.

School Teachers & Administrators

Each of the boys spoke about how teachers and administrators perceived them at school. Teachers' responsibilities include so much more than simply teaching children. They uphold the conceptions that children and young adults have of binary

distinctions between wrong and right. They also set the tone for how each student will experience levels of power and oppression through within their classrooms. All of the participants spoke about how their teachers did not pronounce their ethnic-sounding names correctly -- a small facet of a boys' lives that leads to serious long-term implications for self-awareness and negative self-associations.

Administrators who tirelessly attempt to ensure curriculum covers a breadth of understanding about Arabs and Americans have the serious job of setting the tone for how students will experience their own cultures. Current curricula lack an overview, let alone a perspective-inducing conversation around the lived experiences of Arabs and Muslims. Administrators are responsible for the teachers that are hired and the robust programs in place to address gaps in understanding diverse populations. Assuming many of the Arabs and Muslims in this country are educated in the public school system, this proves to be problematic and emblematic of the funds of knowledge about difference.

Recommendations

In closing, I offer the following six recommendations for practice and research:

Recommendations for Practice

Out of sight, out of mind: It is imperative that materials are provided which work to shed light on Arab Americans in the daily lived experiences of those who have contact with them. Teachers and administrators must work to understand the

populations of students that they serve. At the 2012 National Association for Multi-Cultural Educators conference and after delivering a talk on Arab Americans, I had several school teachers from Michigan approach me asking me if I could explain the differences between Somalian and Arab students. The largest Arab American student population outside of the Middle East is in Michigan. Teacher training programs should include content that is symbolic of the constituency of students in their respective school districts.

More opportunities for practice: More symbolic than anything, understanding how to pronounce an Arab Americans name can become a larger experience for these students in oppressive states. As a teacher and former teacher observer, I have worked with teachers to take time to learn a student's name. It makes a difference. It impacts the experiences that these students have in the classroom and will impact students' own affinity towards their cultures and religions. Likewise, as an adult who may encounter other children or young adults, using simple pronunciation applications or asking how to pronounce a student's name makes a big difference in the long-term relationships with students from other ethnicities. This may be an oversimplification, but incremental positive associations build to larger positive associations.

More nuanced diversity advocacy and inclusion experiences: Unfortunately, whether offered publicly or via corporate HR departments, diversity and inclusion trainings are often centered around individual encounters with a subject unfamiliar with the attendee. Diversity and inclusion experiences should situate the individual receiving training as part of the experience. Self-awareness is essential to understanding the various and interlocking experiences associated with both privilege

196

and oppression. Even further, explicating on how systems of power play out within these individual experiences is essential for those attempting to understand differences.

Recommendations for Research

Comparative study between boys and girls: Future research on this topic may include a comparative study between Arab American Muslim boys and girls. My initial intent was simply to identify a gap in the research focusing on Arab Muslim boys, where very little research exists. With increased surveillance and increased media scrutiny surrounding Arab American Muslims, I would like to do more research around how both boys and girls experience their identities and their resulting experiences of power and privilege.

Class differentiation: All four participants in this study came from upper- and middle-class families. Their access to resources and wealth certainly impacted their lived experiences. Many of the Arab Muslims that have emigrated to the United States are coming as refugees with little or no financial security and limited access to the financial capital that uplifts the participants daily. A study understanding the differentiated nuances of their lives based on socioeconomic status would show varied experiences of power and privilege. Likewise, looking at various socioeconomic statuses in research on Arab Muslim males may yield differences in their personal schooling experiences as well as their resulting performance in school.

Longitudinal study: As mentioned previously, this study took place over the course of a few months. To fully understand how Arab American Muslim boys

197

experience their lives, a longitudinal study would be beneficial and could possibly lead to more robust and nuances differences. Included in this sort of longitudinal study would be the addition of the various facets of each of these boys' school lives, their personal lives outside of school, and their families. This would also allow access to parts of their lives that they either chose not to show or that they did not have a chance to show during the original study.

Summary

This study offers a glimpse into the lived experiences of four Muslim Arab Middle School boys. Initially, it was assumed by both the boys and their mothers that this study would yield little in the way of understanding significant deviations from the typical White American experience. What this study has done however, is show the very intersectional and fluid nature of Arab Muslim boys' identities in the United States. This is significant because of the dearth of literature that exists on this constituency does not illuminate on this significant fluidity and the nature of empowerment based on multiple identity perceptions. I am certain that this study will be impactful for individuals who have presumptions on Arab American experiences and how encounter them daily, such as teachers and administrators. More importantly I hope that individual that read this research glean from it the impact that cultural bias has on Arab Muslims who are being raised in the United States after September 11th. The media imagery that surrounds these boys explicated on more than how they are viewed, rather have impact on how they internalize these images and further how they go on to see themselves.

