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Identity and Career Experiences of Muslim Immigrant Women: The United States Context

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**IDENTITY AND CAREER EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM IMMIGRANT
WOMEN: THE UNITED STATES CONTEXT**

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COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY

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I dedicate this dissertation to my immediate family members- Jaihoon, Orhan Kemal, and Eileen Filiz Khamush, as well as my parents- Behiye and Mehmet Kacar- who have offered tremendous support throughout this project.

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**IDENTITY AND CAREER EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM IMMIGRANT
WOMEN: THE UNITED STATES CONTEXT**

BASAK KACAR-KHAMUSH

ABSTRACT

Muslim women's sense of self is at stake due to prevailing stigma and oppression toward Muslims. Employment and workplace have emerged as primary settings for encounters of negative bias, prejudice, and discrimination. Muslim immigrant women face multiple disadvantages on the basis of their various intersecting identities. The purpose of this study was to explore identity and career experiences of first generation immigrant Muslim women in American society, particularly in work and career settings. Informed by relational approaches to career development and social identity perspective, and grounded on the constructivist paradigm, a phenomenological qualitative analysis using consensual qualitative research (CQR) was conducted. Participants included 15 Muslim immigrant women with diverse ethnic backgrounds, residing in two Midwestern cities. Twelve domains emerged: Descriptive features of the self/identity, dynamic features of the self/identity, education and career experience, immigration and cross-cultural experience, stigma and oppression experience, emotional experience, family relational experience, social relational experience, home-country and home-culture experience, worldview, life challenges, and future orientation. Results suggest that Muslim immigrant women dynamically craft their selves and construct their experience in contexts defined by instability, pressure, and tension. Employment emerged as a primary context of difficult encounters, indicated by barriers of occupational mobility, social exclusion, unfair hiring outcomes, and discrimination on the basis of diverse

identity markers. Contributions to the literature and implications for theory, research, and clinical work were discussed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Identity and Career Experiences of Muslim Immigrant Women: The United States Context

The current socio-political and socio-cultural climate of the United States is ripe for research exploring lives of those challenged politically and societally. Without question, one such group at stake has long been Muslims. In the heat of the last presidential debate, much has been declared, many of which has been spurred by a buildup of tragic terror events spanning more than a decade. The pile of issues distressing the society has intensified following numerous shootings in the nation and terrorist attacks around the globe, causing havoc in both the West and countries of Muslim majorities. In all of these, the perpetrator announces affiliation exclusively with one social group, namely Muslims, building a discourse that puts 1.6 billion world Muslims' reputation, self-esteem, and sense of self at stake.

Public fear emanating from the terrorist attacks throughout the past decade and a half swiftly found its way into the political sphere, paving the way for eloquent expressions of nativistic ideology and intensifying apprehension among many citizens (Portes & Rumbaut, 2014). Anti-Muslim sentiment and rhetoric have prevailed due to

longstanding conception of Islam as incompatible with the Western religious and cultural values (Akram, 2002; Curtis, 2012; Huntington, 1993; Kalin, 2004). However, the West and the Muslim world affairs entered a new controversial stage after September 11, leading to further deterioration of misperceptions toward Muslims (Kalin, 2004). Following the terrorist events, there was an abrupt decline in favorability of Muslims in Europe and the United States as evident from polls showing that Muslims were associated with many negative stereotypes and they were the targets of many discriminatory practices. In the midst of all of these, a closer look into the lives of Muslims is much warranted.

Studies (e.g., Cole & Ahmadi; 2003; Council on American Islamic Relations, 2010; Moore, 2000; Peek, 2003; Seggie & Sanford, 2010; Syed & Pio, 2010; Tyrer & Ahmad, 2006; Zine, 2008) have unanimously emphasized Muslim women's increased vulnerability to racism and discrimination due to visible markers of ethnic and religious identity, such as the veil, dress code, skin color, and accent. Furthermore, Muslim immigrant women experience "triple jeopardy" (Syed & Pio, 2010; p. 117) in the workplace as well as other social contexts as a result of their multiple interwoven identities, such as ethnicity, religion, gender, and nationality that subject them to "multiple and multilevel processes of discrimination and disadvantage" (Syed & Pio, 2010; p. 117), indicative of non-affirming and non-holding contexts (Blustein, 2011).

Oppressive practices linked to racism and sexism and absence of a supportive relational can lead to a sense of rejection and exclusion causing a threatened selfhood and psychological distress (Baumeister, Twenge, & Ciarocco, 2002; Blustein, 2008; Forgas & Williams, 2002). Given the prominence of relationships in the development of women's

self and personal identity (e.g., Jordan, Surrey, & Kaplan, 1991; Miller, 1991; Surrey, 1991), racist and discriminatory attitudes and actions would put Muslim immigrant women's sense of self at stake, inhibiting their motivation to become culturally adapted and productive members of the society through paid and unpaid work (Richardson, 2012; Schultheiss, 2006). Accordingly, this study seeks to explore Muslim immigrant women's experiences of selfhood and career in the American society.

Muslims in the World

As of 2010, Muslims comprised approximately the 23% of the global population with 1.6 billion of Muslims around the world (Pew Research Center, 2015). While Islam currently ranks second with the number of its affiliates, it is identified as the fastest growing religion in the world (Lipka, 2017). The majority of Muslims around the world live in the Asia-Pacific region, including countries such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iran, and Turkey (Lipka, 2017). There is also a large population of Muslims in Middle East, Central Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa (Sirin & Fine, 2008). The number of Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries, such as Europe, North America, and Australia also continues to grow (Hackett, 2016; Sirin & Fine, 2008).

Both Islam and Muslim are interconnected words deriving from the Arabic root S-L-M. The word Islam denotes "submission", to particularly the will of Allah (God) while the word Muslim refers to a person who submits to Allah and adheres to Islam as the religion (Akyol, 2011; Johnson, 2009). From the same root, the word Salam which means "peace" also originates and widely used among Muslims to greet each other. Islam is a monotheistic faith that instruct its adherents to believe and worship only one God. Islam recognizes Muhammad as the last prophet and messenger of and the Qur'an as the book

containing the actual words of Allah revealed to Muhammad by Allah. In addition to the prophets of other Abrahamic religions, Islam endorses belief in a number of other prophets some of whom were mentioned in the Qur'an. The practice of Islam is based on five key principles, including to have faith in God, pray at least five times a day, donate a certain amount of income to those in need, fast during the month of Ramadan, and make pilgrimage to Mecca at least once.

Although the majority of world's Muslims uniformly acknowledge main principles of faith, there is considerable diversity in how the faith is put into practice around the world. These theological nuances are subsumed under four schools' jurisprudence called Sunni sects, followed by the vast majority of Muslims in different parts of the world. Another sect is called Shi'a, which grew out of political rather than theological differences, followed by a much smaller group of Muslims mostly located in Iran (Johnson, 2009).

Muslims in the United States

The arrival of Muslims to the United States has occurred in a number of distinct periods defined by accompanying sociopolitical events around the globe which shaped the ethnic and religious identity of emigrants (Curtis, 2009; Haddad, Smith, & Moore, 2006). Despite the common misconception that Muslims make up only a recent group of immigrants in the United States, their history traces back to the early eighteenth century African slave trade, as evidenced by the accounts of first generation African-American descendants who indicated that their enslaved elders spoke Arabic and practiced Islamic religious rituals, such as fasting and praying (Curtis, 2009).

Muslims who voluntarily immigrated to the United States between 1870s and 1924 in large numbers were of a diverse group from the Middle East, South Asia, Bosnia, and Albania, relocating in North Dakota, Seattle, Chicago, Michigan, Massachusetts, and Detroit where they established local groups, organizations, spaces for prayer, and aid societies in 1900s (Curtis, 2009; Haddad, 2011; Sirin & Fine, 2008). Previously, Islam was being practiced individually rather than communally among the very first Muslim settlers of which following generations assimilated into the Christian culture (Curtis, 2009).

The second wave of immigration followed after World War II (Haddad, 2011). During this period of 1950s, the emphasis was on crafting a tightly connected American Islamic faith and cultural integration in which a strong connection between being a good Muslim and American was drawn (Curtis, 2009). Following the era of Cold War in 1960s, the new wave of immigrants, such as Palestinian refugees and Arab students endorsed increased ethnic and national identification and took on a more critical attitude toward the United States due to its pro-Israeli stance in Middle East regional events (Curtis, 2009; Gendzier, 2011).

With the new immigration law in 1965, millions of Muslims of highly educated and professional backgrounds from diverse parts of the world arrived (Curtis, 2009; Haddad, 2011). This period features Muslims' efforts for increased spiritual growth through more rigorous observance of Islamic principles and societal renewal through joining in with other religious leaders for a moral revival of American popular culture (Curtis, 2009). In 1983, Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) was established to offer support with Islamic issues faced by Muslim Americans and Muslim students while

Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) was founded in 1994 to represent Muslims on political forums (Sirin & Fine, 2008).

The flow of Muslim immigrants was restricted following the terrorist attacks of 9/11 while thousands of Muslims were detained, randomly interrogated, and charities were unfairly targeted as supporters of terrorism (Curtis, 2009). Meanwhile, all major Muslim American organizations and numerous religious leaders condemned the attacks, stated that Islam never approves violence, organized interfaith prayer services, and donations, and sponsored blood drives (Curtis, 2009). Common trends shaping individual and collective identity of Muslims included increased social and political activism, more in-depth focus on problems among the Muslim community, and increasing orientation toward secular and spiritual, rather than religious way of life (Curtis, 2009).

Current state of Muslims in America. Muslim population in the United States has grown over the last 20 years due to immigration and childbirth (Mohamed, 2016). The number of Muslims living in the United States was estimated to be 3.3 million in 2015, making up about 1% of the total U.S. population which is projected to double by 2050 (Mohamed, 2016). Sixty-three percent of Muslim Americans are first generation immigrants and 81% are citizens of the U.S., reflecting a much higher rate of citizenship compared to other groups of immigrants (Pew Research Center, 2011). Muslim Americans mainly come from regions including, Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia and roughly 13% of Muslims are African-Americans whose parents were born in the United States (Pew Research Center, 2011). Twenty-three percent of Muslim Americans of which three-fifths are African American report converting to Islam from other religions (Pew Research Center, 2007).

The majority of Muslim Americans are well-educated and appear to be faring well economically (Portes & Rumbaut, 2014; Sirin & Fine, 2008). Forty-six percent of Muslim Americans report being in excellent shape financially and twice as many compared to the general public report being enrolled in higher education (Pew Research Center, 2011). In addition, the majority of Muslim Americans (56%) report coming to the U.S. because they want to adopt American way of life, showing that Muslim Americans are well integrated to the mainstream society (Pew Research Center, 2011; Sirin & Fine, 2008). Similar to the percentages in general public, Muslim Americans report watching TV for entertainment, following college football, recycling, and playing video games (Pew Research Center, 2011). While 46% of Christians first identified as Christian and then American, 49% of Muslims identified as Muslim first and then American (Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2011; Pew Research Center). Twenty-six percent of Muslims initially identified as American and 18% identified as both American and Muslim (Pew Research Center, 2011). Compared with Muslims elsewhere, Muslim Americans held significantly more egalitarian attitudes toward women, with 90% stating that women should be able to work outside of the home (Pew Research Center, 2011). In addition, the majority of Muslims are inclined to support Democratic Party while they found Republican Party unfriendly (Pew Research Center, 2011).

While the negative images circulated through media serve to magnify the extremism of a radicalized minority group, recent surveys show that the majority of Muslims in countries with significant Muslim population endorse an overwhelmingly unfavorable view of extremist groups, such as ISIS, and their violent actions, including suicide bombings (Morey & Yaqin, 2011; Poushter, 2015). Among Muslim Americans,

opposition to violence is highly endorsed and no correlation was found between higher levels religiosity and favorable view of violence (Pew Research Center, 2011). Despite the stereotype of Muslims being strictly religious and dogmatic, Muslim Americans were found to endorse levels of religiosity that is similar to Christians while less religiously committed than Muslims around the world (Pew Research Center, 2011).

There is vast diversity among Muslim Americans based on gender, race, class, generation, geography compared to Muslims around the world (Haddad, 2000; Sirin & Fine, 2008). Muslim Americans differ significantly from each other on a number of measures, including religious participation, such as mosque-going, praying, and fasting practices; women's status, such as differing views on wearing hijab; civic participation, including engagement in social and political activism (Sirin & Fine, 2008). It is important to consider these variations before making large-scale generalizations about any minority group, including Muslim Americans.

Perceptions and Actions toward Muslims in the West

Anti-Muslim sentiment around the globe has prevailed since 9/11. The Pew Global Attitudes Project (2006) found that Muslims among Jews and Christians were rated as the least favorable group in the West, and characteristics such as fanatical and violent were more frequently associated with Muslims by non-Muslims representing several countries around the world. In addition, the majority of Westerners believe that relations between Muslims and the West are bad and Western public generally blames Muslims for problematic relations (The Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2006). In the United States, while polls found racial profiling was considered problematic by 80% of Americans prior to September 11, 60% of those surveyed reported favoring racial

profiling toward Arabs and Muslims following the events (Cole, 2002). Gallup (2010) reported that about one half respondents of different faiths agree that most Americans are prejudiced toward Muslim Americans. Similarly, The Gallup Center for Muslim Studies found that more than four in ten Americans (43%) reported feeling at least “a little” prejudiced toward Muslims. The percentage of Muslims reporting discrimination was much higher than other faith groups who reported experiencing discrimination on the basis of their religion (Gallup, 2010).

Specific images and beliefs held about certain groups of people often lead to prejudice and exclusionary practices (Deaux, 2006). The deleterious impacts of social exclusion and alienation on the grounds of social group affiliation, such as religious identification were well-articulated from accounts of various disciplines, including history, sociology, anthropology, and psychology (Adams, 1995; Bar-Tal, 1990; Gould, 1996; Opatow, 1990; Wray, 2006). Exclusionary practices include actions ranging from labeling with derogatory terms, humiliation, unfair treatment, and deprivation of civil rights to extremely severe forms, such as exploitation, internment, deportations, destruction, and hate crimes, such as killing (Bar-Tal, 1990; DeWind, 1990; Nagata, 1990). Exclusionary sentiment and actions toward Muslims have taken a variety of forms over the years. Most recently, campaigns for presidential candidacy articulated extremist policies against Muslims residing in the United States, including setting up a governmental database to register Muslims, requiring them to carry identification cards or to wear symbols of religious affiliation, surveillance, random searches, and shutting down of mosques, and preventing Muslim entry to the country (Glenza & Felton, 2015; Obeidallah, 2015).

The negative political discourse trickled down into the larger community as apparent from increased surveillance, threats, and attacks toward individuals and places of worship (Council on American-Islamic Relations, 2015a, b; Matza, 2015; The United States Department of Justice, 2015). Instances include such examples as endorsement of Islamophobic sentiment and acts by public officials (McGuinness, 2010; Mackey, 2010), opposition to construction of Islamic centers in communities (Goldsmith, 2010), confrontation of Muslims by protesters (Tepfer, 2010), verbal harassment through expression of racial slurs (Council on American Islamic Relations, 2009a), workplace harassment and discrimination (Council on American Islamic Relations, 2009b; 2009c), racial profiling including interrogation and detainment (Cole, 2002; Dabashi, 2013; Fantz, Almasry, & Stapleton, 2015; MacFarquhar, 2006), vandalism (Eisenmenger, 2015), and hate crimes ranging from physical harassment (Hector, 2009; U.S. Department of Justice, 2015) to killing, potentially motivated by religious bias (Curtis, 2009; McClary, 2015).

Federal data indicated rising discrimination at employment-related contexts, with record increments each year in percentages of Muslims filing complaints regarding employment discrimination (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2009). While reports by other ethnic and religious groups, such as Jews, Catholics, and Sikhs only slightly rose or declined in 2009, Muslims accounted for about a quarter of total religious discrimination claims filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, constituting an overwhelming majority of the complaints (Greenhouse, 2010). Specific examples of work discrimination include name calling, physical assaults, interruptions of

prayers, requests to remove religious dress, threats to demote, and dismissal from work as well as employment rejection based on religious background (Greenhouse, 2010).

Numerous reports and studies (e.g., Cole & Ahmadi; 2003; Council on American Islamic Relations, 2010; Seggie & Sanford, 2010) have shown Muslim women to be significantly more susceptible to the adverse effects of exclusionary actions in different segments of the society. Muslim women who wear headscarves are disproportionately more likely to face discrimination at education, career, and work settings than those who do not (American Civil Liberties Union, 2008). Incidents include denial of the right to wear a headscarf at work, dismissal or demotion for refusing to remove headscarves, and verbal assault in work and education settings (Council on American-Islamic Relations, 2010; Daily Mail Reporter, 2012).

Muslim Women's Issues

Issues of Muslim women attracted significant scholarly and public attention in both Western and Muslim societies in contemporary world. Muslim women's gender identity in particular has been an enduring subject of debate in the last few decades. Several post-colonial feminist scholars (e.g., Hoodfar, 1993; Zine, 2006) identify a prominent issue as the subjection of Muslim women to dual or multiple sources of oppression, including sexism and racism. Muslim women are pushed to navigate the ebb and tide of a dichotomous discourse between the waves of patriarchal oppression from within their communities and those of white colonial feminist bias mixed with Islamophobic attitudes from the larger society.

Muslim women's veil or hijab stands out as the most salient symbol, often spurring the debate on gender identity, which could be traced back to the Western

preoccupation with the veil beginning in the nineteenth century perceptions of Islam, formed based on travel accounts of European travelers to the East (Hoodfar, 1993). The massive literature that came out of these efforts characterized the initial stages of Orientalism (Said, 1978), referring to the study of Middle Eastern cultures by Westerners, which often reflected a distorted image of the East (Kalin, 2004). In the works of Orientalist scholars, the popular perception of Muslims were of inferior/backwards, in urgent need of modification and progress by the West (Hoodfar, 1993).

Afshar (2008) argues that the current Islamophobia, being an extension of Orientalism to date, views Islam as being monolithic, distinct, barbaric, sexist, and in clash with Western civilization, represented by covered women as the living examples of backwardness and subordination with the veil emerging as the most salient symbol of Muslim women's so-called oppression (Afshar, 2008; Hoodfar, 1993; Kahf, 2008). Within this discourse, Muslim women were frequently stereotyped as alluring, bewitching, seductive, submissive, and oppressed prisoners, expected to cater to their men's sexual desires (Afshar, 2008; Haddad, Smith, & Moore, 2006). On the other hand, Muslim women continue fight the sexism and patriarchal hierarchy in their own societies. Oppressive political regimes, domestic abuse, limited access to education and work, problems associated with living in a war zone, refugee status, honor killings, tribal punishments, and discriminatory practices regarding marriage and divorce have been among the real issues that affect the lives of Muslim women around the world (Taylor, 2008).