Appendices

Appendix A: Recruitment Flyer

Do you know or Are you an ARAB American Muslim Middle School Boy born in the United States? Consider participating in important research including three short 45-minute interviews and 2 focus groups to help make connections between cultural stereotypes, identity and academic achievement. You will receive a $25 iTunes gift card at the conclusion of this study and will help educators and policy makers understand your experiences. Please contact Dina Shafey at dshafey@umd.edu by July, 1, 2016.

Dina Shafey dshafey@umd.edu	Dina Shafey dshafey@umd.edu	Dina Shafey dshafey@umd.edu	Dina Shafey dshafey@umd.edu	Dina Shafey dshafey@umd.edu	Dina Shafey dshafey@umd.edu	Dina Shafey dshafey@umd.edu	Dina Shafey dshafey@umd.edu	Dina Shafey dshafey@umd.edu	Dina Shafey dshafey@umd.edu	Dina Shafey dshafey@umd.edu	Dina Shafey dshafey@umd.edu	Dina Shafey dshafey@umd.edu	Dina Shafey dshafey@umd.edu

Appendix B
FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL
Introduction by Facilitator
Hello and thank you for taking the time to participate in a focus group on Arab
American middle school student's factors contributing to identity construct as it
relates to experiences of discrimination. This focus group is part of a larger research
project at the University of Maryland that I am conducting for my dissertation.
You are all participants in the current research project. During this focus group I will
ask questions and facilitate a conversation around how you have experienced
discrimination, what your definition of your identities are and what you think
academic success looks like. Please keep in mind that no "right" or "wrong" exist.
The purposes of the questions are to start conversation and to hear the opinions of
everyone in the room. I hope you will be comfortable speaking honestly and sharing
your ideas with the rest of the participants and me.
Please note that this session will be recorded to ensure we adequately capture your
ideas during the conversation. However, the comments from the focus group will
remain confidential and your name will not be attached to any comments you make.
Do you have any questions before we begin?
**The focus group questions listed below are samples and will be adjusted based
on information obtained from the interviews and questionnaire.**
 1. Let's do a quick round of introductions. When you introduce yourself, please use
the name that you selected for yourself as an alias. Please tell the group what grade
you are in and how you define your identity. No reports will link what you say to
your name, grade, or cultural affinity. In this way, I will maintain your
confidentiality. In addition, I ask that you also respect the confidentiality of everyone
here. Please don't repeat who said what when you leave this room.
 2. Let's think about how you have defined your identities? What is different about
each of your definitions? What is similar?
3. The following images I will show you are stereotypical depictions of Arabs and
Muslims. How do these images make you feel and how do you feel connected to
these images? Do you have anything more to share around these images?
4. Think about a scenario in which you may have felt discriminated against and share
with the group how that made you reflect on your culture, your gender, your race and
your religion?

Appendix C
Focus Group Images compiled from google images
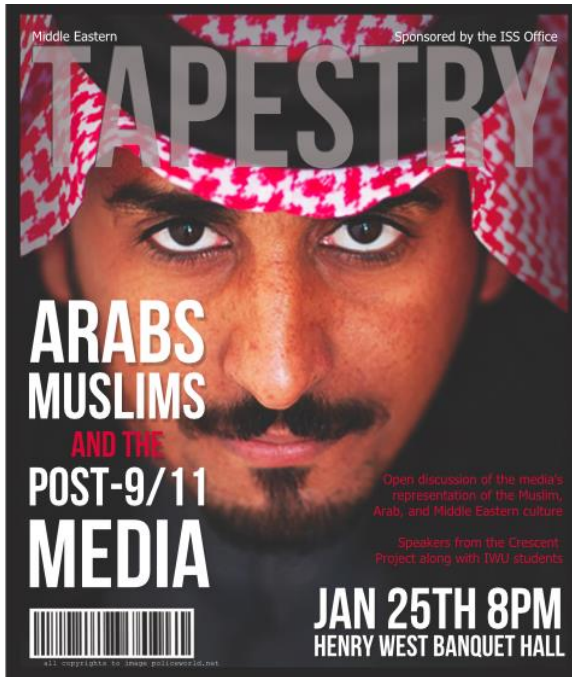Figure 11.1 Arab Muslims and Post 9/11 Media

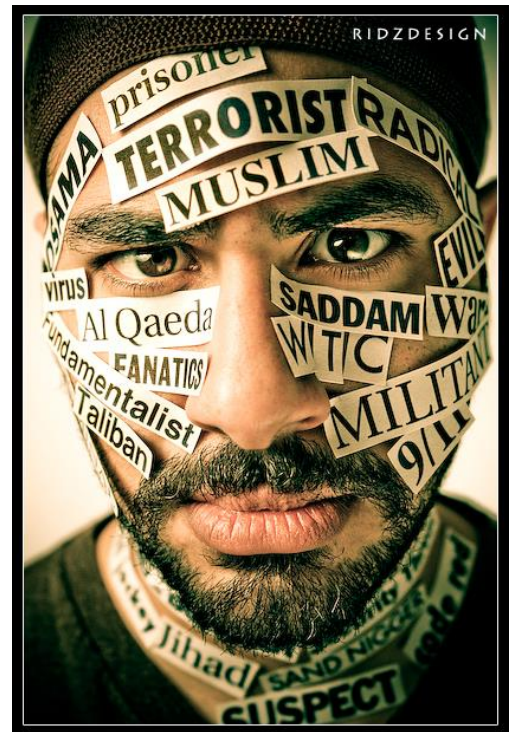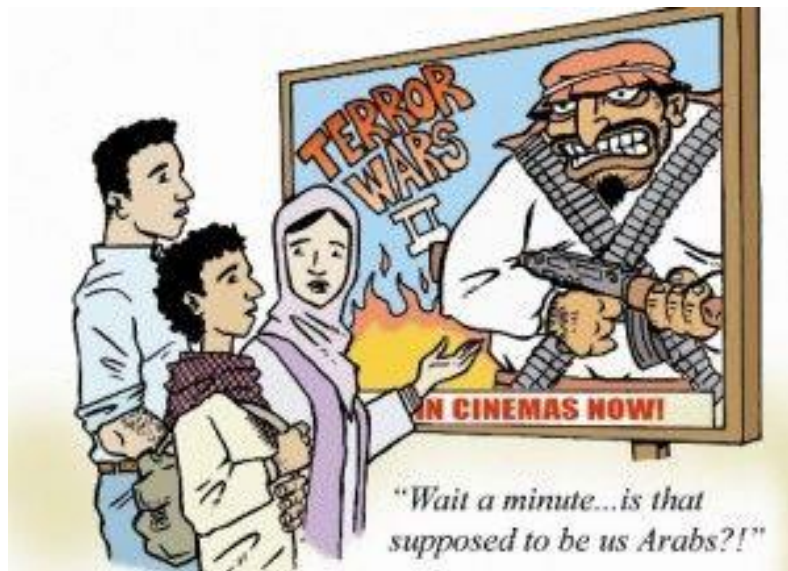
Figure 11.2 Arab Muslim
Male depiction

Figure 11.3 Arabs in Media

Figure 11.4 Arabs in Media

Individual Interview Protocol

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this study, which explores how Arab American Middle school boys construct their identity as framed by cultural bias. These interviews are part of my dissertation research project in the Minority and Urban Education Program at the University of Maryland. Each of the three interviews will last 45 to 60 minutes and will focus on exploring your experiences growing up in a post 9/11 will shed light into how you construct your identities and moreover how you see yourself. Also I plan on prompting the conversation with images that you may be familiar with, pictures of events that have occurred recently in that relate to being Arab and Muslim.

Any potential loss of confidentiality will be minimized by storing data in a secure location, i.e., investigators' password protected computers. In addition, your name will not be identified or linked to the data at any time unless you give your express consent to reveal these identities. Only the principal investigator will have access to the participants' names. If you are a parent of a student in this study, your child's grades/standing will not be positively or negatively affected by your decision to participate or not participate in this research project.

Additionally, if you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, please contact me, Dina Shafey Scott (Principal Investigator), by telephone (240-731-4000) or e-mail (dinashafey@yahoo.com). If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact the Institutional Review Board Office at the University of Maryland, by e-mail (irb@umd.eu) or telephone (301-405-0678). This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.

Do you agree to participate? [If yes, continue. If no, stop.]

The interview will last between thirty and sixty minutes, and I would like to ask your permission to record this interview for accuracy. The recording will only be available to me, and your identity will be kept confidential. Your identity will not be revealed in any report. Instead, a pseudonym of your choice will be used in any references that are made to you. If your words are included in the results, any identifying information will be removed.

Do you agree for me to record this interview? [If yes, then turn on the recorder. If no, do not record the interview.]

Sample Interview Questions (for interview 1 and 2) adopted from Ayish, N dissertation on Arab Muslim High School students

1. I'd like you to think about your earliest school experience. Try to go all the way back to elementary school. Can you recall the first time that you felt different from others as a child?
    a. How did it make you feel?
    b. How did you react to the situation?
    c. How did you cope or deal with it?
2. Can you recall ever feeling uncomfortable about being an Arab/Muslim in school?
    a. Can you tell me about it?
    b. How about in class. Have you ever been singled out and treated differently than other students? Why?
3. Have you ever been discouraged from participating in class?
4. Have you ever felt stereotyped in elementary or middle school?
    a. Can you tell me about it?
    b. How did you react to this situation?
    c. How did you cope and deal with it?
5. Can you recall ever feeling that your culture, religion, or ethnicity was stereotyped or misunderstood in class?
    a. How did you react with this situation?
    b. How did you cope and deal with it?
6. Do you ever remember learning anything about Arabs, Muslims, or Arab Americans in school?
    a. Can you tell me what you remember?
    b. Do you recall ever feeling that what you were learning was stereotypical of Arabs, Islam, or Arab Americans?
7. Are you proud to be an Arab American Muslim student in elementary and middle school?
    a. Why or why not?
8. Did friends and teachers at (name of elementary and middle school) know that you were Arab/Muslim?
    a. Why or why not?
9. While in elementary/middle school, did you feel that you were like all of the other students?
    a. Why or why not?
    b. Were you treated like everyone else?