The issue of the veil. Competing discourses of the veil exists in contemporary Islam (Read & Bartkowski, 2000). Proponents of the veiling base their arguments on the

Qur'an, which is believed to be the sacred text containing actual revelations of God to Muhammed in Arabic language in the seventh century, as well as the hadiths, which is a collection of second-hand reports on Muhammed's life style, personal tradition, and advice (Read & Bartkowski, 2000). Rules and practices pertaining to life are often derived from the verses in Qur'an, often interpreted or elaborated on in combination with the hadith mostly in the works of clergy and scholars.

The two verses in Qur'an that is frequently referenced by Muslim clergy advice women "not to display their beauty and adornments" (24:31) and to "bring down over themselves [part] of their outer garments so that they are known and not abused" (33:59). As these verses suggest, veiling is not just about covering the head and the hair, but it entails covering the whole body, except the face, hands, and feet. However, women in different cultures practice diverse forms of veiling, including covering part of the head with some hair exposed, covering the whole face except for the eyes, or wearing a veil that covers the whole body, including the whole face. In some cultures, the veiling is part of a wider range of practices regulating women's life in different contexts. For example, *Parda* or *Purdah* in the Indian Muslim context, includes such practices as female seclusion and segregation of sexes as well as restrictions on female mobility, dress, and behavior (Jain, 2008; Kirmani, 2009). In others (e.g. Iran), while women's dress is regulated politically through compulsory veiling, women's presence in public contexts is not as restricted. Yet in several other countries, the veiling is optional and women are able to exercise more personal autonomy over the decision to veil or not.

Drawing from the Qur'anic verses and several hadith, Muslim clergy and scholars defend veiling on a number of grounds. First, they argue that women should cover as a

sign of religiosity and submitting to God because hijab is prescribed in the Qur'an, the word of God. The veiling is also viewed as a means for women to protect women's chastity, privacy, and virtue as it supposedly helps avoid unwanted male gaze, attention, and interference (Read & Bartkowski, 2000). The veil is viewed as an identity marker that distinguishes Muslim women from others through communicating social and religious values while linking them to the broader Muslim community (Read & Bartkowski, 2000; Zine, 2008). Additionally, the veil represents "a means of resisting and subverting dominant Euro-centric forms of femininity" and an "oppositional political discourse that counters the tyranny of beauty that objectifies and commodifies women for the edification of patriarchal capitalist desires" (Zine, 2008, p. 243).

Contrary to the clergy and the scholars, Muslim feminists (e.g., Alibhai-Brown, 2015; Hoodfar, 1993; Mernissi, 1991; Zahedi, 2008; Zuhur, 2008) take a more critical approach to the practice of veiling. First, they indicate that the veiling and seclusion of women predates Islam and originates in non-Arab Middle Eastern and Mediterranean societies, which is practiced as a sign of social status to distinguish respectable women and later adopted by Muslims through contact with these societies (Hoodfar, 1993). Several feminist scholars also argue that the form of veiling is not described and covering of hair is not mandated in the Qur'an (Hoodfar, 1993; Zine, 2008). They interpret the Qur'anic verses as advising women of following a modest dress code rather than covering the whole body specifically (Zine, 2008). Muslim critics of the veil argue that the veiling puts the burden of managing men's sexuality and avoiding harassment upon women rather than men. In addition, the practice of veiling is seen as a "mechanism in the service of patriarchy" (Hoodfar, 1993, p. 5), "a means of disciplining and regulating

women's bodies" (Zine, 2008; p. 244) that undermines women's autonomy to make their own choices about their bodies. In that regard, the veil serves as a symbol of women's oppression while veiled women are deemed submissive, uneducated, unintelligent, and in need of liberation and empowerment (Afshar, 2008; Hoodfar, 1993; Taylor, 2008).

Several other feminists (e.g., Bilge, 2010; Zine, 2008) point out to the reductionist discourses that dismiss Muslim women's diverse reasons for practicing the veil. Constructing a view of Muslim women as non-autonomous, submissive victims of patriarchy, as often voiced by Western colonial feminists, grossly overlooks the agency, creativity, and flexibility Muslim women exercise in taking up the veil (Bilge, 2010). Furthermore, the diverse reasons cited by Muslim women for wearing the hijab are often negated, regarded as irrelevant or unreliable information due to the belief that veil as an oppressive practice is a sign of lack of agency and inability to make free choices, which casts doubt about the legitimacy of Muslim women's personal accounts (Bilge, 2010). Whether the veil is mandated as the legitimate form of dress in some countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, or it is banned in public spaces in countries with secularist political regimes (e.g., Turkey), the impact is on women's bodies which become "a site of social control and regulation" (Zine, 2008, p. 244). Thus, a contemporary challenge for most Muslim women is to resist the power of essentialist paradigms, (e.g., "patriarchal fundamentalism vs. secular Islamophobia") in determining their experience and prescribing certain practices and lives (Zine, 2008, p. 250).

Relational and Psychological Experiences of Muslims

Many Muslims living in the West are mainstream, well-rounded citizens contributing to their countries on economic, social, and cultural terms, adopting American customs rather than remaining distinct, making friends, appreciating life in a modern society, and participating in labor force, social and civic life (Pew Research Center, 2007; 2011). Thus, Muslims have constant contact with fellow citizens on various levels within their societies. As the current socio-political climate of the United States has been critically impacted by the extremist actions linked with Muslims for more than a decade, it is important to shed more light on societal factors as well as extremist political discourse and policies impacting Muslim individuals' social and psychological adjustment given the centrality of interconnectedness and relatedness for individual growth and well-being as well as the adverse impact of social isolation and alienation on quality of life (e.g., Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Bowlby, 1988; Cutrona & Russell, 1990; Gergen, 1994; 2009; Jordan et al., 1991; Josselson, 1992; Maslow, 1987; Miller, 1976; Vaux, 1988).

Sirin and Fine (2008) contend that Muslim immigrants in the West experienced significant disruption in their sense of belongingness and embeddedness in the larger society because of anti-Muslim sentiment conveyed by various channels. The media, school, street, and the workplace have become the "social mirrors" (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001, p. 99) that frequently reflected powerful images connecting Muslims with violence and extremism. The prevailing negative discourse solidified the dividing lines, relegating the Muslims to the category of "Others" while the remaining citizens of vast diversity, huddled together under one flag, abstaining from the suspect

and claiming sole ownership of the American identity (Sirin & Fine, 2008). The relational space within which Muslims operate and interact with the members of the larger society seems to include impending suspicion, surveillance, and exclusion, far from meeting the needs of relatedness and social support.

Research (e.g., Amer & Hovey, 2011; Sirin & Fine, 2008) on Muslim Americans found several psychological difficulties such as significant levels of anxiety, depression, psychological withdrawal, and somatic complaints stemming from their experiences of social exclusion and alienation. The disruption in American-Muslims' sense of belonging and the accompanying emotional distress may eventually alter how they view themselves and their value as accepted citizens of the society. Indeed, growing evidence indicates that psychological distress and social maladjustment are closely linked to a selfhood threatened by social rejection and exclusion and a lack of supportive relational experiences with others (Baumeister, Twenge, & Ciarocco, 2002; Forgas & Williams, 2002).

Self, Self-Concept, and Identity

Sense of self, self-awareness, and identity are what distinguishes human beings from other living forms and the ability to reflect upon and talk about oneself is what makes human self-processes cognitively and socially more complex (LeDoux, 2003; Turner, 2003). Understanding the self and identity greatly matters due to the centrality of these phenomena in making sense of human experience, including consciousness, feeling, and action (Turner, 2003). While forming a stable and positive sense of self (Foddy & Kashima, 2002), maintaining and enhancing adequate self-esteem (Kirkpatrick & Ellis, 2004), and promoting self-love (Campbell & Baumeister, 2004) were viewed as

indicative of a well-adjusted selfhood (Oyserman, 2004), mental illness, social maladjustment, criminality, and violence were shown to be linked with a self that is threatened or inadequately developed (Forgas & Williams, 2002).

The concept of self as a multifaceted universal inquiry has long intrigued a wide spectrum of disciplines, including theology, philosophy, literature, art, and most recently modern scientific research, including anthropology, sociology, psychology, and political science, culminating in a massive amount of scholarly work (Deaux, 1992; LeDoux & Debiec, 2003; Simon, 2004). Different definitions of the self, identity, and self-concept exist due to diverse worldviews endorsed by different areas of study, making definitional consensus impossible to achieve (Breakwell, 1992).

The social-cognitive model, which is the dominant metatheory in social psychology (Abrams & Hogg, 2004), views the self as “a representation or set of representations about oneself” (Swann & Bosson, 2010, p. 591). It corresponds to self-as-object in Jamesian terms, referring to self-knowledge that includes the full array of thoughts, feelings, evaluations, and beliefs people have about themselves (Swann & Bosson, 2010). Another term that is closely related to the self is identity. Identities include the traits, roles, and group memberships that constitute self-definitions. The difference between the self and identity is not articulated clearly (Oyserman, Elmore, & Smith, 2012) and the terms are often used interchangeably (e.g., Brewer, 1991; Deaux, 1993; Swann & Bosson, 2010).

Self-concept refers to an idea or a set of ideas of who one is or a theory of oneself (Oyserman, 2004) or to “the totality of the individual’s thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object” (Rosenberg, 1986, p.7). Self-concept frames

experience, motivates action, organizes current self-knowledge, promotes positive self-views, such as self-affirmation, and maintains sense of consistency in the form of self-verification (Oyserman, 2004). The self and self-concept appear to represent different terms in the sense that the self globally refers to an “I” that thinks and a “me” that contains the content of those thoughts, while self-concept is a cognitive structure that involves mental concepts, beliefs, thoughts, and knowledge about who one is (Oyserman, Elmore, & Smith, 2012). Self-concept involves the identities a person holds while identities constitute the content of self-concept. For example, an individual’s self-concept may be made up of a religious identity, ethnic identity, a gender identity, and a role identity. Together, these identities constitute the person’s self-knowledge (Deaux, 1993; Oyserman, Elmore, & Smith, 2012). Thus, the literature suggests that the three constructs, namely the self, identity, and self-concept are not distinguished consensually and sometimes used as if they were synonymous. This study does not favor using one specific construct over the other. Hence, all three constructs will be mentioned alternately based on the degree of fit between their definitions and the phenomena explored in this research.

Overview of theories on the self and identity. Different theorists (e.g., Deaux, 1993; Higgins, 1987; Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Markus, 1977; Stryker, 1980; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1982) have utilized different models to examine the self and offered detailed analyses of the forms, contents, structures, and functions of the self. In the Social-Cognitive tradition (SCT), the self was treated as a centralized schema (Markus, 1977) and a highly organized cognitive structure (Higgins & Bargh, 1987) during the late 20th century psychological research. Accordingly, the self was viewed as

operating in the mind as a universal symbol processor or a central processing unit (CPU) that creates, manipulates, stores, and retrieves information received from the mind's environment (Foddy & Kashima, 2002). From a neuroscientific perspective, LeDoux (2003) argued that the defining characteristics of a person are present in the brain alone and the brain retains the essence of who one is for the person to remain as oneself over time. He concluded that "the self is essentially a memory, or more accurately, a set of memories" (p. 298) and "the self is synaptic" (LeDoux, 2002; p. 302; as cited in LeDoux, 2003).

In response to individualism, reification, and reductionism apparent in the SCT and neuroscientific approach, several scholars (e.g., Foddy & Kashima, 2003; Gergen, 1991, 2009; Hogg, 2008; Onorato & Turner, 2003) argued that the concept of self endorsed by the individualist tradition takes interpersonal, social, and cultural factors into account in a rather limited fashion. The emphases of these perspectives seem to be overwhelmingly on the inner cognitive and intrapsychic structures and the processes of the individual along with a great emphasis on causality and agency in theorizing the self (Gergen, 2009). Onorato and Turner (2003) argued that the traditional view of a "preexisting cognitive structure" (p. 150) called the self-concept is no longer valid and that "self-definition is inherently social, contextual, and relational" (p. 151) rather than strictly personal and absolute as emphasized by the social-cognitive model.

Similarly, Gergen (2009) uses the term "bounded being" (p. 3) to denote the dominant view of the self, stemming from the individualist approach. Gergen challenges the assumed reality of "a distinctly inner or mental world" (p. xx) as the source of action and criticizes theories that conceptualize the self and other as "distinct entities coming

into contact” (p. xx) to actualize a relationship. Hall (1992) argued that postmodernity brought to the fore a view of identity that is no longer conceptualized as unified, fixed, and essential and the idea of a “fully unified, completed, secure, and coherent identity is a fantasy” (p. 598). The feeling of us having a unified identity over time is because “we construct a comforting story or narrative of the self about ourselves” (Hall, 1992; p. 598). In response, more interpersonally and relationally oriented approaches to the self and identity emerged in sociology and social psychology. Sociological perspectives underscore the central role of society in understanding the self and accentuates the reciprocal relationship between the self and society (Stets & Burke, 2003). Social psychological perspectives (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1986) define the self in terms of social context and intergroup relations.

This study takes up a middle position between radically modernist versus postmodernist perspectives of the self and identity, namely those theories (e.g., SCT) that overemphasize the essential, fixed, and core aspects of the self and the ones that accentuate the continuously changing and radically shifting aspects at the expense of more enduring features (e.g., Gergen, 1991; Hall, 1992). The view of the self and identity endorsed here is of contextual, cultural, and relational (e.g., Foddy & Kashima, 2003; Onorato & Turner, 2003) rather than reductionist that treats the self as mainly a cognitive structure, abstracted from its social context (e.g., Higgins & Bargh, 1987). While this study is based on the view of the self and identity as historically, contextually-bound, relatively fluid, and shifting across situations, it is also theorized that the self and identity assumes a cognitive aspect and an intraphysic character that provides some degree of predictability and stability across changing contexts (Swann, 1987). In other words, the

self and identity perspective endorsed in this study is constructivist as cognitive processes and the mind are recognized as sources of self and identity construction while the shifting nature of the phenomena across different social contexts is recognized.

Personal versus social identity. The self emerges as a result of numerous interacting factors, including biological and social (Swann & Bosson, 2010). Accordingly, there is solid consensus among scholars that conceptualizing of identity as a multifaceted and composite phenomenon is more accurate than viewing it as a unitary entity (Reid & Deaux, 1996). The sense of individuality that is integrated, enduring, unique, and personal refers to personality or personal identity while the features of the self-concept that are collective and based on group membership is linked to social identity (Deaux, 2006; Hogg; 2008; Reid & Deaux, 1996). Examples of social identity include ethnic, national, racial, religious, gender, and professional identities (Deaux, 2001). While some authors (e.g., Hogg & Abrams, 1988) have clearly distinguished personal from social identity, others (e.g., Deaux, 1992) have offered integrated models in which social and personal identity were conceptualized as interrelated. From an integrative framework, group membership or collective self-definition is an important part of personal identity, and social categories are filled with personal meanings (Deaux, 1993).

Identity salience, construction, and negotiation. Several authors (e.g., Brewer, 1991; Deaux, 2001; Simon, 2004; Worchel & Coutant, 2004) have offered dynamic conceptualizations of identity with self-concept encompassing a number of different categories, components, or aspects of identity. Different situations defined by an interplay of individual and contextual variables elicit activation of different identities (Simon,

2004). In other words, different identities are accorded prominence or awareness, or become salient or accessible in different contexts (Deaux, 2001; Worchel & Coutant, 2004). Accordingly, identities belonging to such categories as gender, age, political affiliation, and religion will become salient or accessible based on the fit between the situation and the particular identity dimension.

That identities dynamically operate puts forth the idea of identity change. Endorsement of multiple identities makes expression of self quite variable while self-concept tends to remain stable across time (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). In absence of major contextual changes, individuals tend to view themselves and others in stable terms and seek out appropriate social situations to receive self-confirmatory feedback that supports their view of themselves (Swann, 1987). Nevertheless, in critical situations the meaning and value of an identity may be challenged; new identities may be endorsed while existing ones are relegated to the background (Deaux, 2001). When certain identities are threatened severely, individuals may even question the very existence of an identity and choose to withdraw from identification with the social group in question.

From a relational perspective (e.g., Winnicott, 1971), one's self-concept is deeply impacted by perceptions reflected back to her/him by significant others. When the views on one's self-worth are perceived as discrepant, individuals experience a sense of "double-consciousness" (Du Bois, 1986; pp. 364-365), which includes a feeling of seeing oneself through others' perspective. When the image mirrored back to the individual by significant others is generally positive, the self is experienced as adequate and worthwhile. When the reflected image is of nonrecognition or misrecognition, the individual experiences a reduced form of being and significant difficulty holding onto a

positive identity, often causing psychological distress (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

Identity negotiation refers to a change in the way an identity is constructed and expressed within shifting contexts. As change and development occur as a result of the dynamic interplay among multiple levels of the organism and the environment, contextual changes influence the one involved in that context (Lerner, 1991). Similarly, the values, motivations, meaning systems, attitudes, and actions that comprise one's self-system are influenced by and in turn impact the context in which one lives (Deaux, 2006; Oyserman, 2004). In other words, the self as an organizer and a system of meaning making of experience may undergo some adaptations and changes in response to situational demands and pressures (Deaux; Gergen, 1991; Oyserman, 2004). Even though the self-concept is usually stable across time, transitions caused by major events may significantly impact one's sense of self (Swann, 1987; Hormuth, 1990). When a social context shifts and is redefined as a result of socio-political conflicts, an individual's way of being in and relating to that context is significantly altered (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). A significant long-term change in context will have impact on identity because the new setting requires modification of the ways in which a particular identity was maintained in a former context (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). Accordingly, the person must alter the way in which an identity is maintained and identity must be remooored to new social supports (Ethier & Deaux, 1994).

In the context of immigration, participation in two cultures lead to the construction in the form of dual ethnic-national identities that is mostly seen in hyphenated terms, such as Mexican-American or Muslim American (Deaux, 2006; Sirin

& Fine, 2008). Various frameworks of identity construction, change, and negotiation have been defined (e.g, Berry, 1997; Ethier & Deaux, 1994; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997). For example, Berry (1997) identified two independent dimensions that relate to acculturation or bicultural identity construction, including the degree to which one wants to maintain cultural identity and the degree to which a person wants to identify with and participate in the host culture. Four different acculturation strategies emerge in response to how a person combine these dimensions. When both of these engagements are adopted by a person, the resulting identity is defined as integrated or bicultural, while adoption of neither will lead to marginalization. Identification with home culture only at the expense of host culture will lead to separation while the vice versa defines assimilation. Others (e.g., Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997) described “blended” and “alternating” identities. While the former refers to integration of the two identities, the latter represents varied expression of identity in different settings.

Still others (e.g., Brah, 2001; Bhabha, 2004) conceptualized diasporic, ethnic, and cultural identities as plural and always in process, referring to unstable and constantly shifting nature of identities. Elsewhere, postmodern subject has been conceptualized “as being fragmented and her identity as permanently shifting” (Simon, 2004; p. 13) while postmodern identity has been referred to as “formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems which surround us” (Hall, 1992; p. 598). From this perspective, identity is defined historically, not biologically, with the person assuming different identities at different times as well as endorsing contradictory identities (Hall, 1992).

The Self and Identity in Career Theory

Vocational psychology literature was adept at incorporating the self and identity into career theory and research despite sparsity of the use of different perspectives (Stead & Bakker, 2010). Relevant research used concepts such as vocational identity (e.g., Scott & Ciani, 2008), self-concept (e.g., Tokar, Withrow, Hall, & Moradi, 2003), and identity status (e.g., Nauta & Kahn, 2007) to study career variables concerning self and identity. However, the self related concepts were mostly treated as stable inner constructs, reflecting a reductionist and essentialist approach to the self-invariable across contexts (Stead & Bakker, 2010).

Recent postmodern approaches (e.g., Blustein, 2011; Blustein, Schultheiss, & Flum, 2004; Richardson, 2012; Savickas et al., 2009) emphasized fluidity of identity consistent with the unpredictable nature of the 21st century world or work characterized by advances in technology and rapid globalization. Blustein and Noumair (1996) contended that the dynamism and fluidity in historical, cultural, and social factors presents an increasing need for individuals to adapt to changing circumstances and challenges the viewpoint of a purely stable sense of self. Thus, an embedded identity perspective is recommended to explore the interdependence between individuals and their social contexts which include relational and cultural variables. From an embeddedness viewpoint, work is a relational act, a means of gaining a sense of embeddedness and connection within the broader social context as it provides resources toward the establishment of relationships, families, and communities (Blustein, 2011; Blustein et al., 2004). Work itself also emerges as a social context where supportive and nurturing relationships serve to help individuals cope with challenges of working and influence

psychological well-being and sense of self in positive ways (Blustein, 2006; 2008).

Additionally, the influence of more proximal relational factors on career development has been extensively studied, demonstrating that a range of relational factors, such as family relationships, cultural influences, and peer relationships, teacher support, and mentoring relationships exert significant influence on career development (Byars-Winston & Fouad, 2008; Fouad et al., 2008; Kenny et al., 2007; Schultheiss, Palma, Predragovich, & Glasscock, 2002; Whiston & Keller, 2004).

Through work, some people experience a sense of embeddedness in or belongingness, while others may be exposed to alienation and disconnection (Blustein et al., 2004). Shifting trends, job instability, and the increasing uncertainty in the world of work often lead to feelings of insecurity, anxiety, and detachment in individuals (Blustein, 2006, 2008). In addition, unequal access to education, training, promotions, financial assets, occupational mobility, lack of supportive relationships, and existence of racism and discrimination within the work setting lead to physical and psychological health problems for workers or for those that want to work (Blustein, 2008). These factors would be detrimental to one's self-concept because negative relational experiences often become internalized and influence individuals' meaning making of work-related experiences (Blustein, 2011).

Work and relationship are two major social contexts of life that are interdependent because action in one context informs action in other contexts (Richardson, 2012). In this framework, experiences and identities are actively constructed by individuals who perform intentional actions (Richardson, 2012). Likewise, career construction emerges as a result of interactions between the social context and the individual through which both

the individual and the context reciprocally influence each other (Savickas, 2002). The self-concept is constructed through specific experiences, thus may be altered and reconstructed within new circumstances (Savickas, 2009). Individuals' career-related abilities, needs, and values are also socially constructed relational phenomena and refer to their vocational personality (Savickas, 2005).

From a Foucauldian perspective, the self is also influenced by the power and social control and is constructed in accordance with the cultural and philosophical sentiment of a given historical period shaped by dominant language and narratives rather than being an internal structure (Stead & Bakker, 2010). Thus, how an individual recounts experience related to work domain and career contributes to the self. As power determines social classes and statuses, self-construction occurs on the basis of how one is positioned in relation to the other within occupational classification in the hierarchy of work (Stead & Bakker, 2010).

Muslim Identity

As an overall social identification category, Muslim identity could be thought of representing both cultural and religious identities. However, the use of Muslim identity as a shared cultural affiliation based on collective experiences was particularly highlighted in the post 9/11 sociopolitical context (Sirin & Fine, 2008; Sirin et al., 2008). According to Kashima (2002), the only way to understand selfhood is to look at it within a web of meaningful concepts, drawing from a metaphor, story, or theory. Thus, “...culture becomes a central source of the metaphors and narratives in which self-conceptions are embedded... Culture can be thought of as a pool from which various self-

conceptions can be drawn and used for private consumption. It becomes a rich symbolic resource for self-understanding” (Kashima, 2002; p. 208).

From this perspective, it can be argued that the commonalities among characteristics and experiences of Muslims, especially in the post 9/11 period contributed to the emergence of a cultural pool that involves various metaphors, stories, or narratives that individuals refer to while defining and making meaning of relevant aspects of their selves.

Ethnic and cultural identities could be parsed into psychological and behavioral elements (Ashmore et al., 2004; Cameron, 2004; Deaux, 2006; Jasperse, Ward, Jose, 2012; Phinney, 1990). Psychological elements involve aspects such as importance, attachment or sense of belonging, and self-categorization or self-identification, while behavioral elements refer to activities people attend (Deaux, 2006; Jasperse et al., 2012). Ashmore et al. (2004) identified seven distinct aspects of social identity, including self-categorization, importance, evaluation, attachment and sense of interdependence, social embeddedness, behavioral involvement, and content and meaning. Similarly, Phinney (1990) and Cameron (2004) identified self-identification, sense of belonging, attitudes toward in-group, centrality, and involvement among key components of ethnic and cultural identities. In the case of U.S. Muslims, psychological elements of the cultural identification as Muslim has become particularly emphasized and Muslim as a cultural identity category seemed to encompass all Muslims of various national backgrounds regardless of within group differences in regard to gender, race, class, generation, location, and sexual orientation (Sirin & Fine, 2008). Even though social groups are not usually hyphenated according to religion, “Muslim American identity” emerged in recent

years as a socially constructed and historically bound category (Sirin et al., 2008) and a “convenient way to group individuals into an imagined community” (Tindongan, 2011; p. 79). The emergence of Muslim American identity becomes especially meaningful when considered in context of research (e.g., Branscombe, Schmitt, Harvey, 1999; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001) showing that adherence to a social identification increases in response to perceived discrimination.

In addition to being a social construct, Muslim American identity also refers to a religious identity that derives from collective participation in a belief system that provides a sense of personal or collective self-esteem and connection with other group members (Sirin et al., 2008; Ysseldyk, Matheson, & Anisman, 2010). Behavioral elements of Muslim identity are deeply connected to the aspect of religion that contributes to the definition of Muslim American identity. Behavioral aspects include performing Islamic practices such as daily prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, reading the Qur’an, and following a specific dress code, such as hijab. Despite commonalities among experiences and belief systems of Muslims, it is important to be aware of vast within-group differences among Muslim Americans in regard to national/ethnic origin, religious participation, women’s status, in-group conflicts, civic participation, and generational status, which when overlooked can lead to overly simplistic and inaccurate definitions of Muslim Americans (Sirin & Fine, 2008).

Defining the relationship of their faith to national identity is an important task for Muslims to handle for a successful cultural integration (Esposito, 2000). For some, identifying as Muslim and then American symbolically states one’s allegiance to God first (Blackburn, 2014). However, it is argued that using the label Muslim before

American in a hyphenated format, such as Muslim American conveys a monolithic representation of Muslim identity, serving those who want to otherize and alienate Muslims (Galloway, 2011). The Muslim American category implies that someone's Americanness is being altered by their Muslimness, which gives away a "flimsy" sense of identification as American and makes Muslim allegiance to American identity somewhat questionable (Galloway, 2011). Accordingly, recommendation is made toward identifying as American Muslim without any hyphen because hyphen is typically used in regard to one's racial and ethnic lineage.

Muslim Immigrant Women's Selfhood in Social and Career Context

Islamophobic and discriminatory acts encompassing private, public, and media sectors are well-documented (Council on American Islamic Relations, 2010). What remains to be heard more extensively is how this outer world commotion echoes inside one's inner space through a system of meaning making. As Deaux (2006, p.143) put it, "For the psychologist, something more is still needed. That something consists of a more intensive look at the working mind of the individual." Thus, of particular importance is to more attentively listen to those whose relational experiences within the contact zones are impacted by abrupt changes in social context.

For American-Muslims, September 11 and the following attacks represent a juncture in the manner in which they existed within their societies. The social context in which they established their lives and selves was now being redefined by new parameters, prompted by negative portrayals of Muslims in popular media. In addition to being placed under suspicion in a context that they considered their home, they had to deal with stigma threatening collective identities (Sirin & Fine, 2008). Thus, the

relational space in which they interacted with others on many social levels transformed into a space of intensified suspicion and surveillance, challenging their sense of self.

While research (e.g. Sirin & Fine, 2008; Zaal, Salah, & Fine, 2007) examined the outcomes of social exclusion and negative social mirroring on identities of second-generation American-Muslim youth, more studies are needed to shed light on the experiences of Muslims representing diverse backgrounds in regard to gender, immigration status, and employment. Given the distinctive proneness of Muslim women to suspicion and surveillance due to a visibly religious outlook (e.g., Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; Council on American-Islamic Relations, 2008; Moore, 2000; Seggie & Sanford, 2010) they are significantly more susceptible to misperceptions, exclusionary practices, and harassment (Afshar, 2008; Badr, 2004). Thus, Muslim immigrant women's sense of self is frequently at stake in various social contexts.

The emphasis of current research is on immigrant Muslim women's experiences of selfhood in the post 9/11 American society, including career settings which include prevalent instances of social exclusion and oppression (American Civil Liberties Union, 2008; Council on American-Islamic Relations, 2008; Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2009). Career research has been limited in applying career theory to diverse populations, characterized by a "lack of attention to the inner motivations, personal constructions, and the way in which people make meaning of working" (Blustein, 2006, p. 66). Despite useful conceptualizations of the self and identity in recent contextualist theories (e.g., Blustein et al., 2004; Savickas, 2002), research has yet to explore the actual lived experiences of those with contested identities. Drawing from constructivist and contextual-relational approaches to career development (e.g., Blustein, 2011; Richardson,

2012, Savickas, 2002, Schultheiss, 2007) and identity (e.g., Deaux, 2006; Gergen, 2009), this study aims to explore identity and career experiences of first generation immigrant Muslim women in the United States, using a phenomenological design that focuses on lived experience of a phenomenon (Wertz, 2005). To address this goal, the following research questions will be explored: 1) What identities (e.g., religious, ethnic, gender, professional) and self-related experience do Muslim immigrant women endorse? 2) What do Muslim immigrant women experience in various life contexts, including career and workplace in relation to their identities? 3) How do Muslim immigrant women construct and negotiate selves/identities as a result of their experiences in these contexts? 4) What psychological experience do Muslim immigrant women endorse?

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A Framework for the Review of the Literature

Setting out to make home in a different land, immigrants enter an entirely novel physical, social, and psychological space (Deaux, 2006). Life in new country requires adjustment to changes in many vital domains of life, including work, living standards, career, education, family life, relationships, healthcare, and daily tasks. The degree of hardship experienced and success attained navigating these domains depends on a combination of structural and individual factors. Features such ethnicity, nationality, gender, education level, job skills, proficiency in English language, as well as personality traits in regard to values, motives, and expectations refer to the individual factors or the human capital that mitigate struggles following relocation (Deaux, 2006; Lopez, 1999; Perlmann & Waldinger, 1999; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Individual factors often operate in combination with the contexts of reception or the structural arrangements of the receiving country, which include the policies of the receiving country, the features of the labor market, fellow affiliates of one's own ethnic community, and the reception of the newcomers by the host society (Deaux, 2006; Portes & Rumbaut, 2014; Massey, 1999; Raijman & Tienda, 1999).

A thorough understanding of Muslim immigrant women's experience hinges on an exploration of individual and structural factors as well as how Muslim immigrant women navigate the hardships and novelties encountered in a new land. Drawing from Deaux (2006)'s framework for analysis of identity negotiation, this literature review will be organized around the themes of what Muslim women bring, encounter, and do in the context of immigration. Because immigrant Muslim women's experiences intersect with those of ethnic/racial minority women that is subsumed within the category of immigrant women, findings of research on the experiences of other ethnic/racial minority groups will also be briefly reviewed.

What Do the Muslim Immigrants Bring?

Immigrant groups often differ in their personal assets, motivations, values, needs, expectations, religious and cultural practices, and family structures, and encounter different conditions in destination (Deaux, 2006). While limited economic resources in the country of origin is a primary factor motivating immigration, people choose to immigrate for a variety of other reasons, such as having higher aspirations and achievement orientation, strong work orientation (Boneva & Frieze, 2001), motivation for self-development or for preservation of values (Tartakovsky & Schwartz, 2001), and a desire to enhance the prospects of their children (Costigan, Lehr, & Miao, 2016).

The human capital and motivation that accompanied Muslim immigrants has changed over the course of U.S. immigration history. The early Muslim settlers in late nineteenth and early twentieth century mainly arrived from the Middle East for economic reasons with the intention of going back to their homeland and suffered from poverty, loneliness, lack of language skills, and absence of extended family and social network

(Haddad, Smith, & Moore, 2006). Women participated in roles outside of home and often worked in mills, factories, and agriculture under difficult conditions while enduring anti-Muslim prejudice often conveyed through racist epithets (Haddad & Lummis, 1987; Haddad et al., 2006). Muslim immigrants that followed after this initial settlement arrived in several distinct periods from regions such as the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Soviet Union, India, and Pakistan, Iran, Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, and South Asia, respectively, for a variety of reasons, such as to flee political turmoil and to seek further education, work, and family unification. Many Muslim men and women that arrived during these separate phases were well-educated, professionally skilled or semi-skilled, and endorsed credentials as physicians, pharmacists, and engineers (Haddad & Lummis, 1987; Haddad et al., 2006).

Immigrant Muslim women's values, expectations, motivations, political attitudes, and beliefs were mostly shaped by the sociopolitical context of their homelands (Haddad et al., 2006). Following relocation in the country of immigration, their ethnic and national identities were impacted by their encounters in their societies (Haddad et al., 2006). Women also brought with them varying attitudes regarding gender roles, ranging from traditional notions prescribing obedience and home-bound activities for women to liberal viewpoints according a more expanded perspective for women's roles (Haddad et al., 2006).

Aside from the findings of several recent surveys (e.g., Pew Research Center, 2011), which generally focused on both first and second generation Muslims in the U.S., the literature on the human capital, values, expectations, and motivations of Muslim immigrants, particularly of Muslim women is scarce. In their study of five Islamic

communities in the Midwest, Upstate New York, and the East Coast, Haddad and Lummis (1987) intended to explore the values, personal backgrounds, religious attitudes, life styles, values, and perceptions of a sample of 347 Muslim men and women, two thirds of whom were immigrants themselves while half of the rest were children of immigrant parents. The collection of data included in-depth interviews with mosque leaders, such as imams, board members, and Sunday school teachers, and the administration of short-answer questionnaires to the Muslim community attending the mosques studied. The participants varied in regard to gender, ethnicity, country of origin, immigration status (e.g., category of visa, year of arrival), age, and reason for emigrating, and they held good socioeconomic and educational attainment. They represented liberal and moderate viewpoints rather than endorse more fundamental approaches to Islam.

Muslim immigrants surveyed had strong values around communal and societal connection, successful cultural integration, preservation of religious and family values as well as openness to exploring alternative interpretations of Islamic law in accordance with the sociocultural stipulations of their societies. More specifically, most of the participants preferred social involvement to isolation, and indicated celebrating American holidays, such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, New Year's, and even Christmas as a way to connect with American people and the larger society. Yet, they also kept reminding their children of the distinction between Muslim and Christian holidays to conserve religious values. Most participants reported adherence to Islamic rules and recommendations in their life style, such as avoiding pork, alcohol, dogs inside the house, dating, taking loans due to interest, and going to public beaches; yet some of them described autonomy to loosen restrictions in certain situations.

The majority of the participants endorsed liberal viewpoints in regard to women's role in Islam. Seventy-three percent of those surveyed indicated that wives should be able to work outside of home if they wish to do so. More gender traditional jobs, such as teaching, nursing were seen appropriate for women. Participants' opinions about women's covering varied significantly, with only a small percentage contending that women should cover their hair, arms, and legs before going outside and nearly half disagreeing with the latter. Over half of the participants indicated women should be able to take on leadership positions, such as the president of a mosque or Islamic center. The majority of the participants had flexible views on handshaking with the opposite sex, birth control, and divorce, indicating that Islam views these practices permissible under certain conditions. Almost half of the participants approved marriage between Muslim men and women of other religions while a similar percentage believed that Muslim women should rather stay single than marry a Christian or Jewish man. Almost all of the participants opposed to abortion contending that it is against Islam; yet many of them viewed it permissible in cases of rape, incest, or a risk posed to the mom's health from pregnancy. Stricter interpretations seemed to decrease with length of stay in the U.S., with more recent immigrants having a more restrictive outlook on religious practices while those who stayed longer had more liberal thoughts.

Encounters of Muslims in the West

Research and anecdotal evidence regarding perceptions and actions toward Muslims in the West have been briefly reviewed in Chapter I. In this section, the research on the experiences and encounters of racial/ethnic minorities, Muslims, including Muslim Americans, immigrants and foreign students will be reviewed in more detail, with

specific emphasis on Muslim women's experience. Evidence (e.g., American Psychological Association, 2016; Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, & Waters, 2002; Sirin et al., 2008) indicates that negative attitudes and discriminatory practices are among frequent encounters of racial/ethnic minorities and immigrant populations. The adverse impact of discrimination on psychological and physical health of immigrants and racial/ethnic minority populations is also well-established (Gee & Ponce, 2010; Noh et al., 1999; Pascoe & Richman, 2009; Tobler et al., 2013; Tummala-Narra & Claudius, 2013a).

For example, in the Stress in America survey of American Psychological Association (2016), among 3361 adults representing a variety of ethnic and racial group, it was found that nearly seven in ten adults (69%) in the U.S. reported having experienced discrimination, with 61% reporting experiencing discrimination on a day-to-day basis. Findings differed across race, ethnicity, disability status, sexual orientation, age, gender, and gender identity. Among these, the majority of racial/ethnic minority groups, including American Indian/Alaskan Natives (81%), Blacks (76%), Asians (74%), and Hispanics (72%) compared to 61% of all adults reported having experienced discrimination on a day-to-day basis in the form of being treated with less courtesy and respect, being treated as if they are not smart or receiving poorer services than others. While the majority of racial/ethnic minority groups attributed the mistreatment to race, White adults overall reported age as a likely factor for discriminatory experiences. Experiencing discrimination was linked with higher levels of reported stress and poorer reported health. For example, 37% of Hispanics who have not experienced discrimination report very good/excellent health while 29% who experienced discrimination report the same health status. This ratio changes to 32 and 28%, respectively in Blacks.