Focus on Stereotypes (Outside of School)
I'd like you to think about stereotypes that you may have come across outside of school.

1. When you see a movie in which Arabs or Muslims are stereotyped or portrayed or depicted negatively, how does it make you feel?
    a. (If participant gets upset) What do you do about it?

b. Can you share with me an incident that occurred?
2. How Arabs and Muslims are typically portrayed in the movies? On television? On the news? In newspapers? Magazines?
   a. *If negatively:* (Do you think that this image is harmful to people's understanding of Arabs/Muslims?
   b. Why?
   c. Do you have any idea why Arabs or Muslims are stereotyped/portrayed negatively in the movies or on TV/media/popular culture/school curriculum?
3. Have you ever seen a film or TV show that had an Arab or Muslim character in it? How were they portrayed?
   a. How did watching them make you feel?
4. Think about non-Arab Muslims.
   a. How are they portrayed in the movies, on TV, in the media, and in popular culture?
   b. How is this different from the way Arabs are portrayed in the movies, on TV, in the media, and in popular culture?
   c. Why do you think that is?
5. Have you ever seen a film or TV show that portrayed Arabs/Muslim positively?
   a. Can you tell me about it?
   b. How did it make you feel watching it?
6. Have you ever seen a film or TV show that portrayed Arabs/Muslims negatively?
   a. Can you tell me about it?
   b. How did it make you feel watching it?
7. What are your favorite movies/TV shows? Do any of these movies or shows have Arab or Muslim characters?
   a. If yes, what role did they play?
   b. How did it make you feel to watch them?
8. Can you name me any famous Arab American or Arab American Muslim actors or

Actresses? How about musicians? Athletes? Politicians? Business people? Scientists?

Is there anything you'd like to say that I might have forgotten to ask?
Questions about Ethnic Identity
Now I'm going to ask you some questions about Arabs, Muslims, and Americans.
1. How would you describe an Arab?
   a. An Arab male?
   b. An Arab female?
2. How would you describe a Muslim?
   a. A Muslim male?
   b. A Muslim female?
3. How would you describe an American?
   a. An American male?

      b. An American female?
4. How do you think an American would describe an Arab?
      a. An Arab male?
      b. An Arab female?
5. How do you think an American would describe a Muslim?
      a. A Muslim male?
      b. A Muslim female?
6. When someone asks you where you're from, what do you say? Why?
      a. Do you ever hesitate tell them?
      b. Why?
7. When someone asks you what you are, what do you say? Why?
8. How do you think these different characteristics work together?
      a. Does each piece have the same impact?
      b. What is the most important identity characteristic?
9. How do you see yourself (e.g., as an Arab, an Arab American, an Arab American Muslim, or as a [name of national group])?
      a. Has anyone ever commented about where you're from?
      b. Have they ever said anything stereotypical?
10. What is the difference between how your Parents see themselves (their definition of Arab) versus how you see yourself (your definition of being an Arab)?
      a. How would you describe yourself?
11. Do you feel more comfortable being around Arabs or non-Arabs?
      a. Why?
      b. Under what circumstances?
      c. Which group do you prefer to be around (Arab/Muslim or non-Arab/Muslim?)
      d. Why?
12. How do you think non-Arab Americans feel about Arabs?
13. Why do you think they feel this way?
14. When an American thinks of an Arab, what do you think is the first thing that comes to mind?
      a. Why do you think that is?
      b. When an American thinks of a Muslim, what's the first thing that comes to mind?
      c. Why do you think that is?
15. Have any of your friends ever made comments about your ethnicity, religion, or beliefs?
      a. Can you tell me about something that was said?
      b. How did it make you feel?

c. How did you react?

Appendix E
Prompts for Career Dream Drawing Activity

We will be exploring how you see your career dream. Over the next 30 mins please think about what you would like to be when you grow up. I will provide you with Paper, crayons, colored pencils and markers for drawing.
I would like you to think about that career and draw how you see yourself doing that particular career. Be as creative as you would like and use as much detail as possible.

After you are finished with this career dream drawing I will ask you to share what you have drawn with me and explain all the details. I will encourage you to "read your visual diagram" asking you to explain why you choose certain colors, details and objects in the pictures.

Prompts for Identity Mapping Activity
I would like you to think about your identity. How do you see yourself and the different characteristics that are part of you? How do your religion, culture, language, race and gender all combine to make who you are? You may choose to draw a picture, image or scene but can also draw how each of these characteristics work together to make you.
I will provide you with Paper, crayons, colored pencils and markers for drawing.
After you are finished I would like to have a conversation around each of the pieces that make up your identity. Does anyone characteristic have more impact than another? Did you leave any characteristic out on purpose? Why did you choose the specific images, patterns and colors?
How did this activity make you feel? Do you wish to share anything else about your identity?