Although the experience of Muslims may bear similarities to that of racial/ethnic minorities, including immigrants, profound differences exist between the issues of two groups (Haddad, 2000). Despite their long history of immigration, both Western European and North American nations have displayed ambivalence toward accepting immigrants due to perceived economic and cultural threats to the native residents (Esses et al., 2001; Jackson et al., 2001). In the case of Muslims, Yilmaz (2015) emphasizes the “culturalization of immigration discourse” (p. 40), stemming from perceived antagonism between Muslim and European cultures, to illustrate how Muslim immigrants in European countries have been relabeled and recasted from economic class of immigrant worker to cultural class of Muslim, reflecting a dichotomous, mutually exclusive, and irreconcilable view of the two cultures. In the American context, as if navigating acculturation, bilingualism, and preservation of ethnic culture alone were not tough enough, Muslim immigrants need to successfully tackle an extremely tense sociocultural and political atmosphere. The contemporary political discourse surrounding the Muslim case in the world casts doubt on whether emerging generations will ever be truly accepted into the Western context and Islam could ever be viewed as a valid system of values contributing to the diversity of their societies (Haddad, 2000). In an attempt to explore this issue of cultural acceptance, an understanding of the sociopolitical context surrounding Muslims is needed. Accordingly, research detailing the encounters of Muslims, particularly Muslim women within various segments of the society will be reviewed in the subsequent sections.

Encounters in general society. In a large-scale study of Muslims, Arabs, and South Asians in New York City, most of whom were males, New York City Commission

of Human Rights (2003) examined types of discrimination perceived by these individuals in employment, housing, public accommodations, and bias-related harassment or violence. Among 11,800 bilingual surveys distributed, 956 were returned which described 1,224 discrimination experiences. While 69% of the respondents experienced one or more incidents of discrimination and harassment, 31% reported believing they did not experience discrimination. The most frequently reported incident was bias-related harassment, comprising 37% of the incidents, including religious and ethnic insults, and physical assault.

Employment discrimination characterized the second most frequent type of discrimination, with 26% of incidents reported, which included being called names such as Bin Laden, terrorist, or Taliban by supervisors or coworkers, being asked to remove religious clothing (e.g., head scarves) by supervisors, difficulty finding job, being fired or laid off. Discrimination in public accommodations, such as schools, restaurants, medical facilities, and stores was reported in 25% of cases describing negative comments, attitudes, and physical assaults from people in charge or customers. Housing discrimination comprised 11% of the total number of incidents and included such events as landlords refusing to rent houses or asking tenants to move out, harassing tenants, or reducing the services provided.

Among a group of 30 Arab Muslim women of diverse ethnicities, Hassouneh and Kulwicki (2007) found that 63% reported experiencing increased discrimination, which included the following: Ten percent reported being threatened and hit or handled roughly, 53% reported being insulted and called names, 67% reported rude treatment, 57% reported unfair treatment, 27% reported being refused service in a store or restaurant or

subject to delays in service, and 33% indicated being excluded and ignored one or more times. The rate of women who reported experiencing emotional distress due to discrimination was 77%

Hu, Pazaki, Al-Qubbaj, and Cutler (2009) investigated the daily living experiences and gender-based meaning making of first-generation Muslim immigrant women to the United States. The sample consisted of 33 women from several countries, including Pakistan, Egypt, Jordan, Sudan, Algeria, Qatar, and Syria who had an average age of 37. Years living in the United States ranged from 1 to 35 years, with an average of 15 years. Participants responded to a self-administered questionnaire that included both open and closed-ended questions. Results showed that in addition to common struggles of many immigrants, such as language barrier and lack of social and family networks, participants experienced difficulties around developing a sense of belongingness due to lack of mosques, Islamic schools, and community centers. They reported concerns related to lack of understanding for Islamic prayer in public places, less structured boundaries between men and women, and differences in American women's clothing style. While participants mostly described the attitude of society towards them as respectful and helpful, the majority (85%) reported experiencing negative reactions in places such as stores, neighborhood, and at work following 9/11.

Encounters in educational context. Educational settings emerge as significant contact zones where Muslims meet outgroup and rank among primary contexts of challenging encounters. Using focus groups and one-on-one in-depth interviews, Peek (2003) investigated the post 9/11 experiences of Muslim students from seven different colleges and universities in the New York City area. The sample consisted of 68

participants, including 50 females and 18 males of which 52 were U.S. citizens and 16 held a student visa or were permanent residents. While the students were from a range of different ethnic backgrounds, the majority of the participants were of South Asian or Asian origin. Several themes emerged, including the university response, community reaction, response of family members, reactions of the participants themselves, changes in daily routines, and emotional reactions.

Students' immediate emotional reactions included feelings of fear, anger, deep sadness, frustration, and insecurity that arose after the 9/11 attacks. The majority of the participants reported satisfaction and appreciation of the resources and sources of support offered to them by their college administrators, professors, counselors, student organizations, and fellow students on campus. The types of support included increasing security measures and initiating 'no tolerance for hate' policy on campuses and extending deadlines for projects and providing make-up exams for students who missed several days. Students indicated their sense of safety was challenged in the community as they felt fearful of taking public transportation on their own. Students cited lived examples of stares, disturbing looks, verbal harassment, and even physical assaults from other people as reasons for their insecurity. Yet, they were also willing to refer to several examples of positive reactions and affirmative responses from Americans. Another finding was concerned with responses of family members, including parents' anxiety about the safety of their students. Parental responses comprised asking their children to stay out of school for several days or quit school for the semester, urging them to stay away from campus events, and wanting them to change their appearance by removing religious clothing and accessories.

Sirin and Fine (2008) explored identity negotiation, discrimination experiences, and social integration among two groups of a total of 204 Muslim American youth, ages 12 to 18 of whom 32 girls and 38 boys, and ages 18 to 25, of whom 77 young women and 60 young men. The majority (84.1%) of the younger group and more than half (58%) of the older group was born in the United States. One third of the adolescents came from South Asian countries, one third from Arab countries, and the remaining from predominantly Muslim countries, including Iran, Turkey, Bosnia, Kosovo, Central Asian, and West Indian nations. A multitude of research methods, including paper-pencil surveys, open-ended questions, focus groups, individual interviews, and identity maps were utilized to collect data. Participants' responses to a checklist measuring discrimination experiences revealed that about 84% in the younger and 88% in the older group reported experiencing acts of discrimination during the past year both in school settings and public places in the form of surveillance from national and local media, the police, schools, and the society. They also described being watched in public places, on the subway, at school, at home, and in the neighborhoods both by the general public and the Muslim American community. The youth reported moderate-to high levels of depression, anxiety, psychological withdrawal, and somatic complaints as a result of discrimination-related stress.

Tummala-Narra and Claudius (2013b) examined Muslim graduate international students' acculturation experiences, engagement with religion, and negotiation of social support. Using open-ended questions, 15 participants, including 8 males and 7 females were interviewed. The participants attended colleges and universities in the Northeastern United States and came from a number of different countries, including Turkey, Libya,

Bangladesh, China, Iran, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia. Several themes emerged from the data, including experiences of discrimination, reported by the majority of the students (n = 10). Participants described experiencing overt and aversive discrimination in a variety of settings since their arrival in the United States as students. Examples included being kept at the airport for long hours upon arrival, reading derogatory terms about Islam and Muslims on internet resources, and being mistreated by professors because of one's faith. Homesickness and sense of isolation were several feelings many of the participants described.

Muslim women, specifically those wearing a head scarf have been shown more vulnerable to prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory practices in Western countries (e.g., Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; Elias, 2006; Mishra & Shirazi, 2010; Seggie & Sanford, 2010; Tyrer & Ahmad, 2006; Zaal et al., 2007). In a number of U.K. universities located in different cities, Tyrer and Ahmad interviewed a total of 105 Muslim women of South Asian, African, African-Caribbean, and Arab origin, ages 19 to 26 regarding experiences of racism, discrimination, sexism, and Islamophobia in universities and workplaces, as well as employment issues, gender roles, marriage and family obligations, and identity expressions. The study found that a significant number of Muslim female university students who wore headscarves were particularly vulnerable to racial and gender-based discrimination and experienced frequent incidents of verbal abuse and harassment en route to and from the university and on campus as well as misperceptions as alien, oppressed, and non-liberal.

Using in-depth interviews, Cole and Ahmadi (2003) explored the perceptions and experiences of seven Muslim women of Pakistani, Turkish, Egyptian, American, and

British-Pakistani origin, ages 18 to 29, in regard to veiling practices on a large university. One of the themes found included stereotypes and misperceptions Muslim women faced in the campus community. The participants reported that the majority of the campus community viewed them as exotic, fundamental, and oppressed, resulting in varying degrees of academic and social discomfort and social alienation. Due to the intensity of perceived discrimination and social alienation, a number of participants reported that they ceased their veiling practice by removing their head-scarves.

Seggie and Sanford (2010) conducted interviews on the veiling experiences of six undergraduate Muslim female students, ages 18 to 21 years, attending college in the United States. Countries represented by the participants included Somalia, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, and Yemen. While two of the participants were born outside, four were born in the United States. Results suggested that the students experienced the campus climate as both negative and positive. Positive experiences included the campus outside of the classroom being open, welcoming, and inclusive, and administrators being polite and helpful. Some of the challenges relate to feeling exclusion and social alienation in their classes due to negative attitudes toward them, including other students being ignorant about the participants' culture, being underestimated in their ability to speak English or do the work by professors and other students, being graded differently, being treated differently by peers, such as being scared of. Participants reported being set apart by their veil or skin color rather than their nationality, as a factor contributing to negative experiences. The participants reported a stricter self-monitoring on their class behavior so as not to be associated with terrorism. Participants also reported instances of having to bear with the looks and comments of other students on campus.

Encounters in career context. Career emerges as an important context, posing unique issues for minority populations, including Muslim women (Eden & Afra, 2010; Foroutan, 2011; King & Ahmad, 2010; Padela et al., 2016; Syed & Pio, 2010). Syed and Pio (2010) conducted exploratory interviews with 25 working women, some of whom wore hijab and some of whom did not, from Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan, located in Sydney, Australia to find out their workplace diversity experiences. The majority of the participants described the impact of macro-level influences on their experience as ethnic minority women, including social stereotypes based on their dress, hijab, skin color, and religious practices. They provided lived experiences of how these perceptions impacted them negatively in their relationships with their coworkers and their chances of finding a job. Some described experiences of subtle discrimination at work place and others emphasized the need for more diversity education in organizations. Some women mentioned being confined to low-status jobs while others had complaints about workplace structures, such as the dress code policy or socializing events that did not fit their religious worldview. Participants also described discrimination experiences concerning poor English language proficiency. In their own societies. Muslim women provided accounts of difficulty stemming from gendered divisions of labor, such as having to cope with competing demands of family responsibilities. Some participants described flexibility in practicing religion and using their agency negotiating real life structures with religious commitments, such as working alongside of men despite religiously prescribed limitations on interaction with the other sex. Finally, participants' accounts reflected a positive outlook towards life and career as well as hope and belief into more effective enactment of diversity management practices in workplaces.

Foroutan (2011) investigated the impact of religious affiliation on the employment status of female migrants. Data based on 2001 Population and Housing Census of Australia Data from approximately 5.4 million women in the main working ages (15–54 years), of whom approximately a quarter are migrants was analyzed using logistic regression. Results highlighted the employment and occupational status by migrations status, ethnic origin and religion while other characteristics, such as age, length of stay in the host country, educational attainment, and English competency were held constant in the analysis. The findings indicated, first female immigrants were less likely to be employed than native-born women. Second, female immigrants were relatively less likely to be employed in the professional and managerial occupations than native-born women. Third, the likelihood of being employed for Muslim immigrants was half as their non-Muslim women. Additionally, ethnic origin significantly impacted employment status of women, with those from Middle East and North Africa being less likely to be employed, potentially due to identity markers, such as dress codes and Islamic names. Accordingly, lower employment rate of these women could be due to discrimination as they are viewed “visibly different” and “culturally distinct”. However, Muslim immigrant women of Middle East and North African origin were almost as likely as native-born women and Muslim migrants were almost as likely as their non-Muslim counterparts to be employed in the professional and managerial occupations. This was explained by “the selectivity hypothesis” which contends that once employment barriers are overcome, achievement of higher level positions becomes more likely.

Emotional Experience in Response to Encounters

Despite scarcity of studies exploring Muslims' psychological functioning, a few indeed found that adverse encounters of Muslims often take a toll on their mental health. Hassouneh and Kulwicky (2007) investigated the mental health status and discrimination experience among a group of 30 Arab Muslim women of diverse ethnicities in the United States, 27 of whom were immigrants. Several instruments (e.g., Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II), Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D) and Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI)) were used to assess psychological symptoms, experiences of discrimination, and trauma history. Approximately 25% of the women reported clinically significant depressive symptoms as measured by the BDI-II. Based on CES-D, 40% of the sample was found to display clinically significant depression symptoms. BAI scores suggested that 30% of participants had minimal, 30% mild, 23% moderate, and approximately 14% severe anxiety. Additionally, 67% reported experiencing more overall stress as a result of discrimination and 43% indicated that their mental health or the mental health of one or more of their relatives had been negatively impacted by war and/or hate crimes in the aftermath of 9/11.

Amer & Hovey (2011) investigated mental health status of the Arab-American population in the United States. Participants included 601 respondents who responded to email invitations sent to join the study and they were of Palestinian, Egyptian, Lebanese, Syrian, and Iraqi origin, of whom 62% were women while 38% were men. While about 70% of respondents identified as Muslim, 22% were Christian. The majority were well-educated with 60% having received a bachelor's degree and had high income. Participants were prompted to respond to a series of questionnaires assessing

acculturation, social support, and mental health at a website. The findings indicated that one-fourth (25%) of the sample reported moderate to severe anxiety and one-half (50.1%) reported clinically elevated depression scores. No significant difference was found between the scores of male and female respondents.

Ghaffari and Ciftci (2010) investigated the moderating effect of perceived discrimination in a sample of 174 Muslim immigrant men and women in the United States. Participants who ranged in age from 18 to 61 years and represented diverse ethnicities were obtained through a Web-based survey involving a number of measures to assess religious behavior (e.g., religious participation/frequency of prayer, and mosque attendance), religious attitudes (e.g., religious beliefs and attitudes, perceived discrimination, and self-esteem). To examine how perceived discrimination moderated the relationship between self-esteem and religious behavior as well as self-esteem and religious attitudes, hierarchical regression analysis was used. According to the findings, regardless of the degree of religiosity as measured by religious behavior and attitudes, Muslims experienced a decrease in their self-esteem when they perceived more discrimination, showing that perceived discrimination impacts the relationship between self-esteem and religiosity. This suggests that when perceived discrimination is significant, individuals may not be able to benefit from the buffering effect of religiosity on self-esteem. Additionally, participants indicated how religiosity helped them cope with negative impact of discrimination and that they remain devoted to their religious commitments even with perceived discrimination, implicating that they turn to faith as a way to cope with challenges of immigration and discrimination.

Every and Perry (2014) examined the impact of religious prejudice, discrimination, and exposure to a religiously discriminatory environment on self-esteem among a sample of 49 Muslims in Australian context using two instruments measuring self-esteem and perceived religious discrimination. It was found that the three variables statistically significantly predicted self-esteem. Interpersonal prejudice as assessed by religious prejudice and discrimination was found to be related with lower self-esteem while institutional prejudice as assessed by exposure to a religiously discriminatory environment related to an increase in self-esteem.

Jasperse, Ward, and Jose (2012) examined the impact of perceived religious discrimination and three aspects of Muslim identity (psychological, behavioral, and visible) on psychological well-being in a sample of 153 Muslim women aged 16 to 60 years in New Zealand. The majority of the participants were immigrants and endorsed diverse ethnicities. They were administered a 10-page questionnaire, involving measures of Muslim identity, perceived religious discrimination, life satisfaction, and psychological symptoms. Participants in general endorsed strong Muslim identities in psychological (e.g., pride, belonging, and centrality) and behavioral (e.g., religious practice) domains. They also reported low levels of perceived discrimination. Visibility (e.g., hijab) was significantly related with perceived religious discrimination. Wearing hijab and religious practice were related with psychological adaptation and fewer psychological symptoms, suggesting protective function of hijab for life satisfaction and good mental health. Psychological aspect of Muslim identity increased proneness to negative impact of perceived religious discrimination, suggesting that strong psychological identification with religious identity leads to heightened reaction to threat

and causes more distress. On the other hand, behavioral aspects appeared to buffer adverse effects. No relationship was found between perceived religious discrimination and psychological well-being. Muslim women were more vulnerable to lower levels of life satisfaction and psychological distress in the absence of regular religious practices, suggesting a buffering effect of behavioral involvement on perceived religious discrimination.

Self/Identity Experience in Response to Encounters

The self is formed and negotiated in a web of relationships over the lifespan. The content of multiple identities integrated into the self is derived from feedback of other people involved in one's life (Chatman, Eccles, Malanchuk, 2005). New contexts introduce new people and new information that offer self-defining knowledge (Chatman et al., 2015). Thus, identity is redefined as a result of issues, such as immigration or abrupt shifts in context due to sociopolitical and global conflicts (Sirin & Fine, 2008). In case of Muslim immigrants, contextual shifts not only includes a physical change in context, the interpersonal climate in many Western countries has also become complicated due to recent political tensions, potentially impacting the way identities are experienced and expressed. Accordingly, this section reviews research on identity construction and negotiation experiences of Muslims as a result of their encounters in various contexts. Research on other minority populations was also briefly described.

Peek (2005) explored the process of religious identity formation and the emergence of religion as a salient personal and social identity among a group of American Muslim university students from Southeast Asian, Arab, Caucasian, Latino, and African American origin. Data from participant observations and 106 interviews

conducted with focus groups and individual participants speak to the development of religious identity as a significant form of social identity. Three stages of religious identity development were revealed. First, religion as ascribed identity refers to a stage at which participants reported engaging in limited critical reflection about what it means to be Muslim while growing up because being Muslim was taken for granted as assigned by culture and family. At this stage, participants also described pressure to assimilate to the mainstream culture. Second, participants described becoming more reflective of their values, goals, and beliefs as they matured, which refers to the stage of religion as chosen identity. With more time and space for exploration of identities during college, participants reported increased religiosity and autonomy to make choices about how they wanted to define themselves. This stage was characterized by a decreased need to fit in the mainstream culture as participants aligned with peer groups and religious organizations that helped affirm their religious identification, sometimes to the point of excluding other core identities, such as ethnicity and nationality. The third stage – religion as declared identity – was experienced as a response to September 11th attacks. Participants reported relying more on religion as a spiritual anchor, increasing their knowledge on Islam to respond to inquiries from others and to better represent their religion, which in turn led to a stronger religious identity and solidarity among Muslim fellows. This stage was also characterized by tensions experienced as a result of increased surveillance from society as well as physical and verbal mistreatments by strangers, parental pressure regarding modifying their religious visibility, which led some participants to feel forced between being Muslim and American.