Appendix F

Assent for Child

Project Title	Assessment of Attitudes towards stereotypes of Arab Middle School Boys
Purpose of the Study	This research is being conducted by Mrs. Dina Shafey Scott at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because your constituency, Arab American middle school males is often understudied and is increasingly becoming the focus of media and government scrutiny. The purpose of this research project is further understood how Arab Males react to cultural stereotypes and how it effects identity creation and academic performance.
Procedures	We will meet in the Public Library (TBD) to participate in brief dialogue. Individual Interviews will take place for approximately 45 minutes to one hour. During that time a set of 5-10 pre-determined, open-ended questions will be asked. You will be interviewed separately to allow for confidentially. While in your interview, your answers will be recorded using tape recording device, that will remain out of site by the interviewer and answers will be transcribed at a later time. The interview questions are attached to this document. You will be encouraged to ask the researcher questions throughout the duration of the study and you may choose withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.
Potential Risks and Discomforts	There may be some risks from participating in this research study. The study asks you to recall situations where you experienced cultural stereotypes, which may have been uncomfortable.
Potential Benefits	The benefits to you include the opportunity to speak freely about cultural stereotypes and to have your voice heard, through this research. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through an improved understanding of how cultural stereotypes affect academic performance and how you have been able to thwart these stereotypes to pursue your academic goals.

Confidentiality	The purpose of this study is fact-finding and you will be asked to give your opinion on specific questions related to cultural stereotypes in education. The risks are minimal and may include low-level anxiety and concerns about revealing personal information. These risks are addressed through the voluntary nature of the study and how your candid responses will remain anonymous. Additionally, you are encouraged to ask the researcher questions throughout the duration of the study and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty <u>Audio taping:</u> This research project involves making audiotapes of you, in order to ensure your answers and opinions are accurately captured while we dialogue. The audiotapes will be transcribed and only the researchers will have access to them. After the research is complete audiotapes will be stored in 0201 Benjamin in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed after research is complete within 10 years. ____ I agree to be audio taped during my participation in this study. ____ I do not agree to be audio taped during my participation in this study.
Right to Withdraw and Questions	Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify. If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the investigator, Dina Shafey at: 2937 McGee Way Olney, MD 20832 240-731-4000 dinashaefy@yahoo.com dshafey@umd.edu
Participant Rights	If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: **University of Maryland College Park** **Institutional Review Board Office** **0101 Lee Building** **College Park, Maryland, 20742** **E-mail: irb@umd.edu** **Telephone: 301-405-0678**

	This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.
Compensation	Participants will be asked to agree to participate and if participants agree they will be given a $25.00 iTunes gift card as a token of appreciation from the principal investigator at the conclusion of the third interview
Statement of Consent	Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form. If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.

Signature and Date	**NAME OF SUBJECT [Please Print]**	
	SIGNATURE OF SUBJECT	
	DATE	

Appendix F
Consent for Parent

Project Title	**Assessment of Attitudes towards stereotypes of Arab Middle School Boys**
Purpose of the Study	This research is being conducted by **Dina Shafey Scott** at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting your child to participate in a research study that attempts to understand what factors impact their identity construct situated against stereotypes and how this impacts academic aspirations.
Procedures	I would like to talk with your child about instances of discrimination because of their culture and religion as well as how they see themselves as it relates to their ethnic identity. I would also like for your child to share how they see themselves in the future around their specific careers and what they define academic success as. If you agree, your child will talk to me about topics such as discrimination, prejudice, identity, career choices, academic aspirations and success. Additionally, I would like to also hold two focus groups with other Arab Muslim boys in the area where they will be asked to talk to the other boys about culture, race, religion, identity, academic success and discrimination. I will conduct each

	of the 3 interviews in the public library in your community. The interview is expected to take about 45 minutes to complete. I would like to audiotape the interview
Potential Risks and Discomforts	There may be some risks from participating in this research study. The study asks your child to recall situations where he experienced cultural stereotypes, which may have been uncomfortable. If your child seems uncomfortable I will cease the interview.
Potential Benefits	While your child may not directly benefit from participating in our interview, we hope that this study will contribute to the improvement of schools understanding of Arab American Muslim boys and improve cultural sensitivity programs aimed at understanding the lives of these boys.
Compensation	Participants will be asked to agree to participate and if participants agree they will be given a $25.00 iTunes gift card as a token of appreciation from the principal investigator at the conclusion of the third interview
Confidentiality	We plan to publish the results of this study, but will not include any information that would identify you, your child or the family member who participated. To keep this information safe, the audiotape of your child's interview will be placed in a locked file cabinet until a written word-for-word copy of the discussion has been created. As soon as this process is complete, the tapes will be destroyed. The researchers will enter study data on a computer that is password-protected. To protect confidentiality, your child's real name and the names of any family members will not be used in the written copy of the discussion.
Right to Withdraw and Questions	Your child's participation in this research is completely voluntary. Your child may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, your child may stop participating at any time. If your child decides not to participate in this study or stops participating at any time, your child will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which he/she would otherwise qualify. If your child decides to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact me: Dina Shafey at: 2937 McGee Way Olney, MD 20832 240-731-4000 dinashaefy@yahoo.com
Participant Rights	If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or

	wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: **University of Maryland College Park** **Institutional Review Board Office** **1204 Marie Mount Hall** **College Park, Maryland, 20742** **E-mail: irb@umd.edu** **Telephone: 301-405-0678** This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.
Statement of Consent	Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form. If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.
Signature and Date	**NAME OF MINOR PARTICIPANT [Please Print]**
	NAME OF PARENT [Please Print]
	SIGNATURE OF PARTENT
	DATE

Appendix G
Parent Demographic Questionnaire
Dear participant, please complete this brief questionnaire by circling or completing the appropriate answers below. If you are uncomfortable sharing any parts of this information please leave the question blank.

1. What is your gender?   a) Male   b) Female   c) Transgendered Male
   d) Transgendered Female

1. What is your age?   _____

2. What is your religion? _____

3. What is your country of birth? (If not the United States please list the age that you moved to this country) _____Age moved to the U.S._____. Circumstances of immigration (if you immigrated)?
   _____
   _____

4. How do you identify racially and ethnically? (Select best fit)
   a) Black American
   b) White
   c) Hispanic
   d) African (i.e. Ghana, Nigeria), please specify
   _____
   e) West Indian/Caribbean (i.e. Jamaica, Trinidad), please specify
   _____
   f) Multiracial, please specify_____
   g) Other, please specify_____

5. How many children do you have? What are their ages & grades?
   _____.

6. At the school site what grade is your son currently enrolled in? _____

7. What is his overall Grade Point Average (GPA)? _____

8. Based upon your family income, how would you define your class status? Circle one.
   a) Poor
   b) Working Class
   c) Middle Class
   d) Upper Class/Affluent

9. How do you define success (in school, in life, in religion, in culture)? What does success look like in your son's future?

_____
_____
_____
_____

OPTIONAL:
For the purposes of this study, please select a **pseudonym** (first name) that you would like to use. [Note: A pseudonym can be any name you desire. If this is left blank, the researcher will create a pseudonym on your behalf]   **PSEUDONYM:**
_____

Please respond to these questions in an open-ended manner. There are no restrictions as the number of words required to respond to these questions.

Who is the head of the household?

Who makes all the decisions?

Who is responsible for the financial facet of your household?

What kinds of expectations/goals do you have for your daughters? Is this different than the expectations that you have for your sons?

Do you talk to your sons about responsibilities of Men?

Do they ask you questions about differences between Males and Females (ie, "How come (my sister) gets to. And I don't?

What kinds of requirements do the boys have at school? Are there activities they must attend each school year? Sports? Clubs?

Do you allow your boys to attend social functions at school? Why or Why not?
-Do the boys feel at a loss if they are not allowed to attend these functions?

Are parents required to attend Parent/Teacher conferences? Nights?
- Do you attend these regularly?
- Do you often communicate with your sons teachers? Principal?
- Have you had to speak with your son's principal or vice principal for anything other than academics?

Appendix H- IRB Application

UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

DATE: September 27, 2016

TO: Dina Shafey Scott, PhD
FROM: University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [889582-1] Intersections and Intersectionality: Examining Identity Formation
                     and the Academic Aspirations of Arab American Muslim Middle School Boys
REFERENCE #:
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: September 27, 2016
EXPIRATION DATE: September 26, 2017
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 7

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The University of Maryland
College Park (UMCP) IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate
risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be
conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

Prior to submission to the IRB Office, this project received scientific review from the departmental IRB
Liaison.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulations.

This project has been determined to be a Minimal Risk project. Based on the risks, this project requires
continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this
procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and
continued approval before the expiration date of September 26, 2017.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and
insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must
continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Unless
a consent waiver or alteration has been approved, Federal regulations require that each participant
receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior
to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others (UPIRSOs) and SERIOUS and
UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please use the appropriate
reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this
office.

Generated on IRBNet

DATE: January 23, 2017

TO: Dina Shafey Scott, PhD
FROM: University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [889582-2] Intersections and Intersectionality: Examining Identity Formation and the Academic Aspirations of Arab American Muslim Middle School Boys

REFERENCE #:
SUBMISSION TYPE: Amendment/Modification

ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: January 23, 2017
EXPIRATION DATE: September 26, 2017
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 7

Thank you for your submission of Amendment/Modification materials for this project. The University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

Prior to submission to the IRB Office, this project received scientific review from the departmental IRB Liaison.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulations.