Self-concept is usually stable over time; however, a particular identity integrated in self-concept may be displayed differently in when contexts change (Ethier & Deaux, 1994; Swann, 1987). Thus, individuals as active agents may often need to work hard to link their identity to their current context and adapt to the demands of a new environment (Deaux, 2006; Ethier & Deaux, 1994). In a longitudinal study, Ethier & Deaux (1990, 1994) investigated the change in social identity among a group of 39 Hispanic students attending first year at two American universities. Students were interviewed three times over the course of one year and administered a combination of qualitative and quantitative measures assessing identity, collective self-esteem, perceptions of threat, and ethnic involvement. The results showed a relationship between students' family background and the strength of ethnic identity during their first two months at college. That is, students reporting more frequent contact with their family, Hispanic friends, and Hispanic culture at home had a stronger Hispanic ethnic identification. At the second and third phases of the study, the amount of identification with Hispanic ethnic identity was stable. However, there was not a relationship between ethnic identity and the strength of students' cultural background. Instead, the cultural background variable was replaced by cultural involvement, including membership in Hispanic organizations and the percentage of Hispanic friends at college, suggesting that students were able to maintain level of ethnic identification through reworking the identity to the elements supportive of ethnic identity in the new environment.

Long-term shifts in context, such as immigration or sojourn for education or work, can significantly impact the way individuals define themselves. Alhazmi and Nyland (2013) explored the impact of transitioning to a mixed-gender environment on the

cultural identity of Saudi students attending Australian universities. Participants included 5 students, 2 of whom were female and 3 were male. The results indicated that all of the students experienced conflict in regard to transitioning to a mixed-gender setting from a gender-segregated society. The accounts of participants demonstrated some change in the way they viewed their culture and their selves, shaped by their culture. Many of the participants described how their outlook on the Saudi practice of gender segregation was influenced as a result of their new experiences. A number of themes included emphasis on freedom and women's independence that exist in the Australian context and participants described exploring new selves that involves greater confidence and mobility. Some reported changes in the form of more liberal attitudes how they viewed women's role in society as full citizens as well as in their attitude to parenting girls.

The study by Tummala-Narra & Claudius (2013) on Muslim graduate international students in the United States, which was partly reviewed in the previous section, showed that Muslims students frequently experienced difficulty practicing their faith in the new environment, negotiated symbols of religious identity, and reexamined religious beliefs. Among the difficulties, balancing studies and time devoted to religious activities, lack of transportation, and access to mosques were frequently cited. A number of them described that wearing head-scarf made them more visible, which was associated with either a sense of pride and identification with Islam or a feeling of being distanced from others. While most participants referred to their religious beliefs and practices as sources of strength, some of them reexamined the validity of certain religious practices, including restrictions about certain food. Others indicated an increased knowledge and

insight about Islam as well as sense of pride following their exposure to a new cultural setting.

Hu, Pazaki, Al-Qubbaj, and Cutler (2009) study that investigated the daily living experiences and gender-based meaning making of 33 first-generation Muslim immigrant women to the United States identified several themes related to struggles around cultural adaptation and identity. While women appreciated certain aspects of the American culture, such as its emphasis on education, technology, and human rights, they also mentioned a struggle to fit in, a sense of distinctness in their manners, feelings, and beliefs, loneliness, and isolation when among non-Muslims. They often contrasted their identities constructed within their own sociocultural niche to those of subservient, backward, and uneducated images often portrayed in media as representative of all Muslim women. They reported experiencing disappointment over inaccurate and politically motivated depictions of their religion and culture by the Western media and emphasized adhering to higher morality shaping identity and behavior of Muslim women as indicated by following an unrevealing dress code and more structured contact between opposite genders. Another theme that shaped these women's identity was their subscription to traditional gender roles that prescribed separate spheres to operate in for men as the breadwinner and women as the mother and homemaker. The way they incorporated wearing of hijab in their sense of self was a matter of purity, dignity, and equity in terms of being viewed on the basis of their abilities rather than femininity. Hijab was also associated with expressing oneself freely and creatively in the context of America where religious freedom and autonomy are held as core values.

To explore how American Muslim women perform their identities in everyday life, Mishra and Shirazi (2010) conducted in-depth interviews with 26 Muslim women, ages 18 to 39, residing in two cities in Texas and Ohio. The participants were American citizens who had immigrant parents from a number of South Asian and Middle Eastern countries. The majority of the participants were students and professionals and half of them wore hijab while the rest did not. The results showed that the participants negotiated identities in contexts defined by a complex interplay of several pressures. These include the negative outlook of American society on Muslims, experienced by many participants as verbal harassment and articulation of negative stereotypes of Muslim women such as oppressed, backward, and terrorist. Participants' family members was another source of pressure as they opposed certain religious practices, such as hijab, which caused some of the participants to quit or hide it from their family. Participants also negotiated their views on American lifestyle. Many of them reported feeling at home in America and an ease integrating aspects of the culture they find useful. Some of them mentioned difficulties of a complete blending Islamic and American way of life due to perceived contradictions between certain practices, such as drinking and premarital sex. Participants' narratives indicate that they prefer a "selective integration" (p. 202) to the mainstream culture. Participants held individualistic interpretations of Islam, shown by diverse approaches to modesty, with some of them viewing hijab as essential while others conceived modesty on different terms. The results overall show that participants play an active role negotiating their hybrid identities which shift continuously as individuals interact with multiple cultural contexts, as opposed to a notion of American Muslim identity viewed as stable, uninterrupted, and homogenous.

In their study of six undergraduate female students on their experiences of veiling in an American university, Seggie & Sanford (2010) identified several themes one of which is Muslim identification and university climate. Accordingly, many of the women reported identifying with the role of raising cultural and religious awareness and dispel misunderstandings toward Islam among other students. Many of them spoke to the importance of representing the ideal Muslim on their part to eradicate negative stereotyping. They reported that the diverse and welcoming campus climate helped them to disseminate information about Islam to diminish prejudices about the Muslims. The study shows that the new context introduces demands on the identification with new roles and exploration of new selves.

In the previously reviewed study by Peek (2003) on the post 9/11 experiences of 68 students attending several universities in New York City, a number of themes related to students' meaning making and identity negotiation were found. Students' responses following the attacks encompassed increased connection with God and prayers for the victims, organizing campus events to raise awareness about Islam, condemning attacks through statements posted around the campus and online, participating in interfaith vigils, increasing in-group solidarity as Muslim students, and monitoring their reactions to others' offensive remarks. Students reported changes in their daily routines, such as being more cautious while outside by being aware of their surroundings, going outside in company of others, and altering their behavior to prevent unnecessary attention. Several students refused to make any changes in their daily life as they viewed it as admitting guilt or defeat. Thus, they became more committed to their religious outlook with some

of them choosing to dress more religiously visible for solidarity, continued their daily routines, and put more effort into personal study of Islam.

Stubbs and Sallee (2013) interviewed ten Muslim students- seven women and three men-at an American university to investigate how they navigated their dual identities. Participants were of a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds with varying degrees of adherence to religious practices. Participants generally pointed out to their dual identities, including being simultaneously Muslim and American rather than being encapsulated in one form of identity. Some level of difficulty balancing existing identities was expressed due to parental expectations versus a desire to fit their American peers. Participants' living situation and social network often determined the degree to which American and Muslim identities impacted their behavior. Those living at home reported stronger religious identity and adherence to religious practices while those living away from parents and being in a social network of mostly non-Muslim friends had less commitment to practicing Islam in the form of prayers and abstinence from choices, such as drinking. However, students were able to shift from one identity to another and adhere to different values in different contexts flexibly. When confronted with prejudice and negative stereotypes regarding their Muslim identity, participants often excused and rationalized the behavior rather than condemning it or taking appropriate action, which may be an indication of the internalization of the majority culture. They often cited several reasons such as the media influence, negative parenting, and lack of information as excuses for others' discriminatory behavior and indicated a preference to avoid or ignore those engaging in such behavior. Students also seemed undisturbed by lack of campus-level religious accommodations and support, such as the allocation of a prayer

room and frequently emphasized the primacy of individual responsibility in meeting their own needs, such as praying or finding food that fits Islamic principles. According to the authors, this indicates oppression toward oneself deriving from students' bicultural acculturation.

Sirin and Fine (2008) explored Muslim American youth's self-definitions, how these definitions alter, and how they employ other possible selves when the contextual demands shift. Drawing from the notion of hyphenated selves, the authors found that the youth viewed both being a Muslim and American as part of their identities, proving the inaccuracy of the clash of civilizations hypothesis. In addition, the youth increasingly identified with a Muslim identity, as they perceived more frequent discrimination within the society. Many of the participant youth described integrated identities in which they united their Muslim and American identities and viewed having multiple identities as self-enriching. A number of them mentioned parallel identities, meaning their functioning in two separate domains, with some level of tension resulting from an effort to reconcile them. A small number of youth described how they viewed American and Muslim selves incompatible and conflictual to incorporate. The findings indicated gender differences in the way the youth contact with non-Muslims. While the young women presented with a greater desire to educate others and challenge existing stereotypes, the narratives of young men suggested ambivalence, pessimism, and anxiety in standing up for their group when they are challenged in contact zones, the space in which cross-cultural encounters take place (Pratt, 1992).

Zaal et al. (2007) examined identity negotiation processes of 15 young Muslim American women through surveys, drawings of identity maps, and interviews. According

to the findings, all of the participants identified as Muslim, American, and with a specific ethnicity, such as Pakistani or Arab. Some of them mentioned holding multiple selves and an ability to flexibly shift from one to another in response to changing situations. The women also described feelings of pleasure and cultural enrichment in belonging to different social groups. Nevertheless, several of them mentioned challenges unifying their many selves in a balance and discussed the amount of psychological effort spent to exist in multiple worlds, which at times included relegating one of their identities. In addition, the young women felt challenged in the face of heightened surveillance, frequent discrimination, and public scrutiny regarding their social identities, which led some of them to disguise their identities. They described how they internalized the scrutiny and interrogation of others, resulting in an acute awareness reflected toward their internal and external world. Some women in the study mentioned a sense of responsibility for educating others about Islam and Muslims and gave examples of speaking up for themselves and their community. They also mentioned feelings of anxiety and restlessness stemming from fears of being inaccurate or insufficient in their arguments.

The Veil and Identity

Numerous studies (e.g., Ali, 2005; Badr, 2004; Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; Droogsmma, 2007; Hu et al., 2009; Mishra & Shirazi, 2010; Read & Bartkowski, 2000; Zine, 2008) described the significance, functions, and personal interpretations of hijab for Muslim women. Several purposes for the veiling were identified, such as hijab-as-identity expression, an outward symbol of devotion to God, a tool to direct attention from the physical features of the wearer, an equalizer as it liberates women from the male gaze so as to direct attention on their intellectual abilities, a way to make independent choices, to

avoid parental supervision and arranged marriages, a fashion statement, and an expression of resistance to objectification and commodification of women. Studies show that hijab is a strong marker of one's religious, ethnic, and gender identity and the practice of it makes the wearer visible, giving away these overlapping identities (Bartkowski & Read, 2003). What is missing in this debate is Muslim women's voices on the veil. Therefore, a brief review of the literature is warranted to understand Muslim women's lived experience and meaning making on the veiling.

Badr (2004) interviewed 67 American-born and immigrant Muslim women, ages 18 to 63 years, regarding their perceptions of hijab as well as the impact of media portrayals of Muslim women on these perceptions. Participants included South Asian and Middle Eastern origin individuals. The findings indicated that hijab represented a symbol of modesty and a physical marker of social identity for Muslim women. Differences were found between the perceptions of American-born and immigrant Muslim women toward hijab, with immigrant women expressing more fear wearing hijab outside following September 11 while most American-born Muslim women preferred to begin or continue this practice in an effort to represent Islam and dispel widespread stereotypes. In addition, Muslim immigrant women reported wearing hijab mostly for cultural purposes, while American-born women emphasized donning it as an expression of identity and religious obligation. In addition, the research found hijab became a symbol of purpose as Muslim women assumed leadership by being more vocal in response to media portrayals of Islam and Muslims. This challenged the cultural practice of gender segregation in the community and paved the way for women to have more voice and authority in decision making.

Williams and Vashi (2007) explored the context, meaning, and consequences of wearing hijab among a group of Muslim American women drawing on interviews and ethnographic observations. Participants included 49 Muslim women of Indian, Pakistani, and Arab descent and a few American converts to Islam, ages 18-25, the majority of whom attended college. Several themes emerged from interviews and field notes taken during observations. The defense of Islam's views on gender and hijab often emerged as a response to allegedly lax sexual mores of American society and culture. The issue of gender and hijab was often linked with a basic distrust of human ability to resist sexual impulses. There was a denial of women's alleged inequality in Islam with participants claiming that women have equal rights in many areas, including the ability to choose their marriage partners. As a significant angle of gender equality, modesty was emphasized not only for women, but a modest dress code was also described for men by some of the participants. Another significant theme included participants' desire to distinguish cultural practices from religious obligations, especially when it comes to practices that are restraining, unfair, and unwise. Many of the women participants reported wearing hijab on their own volition. While modesty aspect of hijab was most emphasized in male settings and men's speeches, women mentioned pressure to fit in with Muslim females in campus religious organizations as their reason to cover. Gaining more respect from men and discouraging unwanted flirting and attention was another reason cited. Some described that wearing hijab helped them avoid parental supervision, which gave them a chance to date and avoid arranged marriages as hijab increased their outward expression of piety and boosted the perceived legitimacy of their choices. Some women referred to hijab as an expression of their Muslim identity to resist assimilationist

pressures from Westernized parents. Hijab, with different styles to wear, was also found to be a fashion statement for female participants.

Bartkowski and Read (2003) explored how evangelical and Muslim women negotiate gender identity in the context of their religious commitments. Research with Muslim women included in-depth interviews with twenty-four participants in central Texas, half of whom veiled and half of whom did not. They had different orientations toward the practice of veiling but were devout, active in their faith, and identified as highly religious. The women ranged in age from 20 to 55, were well-educated, and of middle and upper class. Many of the veiled respondents view hijab as a symbol of devotion to Allah (i.e., God) and religion, a marker of religious identity as Muslim, a means to control men's sexual impulses and protect women's chastity, a tool to help liberate women from the private sphere by letting them join the labor force and educational institutions, which eventually help them become part of society by distracting others away from women's bodies and increasing true acceptance and regard toward them especially among men. Among the unveiled respondents, veil was seen as a "patriarchal tool of oppression" (p. 83) and a means to control women due to inability and unwillingness of men to manage their own sexuality. Some women asserted that the veil is "culturally significant, not religiously", that it is a political tool used by men to differentiate Muslim women from Westerners, and that a woman could still be a good Muslim without the veil. Despite divergent worldviews on hijab, both groups of respondents were empathetic and avoided being critical toward each other. While veiled women emphasized the centrality of faith and having a good character for their unveiled fellows, unveiled women expressed tolerance and understanding for veiled women's

decision to wear the hijab. The findings indicate that Muslim women “actively negotiate and refashion their religious identities” (p. 87), that hijab is a “multifaceted cultural tool capable of carrying many different cultural meanings” and “marking many different social statuses, such as religious affiliation, ethnic identity, and national origin” (p. 89).

In their earlier work among the same group of Muslim women in central Texas, Read and Bartkowski (2000) presented additional findings in regard to the practice and perceptions of veiling and its implications for identity negotiation. Participants emphasized the relational aspect of hijab indicating that the practice helped them identify other Muslim women and establish a social network that connected them with a broader community of other Muslim women. This shows how hijab is closely linked with religious and ethnic identities and how ethnic and religious distinctiveness through hijab can be a source of comfort for Muslim women. Participants also interpreted the practice of hijab as an “equalizer” (p. 405) and a “liberator from the male gaze” (p. 405), thereby refocusing male attention on true abilities of women rather than physical aspects. For some women, the cited benefits were not without a cost, including being perceived as “weird” by some Americans who do not know motivations for the practice of hijab and experiencing tension with family members who opposed the hijab. Unveiled Muslim women on the other hand asserted that the veil reinforced gender differences that cause Muslim women disadvantage. Many of the unveiled women rejected the notion of men’s uncontrollable sexuality as a reason for veiling and took issue with gendered double standards. The results overall suggest that Muslim women, veiled or not, craft gender identities that are “malleable and inclusive” (p. 411). The progressive and multicultural

climate of Austin seemed to contribute to empathy and tolerance between women with differing viewpoints on hijab.

Theory and evidence reviewed thus far suggest that Muslims in general and Muslim women in particular actively craft and negotiate their selves in contexts defined by instability, pressure, and antagonism, indicative of resilience and persistence in adjusting to the sociopolitical conditions of their societies (Mishra and Shirazi, 2010; Sirin & Fine, 2008; Zaal, Salah, & Fine, 2007). Muslim women's process of constructing identities is parallel to their meaning making of situations encountered and engaging in behaviors to link or remove their identities to the demands of altered social contexts (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). Hijab as a common theme acts as a marker of identity and impacts identity construction.

The Focus of the Current Study

Studies exploring lived experiences of immigrant Muslim women are highly warranted due to the "triple jeopardy" (Syed & Pio, 2010; p. 117) of intersecting gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, and religious identity, all of which became increasingly salient in the past few years due to intensified anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiment spurred by antagonistic political rhetoric. Immigrant Muslim women's selfhood emerges as a particularly important area of research given vigorous evidence on the deleterious impact of stigma and social exclusion (Adams, 1995; Bar-Tal, 1990; Gould, 1996; Opatow, 1990; Wray, 2006). A significant life context in which sense of self or identity is implemented, expressed, constructed, and negotiated is career and work (Blustein, 2006; Richardson, 2012; Savickas, 2005; Super, 1953). However, workplaces and career settings are rarely affirming of interwoven identities as they include prevalent instances

of social exclusion and oppression toward minorities, including Muslim women (American Civil Liberties Union, 2008; Blustein, 2011; Council on American-Islamic Relations, 2008; Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2009; Moore, 2000).

Accordingly, the current research aims to explore immigrant Muslim women's experiences of identity and career in general society and workplace. To address this goal, the following research questions will be explored: 1) What identities (e.g., religious, ethnic, gender, professional) and self-related experience Muslim immigrant women endorse? 2) What do Muslim immigrant women experience in various life contexts, including career and workplace in relation to their identities? 3) How do Muslim immigrant women construct and negotiate selves/identities as a result of their experiences in these contexts? 4) What psychological experience do Muslim immigrant women endorse?