This project has been determined to be a Minimal Risk project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of September 26, 2017.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Unless a consent waiver or alteration has been approved, Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others (UPIRSOs) and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

- 1 -

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University of Maryland College Park
Institutional Review Board
IRB Initial Application - Part 1

Last edited by: Dina Shafey

☐ Full

Last edited on: September 22, 2016

☑ Expedited

[click for checklist]

☐ Exempt

[889582-1] Intersections and Intersectionality: Examining Identity Formation and the Academic Aspirations of Arab American Muslim Middle School Boys

Answer all questions on this form completely, include attachments and obtain signatures of Co-Investigators and your department IRB Liaison prior to final submission on IRBNet.

I. Principal Investigator

Name:	Dina Shafey Scott, PhD	**Status:**	Graduate Student
Department:	TLPL- Teaching and Learning, Policy and Leadership		
Phone:	2407314000	**Email:**	dshafey@umd.edu
Address:	2937 McGee Way		

II. Faculty Advisor   N/A ☐

Note: A faculty advisor is required if the PI is a student resident or fellow and the Faculty Advisor MUST sign this package through IRBNet.

Name:	Jennifer Turner		
Department:	TLPL- Teaching and Learning, Policy and Leadership		
Phone:	Phone: (301) 405-0433	**Email:**	jdturner@umd.edu
Address:	2233 Benjamin Building		

III. Co-Investigators   N/A ☑

Note: All co-investigators MUST sign this package through IRBNet.

Name:

Department:

Phone: **Email:**

Address:

IV. Funding Information   N/A ☑

Note: A copy of the awarded grant application (minus budgetary information) must be provided.

Lay Summary:

The purpose of the proposed qualitative study is to elaborate on how stereotyping effects the self-image and educational attainment of the Arab American male. More specifically, are these young men internalizing stereotypes about their culture and ethnicity? As part of this proposed research, this constituency will be interviewed to ascertain how cultural stereotypes effect their perceptions of self and academic performance, past and present. Additionally, I wish to learn what forms of social and cultural capital these boys have access to in order to determine what protective measurements they may have.

Requested Review Path:
- ☐ Full
- ☑ Expedited
- ☐ Exempt

Projected Completion Date:　　05/15/2017

Research Category:
- ☐ Faculty or Staff Research
- ☑ Graduate Student Research
- ☐ Student/Faculty Collaboration
- ☐ Undergraduate Student Research
- ☐ Other:

Academic Committee Review:
- ☐ Yes - Masters committee
- ☑ Yes - Dissertation committee
- ☐ No additional academic review required

Participant Incentives:
- ☐ Cash
- ☐ Check
- ☐ Raffle/ Lottery:

- ☐ Extra Credit/ Course Credit:

- ☑ Gift:

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Each participant will be given a $25 Itunes gift card which I will fund.

☐ Food:

☐ Other:

☐ Not Applicable

VI. Performance Sites

Performance Sites Engaged in Human Subject Research:
(where the research will be conducted)

☐ UMCP - Campus:
☐ University of Maryland - Extension:
☐ Campus Health Center
☐ Universities at Shady Grove:
☐ Schools:
☐ Prison/Jail:
☑ Other:

All students and participants will be interviewed in thier homes and in the public libraries most closely associated to thier homes. I will not be interviewing or observing the students in the schools.

Is this an international study?

☐ Yes *[complete Section 10 of Initial Application Part 2]*
☑ No

If yes: **International Sites:**

VII. Subject Information

Targeted Populations:

☐ Normal adult/healthy persons
☐ Cognitively impaired persons
☐ Economically disadvantaged persons
☐ Educationally disadvantaged persons
☐ Elderly/aged persons
☐ Hospital patients or outpatients
☐ Illiterate persons
☐ Individuals with physical disabilities
☑ Minority group(s)

- 3 -

☑ Minors/children
  [Inclusion of anyone under 18 requires a Parental Consent Form]

☐ Non-English speakers

☐ Pregnant women

☐ Prisoners

☐ Students (non-minors)

☐ UMCP employees

☐ Other special characteristics and special populations:

Informed Consent Process:

☑ Informed consent will be obtained from subjects and documented with a signed, written consent form

☐ Informed consent will be obtained from subjects, but no signed consent form will be used. This includes oral consent and implied consent (e.g., completing a survey).
  [please see the Requesting a Waiver of Informed Consent Guidance]

☐ Fully informed consent will not be obtained from all subjects. This includes deception, withholding information, etc.
  [please see the Requesting a Waiver of Informed Consent Guidance]

Will health information be collected?
(See the HIPAA section of the IRB website for more information and additional resources.)

☑ No

☐ Yes, data are de-identified or constitute a limited data set.