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Research Paradigm

Studying social reality and human experience is highly complex due to their subjective and phenomenological nature and requires to choose among a variety of approaches that are based on different philosophical underpinnings. These philosophical assumptions or particular ideas about the world represent paradigms, which establish an integral aspect of qualitative inquiry (Creswell, 2007). A paradigm could be defined as a “basic set of beliefs that guides action” (Guba, 1990, p.17) and “deals with ultimates or first principles” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; p. 107). Paradigms reflect the researchers’ worldview in regard to a number of basic questions, including the nature of reality (ontology), the relationship between the knower and what can be known (epistemology), the values that are brought to the study (axiology), and the processes of research that include ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions (methodology) (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Morrow, 2007; Ponterotto, 2005). The beliefs underlying paradigms are basic in the sense that “they must be accepted simply on faith” and there is no way to prove their truthfulness (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; p. 108). For this reason, the answers given to the four basic questions are “human constructions” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; p.

108) that provide the inquirer with utility and persuasiveness, rather than proof in understanding the phenomena. There are many paradigms that guide “disciplined inquiry” (Guba, 1990; p. 18), such as positivism, postpositivism, critical theory, and constructivism, all of which address the four basic areas of inquiry in distinctive ways. The research questions of this study will be explored primarily on the basis of a constructivist paradigm with some postpositivistic interference of the data collection and analysis methods.

Constructivism argues that facts are dependent on theoretical frameworks and reality can only be known in the context of a mental framework; that because the problem of induction makes it impossible to prove the truthfulness of one theory, multiple theories help create reality; theory-dependent nature of exploring reality makes the process of exploration value-laden; and reality is inevitably shaped by the interaction between the inquirer and subject of inquiry, making objectivity impossible to achieve (Guba, 1990). Ontologically, constructivism is relativist as it acknowledges many interpretations of an inquiry, leading to multiple realities and provides openness that helps reach more sophisticated constructions of knowledge through ongoing research (Guba, 1990). Epistemologically, constructivism endorses subjectivity because realities exist in human mind and can only be accessed through the interaction between the inquirer and the respondent (Guba, 1990). Methodologically, constructivism aims to find out the variety of constructions and “bring them into as much consensus as possible” (Guba, 1990; p. 26) between the inquirer and the respondent with the aim of approaching an as much accurate description of the truth or knowledge as possible. In this process, hermeneutics helps eliciting individual constructions with as much accuracy as possible while dialectics help

compare and contrast individual constructions so that one or several constructions could be reached consensually (Guba, 1990).

Rather than approaching individuals' experience with a predetermined theory, constructivists deal with meanings from an inductive perspective, in which the inquirer engages in a process of co-construction or interpretation of meanings with the respondent to allow for a deep and broad exploration of the issue at hand (Creswell, 2007). Due to its emphasis on knowledge and meaning construction in the mind through cognitive processes, constructivism contends that reality cannot be known directly as opposed to positivism's assumption that an objective reality can be identified (Haverkamp & Young, 2007; Ponterrotto, 2005; Young & Collin, 2004). Constructivism differs from social constructionism although the two terms have also been used interchangeably (Young & Collin, 2004). While constructivism recognizes cognitive processes and the mind as the source of knowledge construction, social constructionism remains indifferent to the role of mind and stresses social practices, institutions, and interactions between social groups in production of knowledge (Young & Collin, 2004).

The research questions of this study will be addressed primarily through constructivist paradigm due to its emphasis on multiple realities or constructions reconstructed through the researcher-respondent interaction. The realities or constructions are equally valid for individuals upholding them in exploring and understanding phenomena. In other words, one's worldview is equally valid on a personal level. Accordingly, constructivism fits with the exploratory nature of this study in co-constructing experiences of Muslim immigrant women in regard to identity and career within a relational context. This is particularly true given that the perspectives of identity

and career as theoretical frameworks maintained in this research approach the relevant phenomena from a constructivist stance. For instance, the social and contextual view of identity endorsed by this study contends that identity is a socially constructed and historically bound phenomenon (Blustein, Schultheiss, & Flum, 2004; Deaux, 2006; Gergen, 2009; Hall, 1992) and “self-definition is inherently social, contextual, and relational” (Onorato & Turner, 2003; p. 151). In addition, it is acknowledged that the self and identity is constructed in the mind of the individual through cognitive processes in interaction, rather than isolation, with a given sociocultural context.

The interference of postpositivism in the research paradigm is due to the data analysis method used in this research, which is described in the following section. Postpositivism emerged in reaction to shortcomings posed by positivism and is considered a modified version of positivism (Guba, 1990). Ontologically, postpositivism contends that an objective reality exists, but cannot be captured fully and only an imperfect estimate of the truth can be reached through multiple studies (Haverkamp & Young, 2007; Ponterotto, 2005; Stahl, Taylor, & Hill, 2012). Epistemologically, researchers and participants should be independent to control their influence on each other (Stahl et al., 2012). Axiologically, postpositivism adheres to objectivity in research and the researcher is expected to be a neutral, objective observer to avoid interference of biases into the study (Haverkamp & Young, 2007). Thus, the values and expectations of the researcher should be bracketed (Stahl et al., 2012).

Data Analysis Method

The method of data analysis for this study is Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997; Hill et al., 2005; Hill, 2012). Because CQR

enables researchers to gain a rich and detailed understanding of phenomena, it is ideal for studying the inner experiences, attitudes, and beliefs of individuals in an in-depth manner (Hill, 2012). This aspect of CQR makes it an ideal method of data analysis for this study which focuses on lived experience and meaning making in regard to identity and career phenomena of a marginalized population in the United States. In addition, CQR was developed on the basis of phenomenological, grounded theory, and comprehensive process analysis approaches (Hill et al., 2005). Similar to phenomenology, CQR emphasizes the difficulty of understanding lived experiences outside the context from which they emerge yet acknowledges the importance of putting effort to capture the meaning (Hill et al., 1997). Thus, CQR as a data analysis method is consistent with the phenomenological design of this study.

In collection of data, CQR endorses use of open-ended questions to prevent imposing predetermined ideas and constraints to the flow of narratives from participants and it enables conclusions to emerge from the data inductively without imposing a theoretical framework (Hill, 2012). In gathering and making meaning of the data, CQR relies on participants' words, narratives, and stories gathered through an open-ended expression of their experiences and thoughts related to the phenomenon while paying close attention to the context that shaped participants' narratives (Hill, 2012). To reduce the bias and subjectivity involved in making meaning of narratives, CQR brings multiple perspectives to the data analysis through use of a team of judges that represent diverse viewpoints (Hill, 2012). Through a consensus process that includes "mutual respect, equal involvement, and shared power" (Hill et al., 1997; p. 250), team members come together to agree on the "best representation of the data" (Hill, 2012; p.10) following

independent analysis of the data. Trustworthiness is an essential component of CQR and is ensured through multiple viewpoints, consensus process, and continually returning to the data to check for the consistency of perspectives among the team members in making meaning of the data (Hill, 2012).

Hill et al. (2005) described CQR as “predominantly constructivist, with some postpositivist elements” (p. 197). From an ontological standpoint, CQR is constructivist as it contends that individuals construct their reality and that there are multiple socially constructed versions of the truth which are equal in their validity (Hill et al., 2005). Several postpositivist elements involved in CQR’s ontological stance is the emphasis on consensus among team members and the use of auditors in data analysis in an effort to best represent the data, implying a somewhat reductionistic approach (Ponterotto, 2005). However, bringing multiple perspectives to making meaning of the data resonates with constructivism because it allows diverse viewpoints to emerge which are equally involved in the data analysis process (Stahl, et al., 2012). While those aspects deemed as postpositivist speak to the rigor and objectivity, constructivist elements provide relevance by helping to maintain the holistic and contextual perspective of the data, which is one of the strengths of CQR among other qualitative methods (Stahl, et al., 2012). In terms of epistemology, CQR is primarily constructivist as it acknowledges the mutual influence the researcher and the participant have on each other and provides options for in-depth exploration of lived experience (Hill et al., 2005; Stahl et al., 2012). The kind of researcher-participant interaction in CQR embodies some postpositivistic features due to the semi-structured interview protocols that may limit in-depth exploration and the researcher’s role as a trustworthy reporter rather than as someone who co-constructs

meaning with the participant (Hill et al., 2005; Ponterotto, 2005; Stahl et al., 2012). To reconcile the tension between the two paradigms, the participants in this research were initially asked open-ended questions to explore their lived experiences in an in-depth manner (Hill et al., 2005). In addition, the interview questions were reiterated in a non-academic language frequently for clarity and to allow participants tell their stories in the way they hear and interpret the questions (Chase, 1995). Semi-structured follow-up questions were also asked to facilitate exploration and expression of information that may not have occurred to the participants at first as well as to remain consistency across multiple participants (Hill et al., 2005).

In terms of axiology, consistent with both constructivist and postpositivist stances, CQR acknowledges the influence of researcher values, expectations, and bias in understanding and analyzing the data, but CQR also argues that these factors should be discussed in detail and bracketed or kept aside as much as possible so that participants' own voices could be heard without undue influence of researchers' experiences (Hill et al., 2005; Stahl et al., 2012). Accordingly, this researcher kept a journal throughout the data analysis process to become aware of potential values, expectations, and biases that may appear in the use of follow-up probes, the wording of clarification questions, and other nonstandard expressions used during participant-researcher interactions.

Research Design

Research design is a preliminary stage that leads procedures such as sampling, data collection, or analysis in any research endeavor (de Vaus, 2001). The function of a research design was described as "to ensure that the evidence obtained enables us to answer the initial question as unambiguously as possible" (de Vaus, 2001, p. 9). Research

design includes reflecting on the type of evidence needed to answer the research questions in a convincing way (de Vaus, 2001). Failure to critically attend the issue of designing the research prior to devising questionnaires and conducting interviews results in conclusions that cannot address the research questions adequately (de Vaus, 2001). There are various ways of designing qualitative research, such as case study, narrative research, grounded theory, ethnography, and phenomenology (Creswell, 2007).

The aim of this study was to explore immigrant Muslim women's experiences of selfhood in the post 9/11 American society, including work and career settings, with particular emphasis on how they experience and/or make meaning of their identities and career based on their lived experiences in various social contexts. Accordingly, a number of research questions regarding experiences of self, identity, and career of immigrant Muslim women were developed to address this aim. Phenomenological research design was chosen to address the research questions effectively because phenomenological study is concerned with the meaning of lived experiences for several participants, which is consistent with the general aim of this study (Creswell, 2007).

Phenomenological research first includes identification of an issue or phenomena to explore, such as anger, grief, or identity, and then data is collected from individuals who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). A composite description of the essence of the experience is established, which includes what the participants experienced in terms of the phenomenon and how they experienced it (Creswell, 2007). Accordingly, this research began with identification of the phenomenon as lived experiences of identity and career in the post 9/11 American context, which was explored among a number of Muslim immigrant women who have shared experiences of the relevant phenomena. In

addition, the CQR as the data analysis method in this study was developed on the basis of a number of approaches, including phenomenology (Hill et al., 2005). Similar to phenomenology, CQR emphasizes the difficulty of understanding lived experiences outside the context from which they emerge yet acknowledges the importance of putting effort to capture the meaning (Hill et al., 1997). Similar to how an essence of the phenomenon is developed based on data in phenomenological research, CQR summarizes the participants' statements and looks for themes across participants to generalize (Hill et al., 2005). Thus, the subject matter explored and the data analysis used in this study are consistent with the focus and procedures of phenomenological design.

Phenomenology draws from the disciplines of philosophy, psychology, and education (Creswell, 2007). The basic concepts underlying phenomenology date back to the work of Edmund Husserl (1913/1962) (Wertz, 2005). Husserl emphasized abstaining from influences of theories, explanations, and preconceptions of the subject matter as well as "to recollect our own experiences to empathically enter and reflect on the lived world of other persons" (Wertz, p. 168) This is consistent with the axiological stance of CQR because it encourages researchers to be aware and disclose their biases in an effort to keep their interference in control so that the participants' experiences could be represented accurately (Hill et al., 2005). In addition, phenomenology is concerned with detailed descriptions of lived situations, rather than opinions or interpretations of the issue (Wertz, 2005). When participants provide a description of their thoughts and beliefs about the phenomenon, researchers could prompt participants about what they actually experienced in terms of the issue (Wertz, 2005). Accordingly, this researcher frequently

utilized follow-up questions to draw participant responses that are closely linked to their actual lived world.

Phenomenology is a contextually-based approach to inquiry (Wertz, 2005). Husserl refers to the lived world or life-world of an individual that consists of spatial surroundings or the environment with its possessions; temporal process that includes present, past, and the future time frames; body-subjects as the active agent of human beings; and sociality as it relates to the individual's connection with others through language (Wertz, 2005). Phenomenology with its contextual emphasis is a suitable research design for the current study which focuses on the lived experiences of individuals within a cultural context that is comprised of a specific time frame, individuals, and social interactions.

Researcher as Instrument

The researcher for this study is a female student of Turkish origin attending a counseling psychology program in Midwestern region of United States. She came to the United States as an international student in the year of 2008 following her admittance to her current academic program. In 2011, obtained permanent residency status as a result of application to the Diversity Visa Program, also known as the Green Card Lottery, administered by the U.S. Department of State. Therefore, her status changed to that of an immigrant from being an international student.

Although this researcher was born to parents that identified as Muslim in a country with a predominantly Muslim population, she was not raised as a conscious adherent of Islam due to Turkey being a constitutionally secular country. Thus, the researcher not only did not practice Islam until about 20 years of age, she also had a

critical outlook on religion, identified as Agnostic for a while, and had contact with missionaries in Turkey to learn about Christianity. After critical readings of several texts about Islam and meeting practicing friends, this researcher gained a deeper understanding of the Islamic faith and incorporated a faith-based perspective into her worldview. The model of Islam this researcher follows is closely in line with a Sufi perspective, based on psycho-spiritual principles that guide individual self-discipline and growth in the form of following high ethical and moral standards in behavior, which is endorsed by many faith systems and philosophical schools of thought. The worldview of this researcher is distinct from those that endorse Islam as a political system due to personal beliefs about incompatibility of faith and politics.

This researcher's journey to the United States was spurred by her deep interest to receive graduate education and training in counseling psychology in the context in which it emerged and developed. Throughout her living in the United States, she has experienced significant events, interactions, and situations that had an impact on the way she came to view and define herself. This process lays the foundation of identity research embarked on in this study. Drawing from her own experiences of cultural enrichment, acculturation, and adjustment along the way, this researcher seeks to understand how Muslim immigrant women from diverse ethnic, racial, national, and social class backgrounds construct and negotiate selves within various social contexts.

The researcher has always been in close contact with a Turkish community that identified as Muslim and frequently attended events organized by the community. She also has developed some degree of familiarity with Muslims from diverse nationalities and backgrounds due to attending a mosque occasionally in east side of Cleveland for

Friday congregations. She has got to know Muslims of diverse backgrounds, including those referred to as converts. As an insider of the Muslim community, the researcher has gained first-hand experience with respect to life styles, values, roles, worldviews, practices, and lived experiences endorsed by Muslim individuals representing diverse backgrounds. In addition, the researcher has been in touch with Muslim individuals as a result of her work experiences. First, during her six semesters of practica and one year of internship, the researcher has worked with a number of early and late adolescent clients that identified as Muslim. In addition, she has worked as a teacher at a middle school in a midsize Midwestern city mostly attended by a Muslim early adolescent population. These experiences have helped the researcher gain deeper awareness as to the behavioral patterns and socioemotional struggles of the Muslim community.

The researcher has had strong skills and experience in qualitative research. She has completed a doctoral level course on qualitative research and has been a co-author on a number of qualitative research investigations that she has presented at international, national and regional conferences. In addition, the researcher has read significantly on qualitative methodology (e.g., Creswell, 2007; Haverkamp & Young, 2007; Hill, 2012; Morrow, 2005, 2007; Ponterotto, 2005) as well as research (e.g., Schultheiss, Palma, Predragovich, & Glasscock, 2002; Sirin & Fine, 2008) conducted with qualitative methods.

Creswell (2007) noted that bracketing personal experiences may be difficult, seldom perfectly achieved, or even impossible for the researcher. This researcher was a culturally sensitive inquirer for conducting research with the relevant population because of multiple shared identities, including gender, religion, culture, and immigration status.

This may somehow have interfered with bracketing personal experiences in the interview process as this researcher at times disclosed her feelings and personal experience during interviews. In addition, the researcher often utilized basic counseling skills, such as feeling reflection and reflection of meaning to facilitate the process of interviewing.

While these factors may be argued to have somewhat affected with the objectivity of the interview process, it was observed that researcher self-disclosure and use of professional skills increased empathetic responsiveness to the intensity of personal experiences some participants shared. When participants disclosed painful stories, core experiences, deep feelings, often accompanied by tears, the researcher switched to the role of an empathic and supportive listener, emphasizing their hardships and affirming resilience, rather than remain in a blank state. The researcher believes that this has immensely helped participants feel heard, validated, and secure, thus open up more about their lived experiences, increasing the richness of narrated data.

This researcher is also aware that her assumptions based on her own lived experience may have had some influence on the description of the phenomena during data analysis process (Creswell, 2007). However, she took steps to minimize undue influence based on biases and expectations formed through personal experience or knowledge of the literature. First, she engaged in a constant self-reflective process to question her biases while reading the interview scripts by having a critical outlook on how follow-up questions, prompts, researcher self-disclosures, and use of basic counseling skills impacted the participant responses. In addition, during the interviews, the researcher frequently checked in with participants to make sure her understanding of participants' statements was accurate. Furthermore, when participants talked about their

distinctive cultural practices or home country circumstances that was unfamiliar to the researcher, she often asked follow-up questions to make sure that she was understanding the context of those experiences accurately prior to describing and interpreting data following the data analysis process.

Research Team

The co-investigator who served as chair of this dissertation and as auditor in the data analytic process is a middle-aged European American woman who is a professor of counseling psychology. She has extensive research experience in qualitative methods, has taught a doctoral level course in qualitative methods, and has chaired a number of qualitative dissertations. This investigator has an interest in diverse global populations and has been active in international career research. Her knowledge of the experiences of Muslim women stems principally from her mentoring relationship with the principal investigator who is her advisee. They have studied the immigration process and work lives of Turkish couples and have presented our findings in Turkey. We have had many discussions about the lived experiences of Muslim women, and this co-investigator had the opportunity for an immersion experience in Turkey which helped to provide a context for a deeper understanding of the sociocultural context of everyday life. This co-investigator came to this project with some understanding of Muslim women's experiences from an outsider's perspective. During the auditing process of data analysis, communication with the primary investigator was helpful in setting aside biases and facilitating the understanding of participants' experiences.

The first team member for this study is a Bosnian, female student recently graduated from a doctoral program in counseling psychology and is currently pursuing

her post-doc in the area of child and adolescent mental health. She has been in the United States for approximately sixteen years. She arrived in the United States as a refugee. Prior to relocating in the United States, she found refuge in Germany after leaving her country of origin following the end of civil war.

The first team member's experience with Muslim women started back in her country of origin, namely Bosnia and Herzegovina where she became very familiar with Muslim culture. She particularly became familiar with Bosnian Muslim women and their experiences and struggles relating to the civil war, as well as experiences of exile, through her own dissertation research project looking into the perception and meaning of their experiences. After moving to the United States, she got to know Muslim women with diverse backgrounds. She made close friends with a few Muslim women from Saudi Arabia and Oman. In addition, she has personally got to know the main researcher of this project, who is a Muslim woman from Turkey who shared some of her experiences of what it means to be a Muslim woman in U.S. from her perspective, as well as a Muslim woman in Turkey.

The team member possesses strong skills and experience in qualitative research methods. During her doctoral educational experience, she completed a course on qualitative research and has co-authored a number of qualitative research investigations, which were presented at regional and national conferences. In addition, the researcher has read a significant amount of literature on qualitative methodology. In addition, this particular team member has participated in a research team with the primary researcher in a team project, which explored work-family interface of Turkish immigrant couples. This study allowed for a better understanding of their experiences, mostly regarding the

balance between work and everyday life, while taking care of their families. Even though the current study engaged a similar population, it was more focused on exploring the experience of Muslim women identity formation as a dynamic variable throughout major life changes, including migration to another country. The team member reported expecting that this study will shed more light on how these women navigate throughout these significant life changes and how these in turn will influence their identity development.

The next team member identifies as a Caucasian female. She received her education in the Midwest and has an undergraduate degree in psychology, Associates degree in Applied American Sign Language, a Master's degree in Community Counseling, and doctorate in Counseling Psychology. She is currently employed as a psychology fellow in a private practice and also works as a psychology assistant in a community mental health agency in a large Midwestern urban city. This team member has extensive training and experience with both qualitative and quantitative research. During her Masters program, she completed a qualitative research study utilizing Grounded Theory that examined therapeutic techniques for abused children. During her doctoral program, she was a team member for a study utilizing CQR examining work-life balance among Turkish immigrants, worked on a team content analysis examining unemployment within the literature, used Participatory Action Research (PAR) in an urban elementary school and an urban high school, worked on a team content analysis examining elderly population within research, and created a quantitative survey examining bullying within doctoral programs. Additionally, this team member completed a dissertation utilizing CQR examining urban adolescents' perceptions of parental

unemployment and was a co-researcher for another dissertation utilizing CQR focusing on refugees in the United States.

This team member was born and raised in the Midwest and had limited exposure to international and religious diversity until beginning her secondary education. Since then, she has been exposed to these populations through personal and professional relationships at school and work and through her extensive research experience. She is unaware of any personal biases toward the Muslim population and attempts to be understanding and accepting of any and all types of diversity. She prefers to learn about different cultures and experiences directly from members of diversity and recognizes that every individual has his or her own unique perspective on life. This team member is sadly aware of the unfortunate fact that many people in the Western civilization do not share her same beliefs about and open acceptance of members of diversity, including Muslim individuals. She hopes the current study will provide others with an open and honest perspective of the challenges many Muslim women face on a daily basis.

The third team member is a Caucasian female student, graduated from a counseling psychology doctoral program in 2016. Her undergraduate, masters, and doctoral training were all psychology degrees from institutions in the Midwestern United States, and she is currently employed in a post-doctoral fellowship for chronic pain and health psychology. She has received training in both quantitative and qualitative research methods, and has been a team member for other qualitative studies, but predominantly works with quantitative research methodologies.

This coding member was born and raised in the Midwestern United States. She identifies as of Western European heritage. Her political views are typically moderate

and, politically, she identifies as independent. She was raised in the Roman Catholic faith, attended Catholic education institutions until her graduate studies, and continues to actively practice Catholicism. Additionally, she has limited experience with Muslim women, and noted her connections have largely been through several friendships and relationships with coworkers. She is not aware of any active bias, though being raised in a predominantly White, middle class, Midwestern community have undoubtedly shaped her worldview. She and her family value diversity and learning from people who come from different backgrounds and have different perspectives.

Participants

The total number of participants for this study included 15 Muslim women residing in two midsize cities in a Midwestern state. The sample size is assessed adequate to achieve consistency in results across participants as well as to reflect lived experiences from different viewpoints (Creswell, 2007; Hill & Williams, 2012). Criteria for including participants were a minimum age of 20, identification as female, immigrant, and Muslim, ability to understand and speak English, minimum of three years of residence in the United States, and previous and/or current work experience. All the women interviewed identified as immigrant, with majority of them having U.S. citizenship, and resided in the United States for a minimum of three and a half years. The age range was 22 to 60 years with a mean age of 42 ($SD = 10.36$). Participants were of a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds including South Asian (Pakistan, India; $n = 4$), African (Nigeria, Somalia, Ivory Coast; $n = 3$), North African (Morocco, $n = 1$), Middle Eastern (Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon; $n = 3$), European (Albania, Turkey; $n = 3$); and Middle Eastern-South American (Palestinian-Puerto Rican; $n = 1$). The number of participants who were

married was ten, three identified as divorced and the remaining two as single. Twelve of the participants reported having children.

All of the participants in this study described their religious/spiritual commitment as consistent, indicated by regular involvement in religious practices, such as wearing hijab, doing prayers, reading religious/spiritual texts, attending mosque or religious/cultural centers, and being involved in social activism on behalf of their religious and ethnic orientation. The majority ($n = 11$) of the participants reported wearing headscarf or hijab as a religious practice, while four ($n = 4$) of them chose not to practice hijab. Among these, the styles and constancy of wearing hijab varied among participants based on ethnicity or personal choice. A number of them covered their hair and neck fully, while several others either covered their hair while leaving neck out or partly covered their hair and neck leaving some parts uncovered. In addition, several of them reported taking their hijab off in places where they did not feel comfortable revealing their religious identification. Four of the participants reported that they chose to wear hijab following their resettlement in the United States. One of the participants identified as Shia while the rest were Sunnis.

Participants' length of stay in the US varied between 3.5 years and 35 years, with an average duration of 17 years. The number of participants who arrived in the U.S. on their own without a family was three and the rest immigrated along with family members, including spouses, children, parents, and siblings. Among those, two of the participants immigrated with their parents and siblings when they were young and earliest age at which they immigrated was 16. The majority of the participants had their children following relocation in the United States. A variety of reasons were cited for immigrating

to the U.S., including obtaining further or advanced education ($n = 5$), accompanying spouse who found a job in the U.S. ($n = 5$), fleeing war/political conflict in home country ($n = 1$), finding better opportunities for work ($n = 1$), marrying a spouse who lived in the U.S. ($n = 1$), marrying a U.S. citizen following arrival to the U.S. as a visitor ($n = 1$), and joining family members who were already in the U.S. ($n = 1$). Four of the participants reported that they had lived abroad for employment-related reasons prior to their immigration to the United States. Only one participant, who was a student, reported that she is intending to return her home country to live and work upon completion of her studies.

Participants had the following educational degrees: Post-doctorate ($n = 2$), doctorate ($n = 3$), master's ($n = 4$), bachelor's ($n = 3$), associate's ($n = 2$), and high school ($n = 1$). Participants held a diverse range of jobs, represented by medical (e.g., physician, dentist, researcher, medical assistant, interpreter, and medical billing specialist; $n = 5$), educational, humanities, and family services (e.g., administrative assistant, interpreter, librarian, tutoring, social work, faculty, and case manager; $n = 7$), and business sectors (e.g., manager, accountant; $n = 3$). Among these, three ($n = 3$) of the participants were students, enrolled in undergraduate and graduate schools in addition to holding part-time or full-time jobs. The length of working in their current jobs ranged from one month to 30 years, with an average of 6 years of involvement in the current job. The number of participants who reported being enrolled in the same job was three ($n = 3$), while the rest ($n = 12$) were involved in several other jobs after coming to the US. Participants' previous jobs involved positions such as, manager, interpreter, case manager, teaching assistant, lecturer, job coach, medical assistant, dental assistant, teacher assistant,

pharmacy tech, research assistant, visiting professor, technical project manager, and laboratory manager. Twelve ($n = 12$) of the participants reported working full-time (e.g., 40 hours or above) while three ($n = 3$) worked part-time (e.g., 20 hours). With their previous involvement in the job market, participants' total years of involvement in paid work varied between nine months and 27 years with an average of 15 years spent working. All of the participants, except one reported that their primary reason for working is to support their finances. Other frequent reasons cited for working were to enrich their career experiences and to socialize in the American culture and strengthen their linguistic skills.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant	Age	Country of Origin	Length in U.S.	Relationship Status	Number of Children	Highest Degree
1	47	Ivory Coast	22	Divorced	1	Associate's
2	50	Turkey	28	Divorced	1	Post-Doc
3	41	Palestine, Puerto-Rico	20	Divorced	1	Master's
4	54	Pakistan	18	Married	2	Doctorate
5	36	Somalia	9	Married	5	Associate's
6	37	Morocco	20	Married	2	High School
7	47	Pakistan	22	Married	3	Doctorate
8	29	Albania	12	Single	0	Bachelor's
9	41	Turkey	18	Married	3	Post-Doc
10	31	Lebanon	4	Married	0	Master's
11	60	Pakistan	32	Married	1	Master's
12	43	India	25	Married	1	Master's
13	55	Nigeria	20	Married	2	Bachelor's
14	22	Palestine	3.5	Single	0	Bachelor's
15	42	Egypt	6	Married	2	Doctorate

Instruments

Demographic questionnaire. Participants were administered a questionnaire that was developed to obtain information about their background, including age, ethnicity, country of origin, the length of time living in the United States, marital status, parental status, and work involvement (e.g., title of job, working hours, previous work experience, and the reasons for working). The purpose of the demographic questionnaire was to

describe participants in regard to their background characteristics and human capital. An understanding of participants' contextual variables is anticipated to be helpful in making a more grounded sense of interview data.

Individual interview protocol. Participants responded to a semi-structured interview protocol that was developed to gather information about the topic of interest (Burkard, Knox, & Hill, 2012). The protocol was based on a review of the theoretical literature on social identity (e.g., Deaux, 1993, 2006; Ethier & Deaux, 1994; Sirin & Fine, 2008) issues of Muslims and Muslim women (e.g., Amer & Hovey, 2011; Afshar, 2008; Council on American Islamic Relations, 2010; Haddad, 2000; 2011; Hoodfar, 1993; Seggie & Sanford, 2010; Sirin & Fine, 2008; Syed & Pio, 2010; Tyrer & Ahmad, 2006; Zine, 2008), issues of immigrants (e.g., Deaux, 2006; Portes & Rumbaut, 2014; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001), and career development (e.g., Blustein, 2011; Blustein, Schultheiss, & Flum, 2004; Schultheiss, 2003, 2007). The questions aim to explore participants' social identities (e.g., religious, ethnic, and gender identity), experiences (e.g., positive experiences, challenging experiences) associated with their social identities in a variety of settings (e.g., general society, workplace), and meaning making of their experiences.

The interview began with a broad question asking participants to talk about aspects that make them who they are now. They were then asked several follow-up questions to describe their view of themselves in regard to their gender, religious, ethnic/cultural, and vocational identities. In addition, participants were asked about their experiences in relation to intersecting identities as Muslim immigrant women. Another question included their perceptions of others' (e.g., in society or workplace) treatment of

them as Muslim immigrant women and the influence of those perceptions on their self-construal. Several questions focused on participants' experiences of identity salience and change upon their arrival to the United States. The role of relationships with family members, friends, and coworkers on participants' self-perception and construal was also probed. Participants' emotional well-being and future orientation were other areas of focus.

The questions were developed in an open-ended format to allow for a smooth flow of responses from the participants, as well as a deep exploration of the phenomenon (Hill et al., 2005). Through semi-structured interviews the researcher will be able to make necessary adaptations to fit each interviewee (Hill et al., 1997). The protocol also includes follow-up questions to increase the depth and richness of data to explore the phenomenon more comprehensively (Berg, 1998).

The researcher administered pilot interviews to one colleague and two Muslim immigrant women to receive feedback and revise the interview protocol to ensure trustworthiness (Creswell, 2007). These were administered at locations chosen by these individuals, such as the university library and the interviewee's office. The interviews were audio recorded to evaluate potential domains that are likely to emerge in the actual study as well as to estimate how actual participants could respond to the questions (Hill et al., 1997). A number of questions and probes were revised based on interviewees' feedback to improve clarity and brevity. One of the interviewees reported that several questions and probes sounded repetitive and suggested that the researcher provide some examples to help participants distinguish these questions from the ones already answered. Thus, the researcher decided to provide clarifications to participants after these questions

were asked. To further prevent repetition of the questions, before directing the questions to participants, the researcher decided to regularly check in with participants to determine whether questions covering similar topics had already been answered. If it was confirmed that the questions to be asked had already been discussed by the participant, those questions would be skipped to ensure brevity and prevent confusion.

Procedures

Sampling. Participants for this study were recruited purposefully from universities and cultural and religious organizations in the Midwestern part of the United States, and were invited to participate in the study through in-person invitations. The method of sampling participants for this study was purposeful sampling which includes selecting information-rich cases from which a great deal of information about the topic of study could be learned (Patton, 1990). Among the various strategies employed in selecting information-rich cases, the strategy followed in this study was snowball or chain sampling in which potential participants are recruited from among existing participants' acquaintances (DeMarrais & Lapan, 2004; Patton, 1990). Snowball sampling is particularly helpful in recruiting participants for research topics that are sensitive in nature and require the knowledge of insiders to identify participants suitable for the study (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981).

Recruiting participants. Following the approval of this study by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the researcher's graduate institution, the researcher initially contacted the president of a Muslim religious association located in one of the two cities to introduce the study and request formal permission to recruit participants. Upon referral from the president, the researcher contacted the general secretary who informed the

researcher of appropriate times to seek participants and then introduced the researcher to the potential participants following a Friday prayer and during a monthly dinner event. The researcher was also a regular attendant of the religious association for Friday prayers at the time, thus she was somewhat familiar with other regular attendees. The researcher approached potential participants during the two events described and after several Friday prayers and provided detailed information about the purpose of the study. Flyers introducing the study and including sample interview questions were distributed along with the contact information of the researcher. Individuals who were willing to be interviewed agreed to participate during the initial introductory conversation with the researcher. Those who said that they want to think more about participating never contacted the researcher. Several of the participants initially interviewed contacted their acquaintances and told them about the study. In addition, a few of those who did not match the inclusionary criteria or were too busy to participate recruited participants from among their acquaintances.

A total of 11 participants were eventually recruited and interviewed for the study. Later on, when transcribing the interviews, it was noticed that four of the interviews were inaudible due to a problem with the audio-recorder used with these participants. Therefore, those cases were eliminated, decreasing to a total of seven audiotaped interviews. One of the issues encountered during recruitment had to do with potential participants' skepticism about the purpose of the study as well as tight work schedules that made allocation of time for the interview difficult. Skepticism was expected as the population being studied is highly stigmatized and marginalized, which was reported elsewhere (e.g., Haddad & Lummis, 1987). Those who did agree to participate may have

supports to counter the skepticism, and/or have the personal resources needed to speak up and perhaps use participation as an opportunity for liberation or advocacy or some other personal or group meaning. Future research is needed to address this hypothesis. Ongoing efforts of recruitment helped add an additional nine participants through referrals in Columbus area, which is home to a significant size of Muslim population. It was noticed that one of these participants was in the U.S. on student visa, rather than on immigrant status. Thus, the interview with that participant was removed, resulting in a total of fifteen participants informing the study.

Interviewing participants. Data for this study were collected through in-person interviews. Following recruitment, voluntary participants were asked the appropriate time and place for the interview. The meetings occurred at places mutually determined between the researcher and the participants based on the participants' preferences. Prior to conducting the interviews, the researcher sought consent from the participants explaining the purpose and the procedures of the study and providing room for questions for the researcher. Participants were informed that participation is completely voluntary and they have the right to withdraw from study at any time (Hill et al., 1997).

After the informed consent forms were reviewed and signed by the participants, the researcher administered the demographic information forms and the interview protocol. Interviews took approximately one-and-a-half-hour on average and were audiotaped with a digital recorder. Upon completion of the interviews, recordings were transferred to a password-protected computer and consent and demographic information forms were placed in a paper folder and kept in a safe storage box. To protect anonymity, neither the audiotapes nor the demographic information forms included identifying

information. Forms and the tapes were labeled with pseudo names assigned to the participants.

The majority of the participants had an open attitude toward the researcher and the interview questions. They seemed to be willing to share their feelings and lived experiences when responding to the questions. Several of the participants initially had a somewhat guarded approach toward the interview process as apparent by a tendency to keep their answers short and generic. However, their attitude became significantly more relaxed and open as the interview continued. Overall, the respondents also seemed to open up more and provide more in-depth narratives as they became more familiar with the nature of the questions. Prompts that followed open-ended questions helped clarify open-ended questions and facilitate the flow of information from the participants.

Based on feedback from pilot interviews, the researcher provided clarifications to participants following several questions to help them distinguish similar areas of inquiry. To further prevent repetition of the questions, before directing the questions to participants, the researcher regularly checked in with participants to determine whether questions covering similar topics had already been answered. If it was confirmed that the questions to be asked had already been discussed by the participant, those questions were skipped to ensure brevity and prevent confusion.

Transcription of interviews. Recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and transcriptions were checked for accuracy by the researcher. Corrections were made in wording and misspelling to ensure accuracy of the data.

Data analysis. Data was analyzed using Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005). Data analysis is based on a teamwork approach and

consensus is a basic aspect of CQR (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005). There is not a fixed model of team composition recommended by CQR; and researchers could form different types of teams depending on their needs for a particular study (Hill, et al., 1997). While members of the primary team arrive at consensus about the common understanding of the data, at least one auditor reviews the work and provides feedback (Hill et al., 2005). Including multiple individuals in the data analysis process helps emerge multiple, equally valid viewpoints, helps the team make sense of data in different ways, facilitates bracketing of biases, and helps capture the complexity of data (Hill, 2012). For this study, the primary research team was composed of the current researcher, one doctoral-level student in counseling psychology, and two recent graduates with doctoral degrees in counseling psychology. All the members have possessed strong skills and experience in CQR. The advisor, dissertation chair, and methodologist of the primary researcher who has had expertise in career development research and practice as well as qualitative methods served as the external auditor.

Initially, a start list of domains or topic areas was developed by the primary researcher based on a review of the literature and interview questions (e.g., Blustein, 2011; Blustein, Schultheiss, & Flum; 2004; Deaux, 1993, 2006; Ethier & Deaux, 1994; Sirin & Fine, 2008) to help sort the large amount of raw data into blocks of data that cover similar topic areas (Thompson, Vivino, & Hill, 2012). The number of domains developed initially was 21 for the current research. Later on, it was realized that some of these were actually subdomains of a more inclusive topic area and they were merged together within one domain, reducing the number of domains to 10 (Thompson et al., 2012). The primary researcher then applied this list to two transcripts to see if the data

was captured adequately. It was noticed that several domains were too specific and were not capturing the descriptions of experiences. The way participants answered questions was often different than how the questions were structured. Their responses were often in-depth, contextually detailed, covering a number of topic areas rather than straightforward that form unique clusters (Thompson et al., 2012). Thus several domains were eliminated because they were not capable of addressing participants' responses, while new ones were added. For example, participants constantly referred to relationships with family members in their descriptions of the self. Thus, a domain named relational experience was constructed. In addition, several participants described their educational and career trajectory in detail, thus a domain named educational experience was added to the list. Experiences of immigration and significant life circumstances such as failures and losses were also frequently mentioned topic areas. Thus, domains covering each of these topics were developed. Eventually, the construction of a domain list was made on the basis of not only the literature and interview questions, but also what topic areas naturally arose from the interview data regardless of a priori knowledge (Hill et al., 2005; Thompson et al., 2012). This domain list and corrected transcripts were sent to all the team members. Each team member received five transcripts to code based on the initial domain list. In addition, the literature and interview questions were reviewed by the team members before the domain coding started.