☐ Yes, subject's authorization will be obtained or a waiver or alteration of authorization will be requested.
  [complete IRB Form HIPAA]

VIII. Research Procedures

Research Procedures:

☐ Records review - retrospective

☐ Records review - prospective

☐ Education research

☐ Behavioral experiments

☐ Behavioral observation

☑ Questionnaires/surveys

☑ Interviews

☑ Audiotaping/videotaping

☐ The Internet

☐ Deception
  [describe debriefing process in Section 7 of Initial Application Part 2]

☐ Cancer Interventions (health promotion, implementation, etc.)

☐ None of the above

Biomedical Procedures:

☐ Tissue banking

☐ Biopsy

☐ Blood draw

☐ Use of pre-existing tissues

☐ Clinical tests

☐ Radiology

☐ Radiation/X-ray/DEXA

☐ fMRI
  [use IRB fMRI templates]

☐ Pregnancy screening

☐ EKG

☐ EEG

☐ Genetic analysis

☑ None of the above

IX. Assurances and Signatures

Assurances

This research, once approved, is subject to continuing review and approval by the IRB. The principal investigator will maintain records of this research according to IRB guidelines. If these conditions are not met, approval of this research could be suspended or terminated.

Electronic signatures certify that:

- The signatory agrees that he or she is aware of the policies on research involving participants of the University of Maryland College Park and will safeguard the rights, dignity, and privacy of all participants.
- The information provided in this application form is correct.
- The principal investigator will seek and obtain prior written approval from the IRB for any substantive modification in the proposal, including but not limited to changes in cooperating investigators/ agencies as well as changes in procedures.
- Unexpected or otherwise significant adverse events in the course of this study which may affect the risks and benefits to participation will be reported to the IRB.
- The research will not be initiated and subjects cannot be recruited until final written approval is granted.

The following signatures are required for new project submissions:

- Principal Investigator
- Research Advisor(s)
- IRB Liaison (click here for list)

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INSTRUCTIONS TO RESEARCHERS

[top]

Now that you have completed this document, check your work, attach all appropriate documents, electronically sign and submit your work. Based on your responses, the following additional documentation must be included with this package before submission. Upload additional documentation in the Designer.

Documents available in the IRBNet Forms and Templates Library:

- Consent Form (template and Completion Guide in Library)

Additional required documentation:

- Parental Consent Form

If you have any questions, please refer to the guidelines in the IRBNet Forms and Templates Library or contact irb@umd.edu.

Appendix I- Preliminary Codes for Data Analysis

Question Specific- Thematic Condensed Categories Preliminary Codes				
Q.1 Identity	**Q.2 Success and Achievement**	**Q.3 Experiences with Cultural Bias**	**Q.4 Cultural and Social Capital**	**Q.5 Navigating Schooling around Bias**
Islam is my Identity • My Muslim Religious Identity • Islam as a protective mechanism • Religious Capital	**Success as Financial Stability** • Financial Security	**Perceptions of Others' Perceptions** • Outsider Identity Classification • Insider Stereotype Incontinuity	**Parental Desire for Success** • Parental Sacrifice • Familial Capital • Parental Role in Academic life	**Recognition of Difference** • Navigating Stereotypes in school • Cultural Sensitivity • Recognizing Ignorance
Cultural Identities • My Arab Culture • My American Culture • Intersectional Cultural Identities	**Success as Achievement in School** • School Necessity for Success • Future Driven by Academic Success • Parental Role in Success	**Cultural Bias** • School Based Bias • Societal Bias • Self-Bias	**Intellectual Capital** • Self-Motivation • Self-Determination	**Disconnecting from Cultural Associations** • Insider Stereotype Incontinuity • Insider-Outsider Recognition • Becoming part of dominant cultural group • Navigating schooling through assimilation
Being a Boy • Masculine Identity • Neutral Gender Roles	**Barriers to Success** • Academic Constraints • Negative schooling experiences		**Religious Commitment** • Religion as Capital • Religious Perseverance	**Cultural and Religious Pride** • Positive Association with Culture • Cultural and Religious Pride
On Being an Outsider • Outsider identity Classification • Production of Privilege and oppression			**Arab Cultural Pride** • Music • Cultural Artifacts • Fear of loss of Culture	**Family and Friends as Support** • Parental Involvement • Friends as protective mechanisms

Task	Apr 2016	May 2015	June 2016	July 2016	Aug 2016	Sep 2016	Oct 2016	Nov 2016	Dec 2016	Jan 2017	Feb 2017
Proposal Defense	☆										
IRB Submission and Approval		☆	☆								
Distribute Fliers and Recruit Participants			☆	☆	☆						
Formal Data Collection						☆	☆	☆	☆		
Transcription and Initial Coding							☆	☆	☆		
Transcribe Researcher Logs							☆	☆	☆		
Member Check Case Studies							☆	☆	☆		
Write Narrative Chapters									☆	☆	
Write Cross Case Chapter										☆	☆
Prepare Draft Dissertation for Review											☆
Committee to Review Final Dissertation											
Final Dissertation Defense											

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