The data was read independently by team members and grouped into the domains developed in the initial list. The primary researcher met with each team member separately to arrive at consensus regarding the domain list and the coding of the raw data. Once the data was coded by a team member and the primary researcher, the two met to

discuss how the domain list fit the data. During this process, some domains were redefined or merged, while others were deleted or added until the list stabilized and best captured the interview data (Hill et al., 1997; Thompson et al., 2012). The process of domain consensus among team members was discussed in detail in Chapter IV. The primary researcher prepared an updated list of domains following each consensus meeting and sent the updated list to other two members for their feedback as well as use in coding the remaining transcripts. By the end of the domain coding, the original list had been revised approximately 6 times. The number of domains was 10 in the most refined domain list. Because people's description of their experiences is rarely circumscribed to a single topic area, sometimes the narrative could fall into more than one domain (Hill et al., 1997; Thompson et al., 2012). When that was the case, data was double or triple-coded although this was kept to a minimum to avoid confusion and domains needing to be redefined or combined (Hill et al., 1997; Thompson et al., 2012).

Once the coding of data into domains was finalized among group members and the domain list reached to the stabilized version, a consensus version of the transcripts that includes the domain titles and all of the raw data is formed by the primary researcher. All of the transcripts coded based on the consensus version of the domains were given to the auditor for feedback. Auditors are a critical aspect of sound CQR because as outsiders they can provide objective feedback regarding analysis of the data. As stated by Hill et al. (1997), "Working with words is extremely difficult, and having many perspectives is crucial for capturing the essence of the data" (p. 548). During domain coding, auditors review the domain titles, assess the fit between the domains and the data, check potential

overlap among the domains, and check if domains are too large. The auditing process for this study was described in Chapter IV.

The following steps included developing core ideas and cross-analysis through which common themes across cases were identified (Ladany, Thompson, & Hill, 2012). The primary researcher compiled all data into one mega-table, sorted by domains (Ladany et al., 2012). Then, using the sort function in word-processing software, the table was organized such that data belonging to each specific domain for each participant was placed near each other to easily read common themes across cases. Once the data was organized, the team members met through Skype and email communication to develop core ideas and then the categories. Initially, the content of each domain was summarized into core ideas, which included capturing the narratives in fewer words by retaining the explicit meaning (Hill et al., 1997). After the team members discussed to summarize the data verbally into core ideas for each domain, they brainstormed together about various categories (Hill et al., 1997). The purpose of developing categories is to capture the essence of participants' narratives (Hill et al., 1997). Once categories identified, team members looked across cases to identify similarities (Hill et al., 1997). There is not a specific limit for how many categories should be developed for each domain (Ladany et al., 2012).

The subsequent step consisted of the evaluation of the categories' representativeness of the sample. A category that applied to all but one of the cases was labeled general whereas a category was considered typical if it applies to more than half of the cases (Hill et al., 2005; Ladany et al., 2012). If a category applies to at least two participants up to half of the cases, it was considered variant (Hill et al., 2005; Ladany et

al., 2012). For categories that only apply to one participant, the team members discussed if these can be placed into other categories by broadening the other categories.

Writing up the Results

In the final manuscript, the domains and categories were presented in the Results section. Data for each category was presented for the readers. Quotes from the raw data were offered to allow the readers gain an understanding of how the findings have been derived from the raw data (Morrow, 2005). The meaning of the results and links to the existing literature were provided in the discussion section.

Evaluating the Quality of Research

Writers of qualitative research (e.g., Lincoln & Guba, 1985) have argued that the terms validity and reliability belong to a positivistic and quantitative terminology, which diverges significantly from the rationale of qualitative research. They offered alternative ways of judging the rigor of a qualitative study with alternative terms such as trustworthiness, credibility, and transferability (Creswell, 2007). Hill et al. (1997) present a number of criteria for evaluating the quality of CQR, including trustworthiness, coherence of the results, representativeness of the results, testimonial validity, and member checking.

Trustworthiness. Trustworthiness refers to reliability or validity and represents the degree to which the findings of research can be trusted or the use of appropriate and replicable methods (Hill et al., 1997; Williams & Hill, 2012). The first area to monitor trustworthiness is the adequacy of the questions and the interview process (Hill et al.). To ensure that, interview questions were developed relevant to research topic and questions were designed in open-ended format to fully capture the participants' perspectives

(Morrow, 2005). In addition, the interviewer probed adequately to understand the participants' experiences in depth (Morrow, 2005). The researcher also administered pilot interviews and revised the protocol according to the feedback.

Trustworthiness is also measured on the basis of whether the composition of the sample is adequate (Hill et al., 1997). Accordingly, the population was defined adequately and the sample was composed of participants that have experienced the phenomenon (Morrow, 2005). Consensus is the third area of evaluation for trustworthiness (Hill et al., 1997). Data was examined independently and then a consensus was reached by team members regarding coding and cross-analysis (Hill et al., 1997). In addition, the team members continually checked the results against the raw data to ensure that the results were representative of participants' narratives (Hill et al., 1997). The team members were allocated equal power in making meaning of the data rather than one person dominating the process (Hill et al., 1997).

Inclusion of an external auditor also serves to increase trustworthiness because an auditor assesses the accuracy of the research by examining the compatibility between the data and the findings and interpretations (Creswell, 2007). This research included an auditor to serve as an external consultant. The auditing process was monitored to ensure that feedback was adequately integrated into the data analysis process (Hill et al., 1997).

To ensure integrity of the data, the research report provided detailed information about the research team members, team members' biases and expectations, the selection of the sample, the interview protocol, including a copy of it in the appendix, the recruitment method, the interview process, the transcription process, the steps followed in data analysis, and the auditing process (Williams & Hill, 2012).

Coherence of the results. The researcher strived to ensure that the results of the data analysis were logical, accounted for all the data, answered the research questions, and were understandable by the outside reader (Hill et al., 1997). Examples from the raw data were presented to allow readers understand how the conclusions were reached (Morrow, 2005).

Representativeness of the results to the sample or generalizability. The researcher demonstrated typicality or generalizability by indicating how often the categories emerged during cross-case analysis, whether each finding applied to all of the cases or all but one case (general), more than half of the cases (typical), or less than half of the cases (variant) (Williams & Hill, 2012).

Participant checks. Also referred to as member checking, this procedure solicits the view of participants in regard to the credibility of findings and interpretations (Creswell, 2007). Following transcription of the interviews, the researcher contacted all but one participant from contact information provided by the participants in an effort to receive feedback on the accuracy of the data. Participants were asked whether they wanted to add new information to the data or they wanted the researcher to delete parts of narrated data. Among the fourteen participants contacted, only one participant provided feedback as to the accuracy of the narrated data and reported that the transcribed interview data represented her experience adequately. Three of the participants responded indicating that they would review the data but they never contacted the researcher back with their feedback. One participant was never contacted because the contact information was lost. Two of the participants were attempted to be reached through email but a mail delivery error message was received, indicating that their email addresses were not valid.

Other participants who were contacted either through email or text message did not respond to the researcher's request to review transcribed interviews.

Ethical Considerations

The target population and topic of this research, the roles of researcher and participants, and the research process may introduce several ethical issues in regard to competence, boundaries and multiple relationships, confidentiality, and informed consent that need to be addressed (Haverkamp, Morrow, & Ponterotto, 2005).

Competence. The issue of competence is relevant to three central issues that have implications for the trustworthiness of method and participants' well-being. First, research needs to employ a rigorous method so that it is known that the results are an accurate reflection of participants' experiences, and ultimately serves the higher purpose of advancing knowledge in the particular area of study (Morrow, 2005). Similarly, APA Ethics Code Standard 2.01c (2002) states that researchers acquire appropriate education and training before conducting research involving techniques or populations unfamiliar to them. In addition, Standard 2.01b requires that researchers obtain the training and experience relevant to participant characteristics such as culture, sexual orientation, and religion to ensure competent practice of research and make appropriate referrals when needed. Conducting CQR studies require developing competence in several areas, including interviewing participants, analyzing the data, and writing the manuscript (Burkard, Knox, & Hill, 2012). Consistent with these principles, this researcher possesses advanced knowledge and skills regarding the CQR methodology, research process, and participant characteristics due to active involvement in a CQR project previously as an interviewer and data analyst.

Boundaries and multiple relationships. Qualitative research is often characterized by a high relational quality as researchers are granted the opportunity to enter the participants' world and hear personal stories, thoughts, and innermost feelings (Haverkamp et al., 2005). Thus, maintaining the role of researcher for psychologists may be particularly challenging as participants may experience strong emotions and disclose sensitive material during interviews. Shifts in the researcher role may be deemed necessary to prevent harm when participants display intense psychological symptoms (Haverkamp et al., 2005). This researcher negotiated role shifts with the participants throughout the interviewing process. In addition, the researcher was aware of the necessity to end the research relationship when engaging in overlapping roles is estimated to pose significant risk for participants.

Confidentiality. APA Ethics Code (2002) requires researchers to “protect confidential information obtained through or stored in any medium” (Standard 4.01). Ensuring privacy may be extremely challenging in qualitative research due to the detail and specificity of the information provided by participants (Haverkamp et al., 2005). This researcher took reasonable precautions to make sure that confidential information, such as participants' personal identity or institutional affiliations were not revealed by clues that permit identification of the group (Haverkamp et al., 2005). For example, the researcher did not include those participant quotes that include significant detail or personal information. In addition, the researcher did not reveal the participants' institutional affiliation.

Informed consent. Researchers are required that may be expected to influence their willingness to participate such as potential risks, discomfort, or adverse effects”

(Standard 4.01) (APA Code of Ethics, 2002). The issue of informed consent may present particular challenges to qualitative research because of unforeseen factors that might arise and interfere with research at any point in the process (Haverkamp et al., 2005). For example, the interviews may trigger memories of distressful events in participants or they may experience alterations in their insight that is beyond their level of readiness to process appropriately (Burkard et al., 2012). Because the interview questions included specific questions about the participants' lived experiences, expression of negative events may elicit stress and strong emotions in participants (Burkard et al., 2012). The researcher informed the participants of these potential reactions that may arise during and in the aftermath of the interview process, and a list of referral resources was kept ready in case participants needed follow-up care (Burkard et al., 2012). In addition, the researcher let the participants know at the outset who will have access to data and in what form (Haverkamp et al., 2005).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The raw data were organized into twelve primary domains which were constructed based on a review of the literature (Blustein, Schultheiss, & Flum; 2004; Blustein, 2011; Deaux, 1993, 2006; Ethier & Deaux, 1994; Cole & Ahmadi; 2003; Moore, 2000; Peek, 2003; The Council on American Islamic Relations, 2010; Seggie & Sanford, 2010; Sirin & Fine, 2008; Syed & Pio, 2010; Tyrer & Ahmad, 2006; Zine, 2008), interview questions, and what domain areas naturally arose from the participant responses regardless of the theory-driven interview protocol (Hill et al., 2005; Thompson, Vivino, & Hill, 2012). Domains refer to topic areas that cover similar or connected chunks of narrative in regard to an interview probe (Thompson et al., 2012). The domains developed for the current study included the following: Descriptive Features of the Self/Identity, Dynamic Features of the Self/Identity, Education and Career Experience, Immigration and Cross-Cultural Experience, Stigma and Oppression Experience, Emotional Experience, Family Relational Experience, Social Relational Experience, Home Country/Cultural Experience, Worldview, Life Challenges, and Future Orientation. Following the construction of domains, all the data within domains were summarized into core ideas which captured the core of participants' narratives in fewer statements

(Ladany, Thompson, & Hill, 2015). Core ideas were placed into categories based on similarities across cases (Hill et al., 1997). The auditor reviewed the domains and categories and provided feedback to the principal investigator. To denote their representativeness, the categories were described as “general” if it applied to all cases, “typical” if it applied to at least half of the cases, and “variant” if it applied to less than half but more two or more cases (Hill et al., 1997; Ladany et al., 2015). The domains and categories as well as the number of cases categories were identified, and descriptors of representativeness are displayed in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Research Results Summary

Domains/Categories	Number of Cases	Representativeness
Descriptive Features of the Self/Identity		
Self-definition	15	General
Cultural and relational aspects	15	General
Self-esteem and confidence	14	General
Identity salience	13	Typical
Humility and spirituality	10	Typical
Centrality/importance of identity	8	Typical
Intersecting identities	7	Variant
Physical appearance	4	Variant
Dynamic Features of the Self/Identity		
Self-growth	10	Typical
Acculturation and identity construction	10	Typical
Behavioral involvement	8	Typical
Gender roles and expectations	7	Variant
Proving oneself	7	Variant
Mothering	6	Variant
Comparison of self and social group to others	5	Variant
Education and Career Experience		
Career achievement and satisfaction	12	Typical
Description of job/profession	11	Typical
Career Self-construction	11	Typical
Education and career barriers	10	Typical
Relational influence on career	10	Typical

Domains/Categories	Number of Cases	Representativeness
Education and career path	9	Typical
Seeking better opportunities, ambition, and motivation	9	Typical
Work-family integration	9	Typical
Career goals	7	Variant
Experiencing work as a relational activity	6	Variant
Struggle and strain performing job	5	Variant
Spirituality related to career	4	Variant
Immigration and Cross-Cultural Experience		
Acculturation, adjustment, and growth	15	General
Adversity, Pressure and Perseverance	9	Typical
Description and reason for immigration	9	Typical
Cross-cultural experience	8	Typical
Stigma and Oppression Experience		
Stereotypes and prejudice	14	General
Emotional reaction to stigma and oppression	11	Typical
Using resilience to cope	10	Typical
Discrimination and social exclusion	9	Typical
Advocacy and educating others	8	Typical
Self-consciousness and self-protectiveness	8	Typical
Stigma perceived from in-group	6	Variant
Rationalizing stigma and oppression/Understanding outgroup	5	Variant
Emotional Experience		
Difficult emotions	15	General
Resilience, internal strength, and agency	9	Typical
Religious/spiritual coping	7	Variant
Advocacy and taking action	5	Variant
Self-care	4	Variant
Psychosomatic symptoms	3	Variant
Avoiding, ignoring, and blaming others	3	Variant
Family Relational Experience		
Family modeling, expectations, and transferring values	12	Typical
Support received from family	8	Typical
Support and caregiving provided to family	8	Typical
Family descriptive information	6	Variant
Pressure and conflict within family	5	Variant

Domains/Categories	Number of Cases	Representativeness
Quality of social/relational interaction with outgroup	11	Typical
Quality of social/relational interaction with in-group	9	Typical
Providing and receiving social support	8	Typical
Community service involvement	8	Typical
Perceived positive attitudes of others	5	Variant
Home Country/Cultural Experience		
Culture-specific gender issues	10	Typical
Characteristics of home country/culture	9	Typical
Home-country political/structural issues	7	Variant
Worldview		
Perception of gender and women's issues	11	Typical
Perspective of Islam and Islamic experience	10	Typical
Perspective on stigma and oppression	7	Variant
Values, assets, and qualities	6	Variant
Criticism toward in-group	5	Variant
Value of career and education	3	Variant
Life Challenges		
Loss and its impact	6	Variant
Financial hardships	4	Variant
Divorce	3	Variant
Future Orientation		
Goals and wishes	12	Typical
Apprehension of past and future	5	Variant

Consensus and Auditing Process

Domain consensus and auditing. Team members offered several recommendations regarding the definition of domains, addition of new domains, and deletion or combination of existing domains. For example, one of the team members suggested that the domain named Life Circumstances was too inclusive and would cover all the other domains. It was suggested that the primary researcher redefine the domain by specifically stating what kind of data should go under that domain. Accordingly, the domain was renamed as Life Challenges in consultation with this team member. Another

team member suggested that data regarding relational experience with coworkers should be coded within the relational experiences domain, rather than within the Education and Career Experience domain. After coding several transcripts, it was noticed that participants frequently referred to their experience of the American culture and of other cultural groups in America and their home culture. Thus, a domain named Cultural Experience was formed. Later, it was realized that participants' experiences of the American culture were often mentioned from a cross-cultural perspective. Thus, the Immigration Experience domain was renamed as Immigration and Cross-Cultural Experience. Participants' experience of home-culture pre-immigration was placed under the Home Country Experience domain. In addition, narratives in regard to balancing work and family life were initially coded into a domain named Work-Life Balance, which was later renamed Work and Family Integration. Later on, it was noticed that lived experiences of work-life balance and integration were often mentioned in the context of Career Experience. Thus, the Work and Family Integration domain was included into Education and Career Experience domain.

The auditor for this research had a number of recommendations regarding domain coding. First, the auditor recommended that the domain Educational Experience be merged with the Career/Work Experience domain because participants' narratives on these domains often overlapped. The team members agreed with this suggestion and merged the two domains. Second, the auditor recommended that the primary researcher write a description of each domain that includes the breadth of the content in that domain using bullet points to elaborate what is included in a particular domain. Accordingly, the primary researcher wrote a description of each domain to specify related content.

Category consensus and auditing. Team members and the primary researcher were in different geographic locations, making face-to-face meetings impractical. Team members were fully able to join Skype interviews with the primary researcher to reach consensus during the domain coding process. Due to additional time restrictions, in consultation with the auditor and faculty advisor of the current study, the team members and the primary researcher decided to continue cross-analysis through Skype and e-mail exchanges.

Consensus through electronic communication was gauged a viable option as the primary researcher noticed that team members were mostly able to converge on how to categorize data and that disagreements were minimal. Thus, the primary researcher constructed potential categories for each domain and sent documents of categorized domains to the team members. The team members reviewed the categories carefully and wrote their comments next to each one they disagreed with indicating why they disagreed and how to potentially modify that category. Then, the primary researcher reviewed these comments and either made the recommended changes or committed to the initial category with a written explanation of why she wanted to maintain that category. The documents reviewed and commented on by the primary researcher were sent back to the team members for another round of reviews, leading to consensus on categories for all ten domains.

Throughout this process, open expression of thoughts and disagreements was carefully maintained among team members. Two of the team members had already completed their dissertation research using CQR as the method of data analysis. The third member had participated in a research team employing CQR for data analysis.

Furthermore, all team members and the primary researcher had previous experience working together as a team on a project involving CQR. As the team members were familiar with involving different, equally valid perspectives into the data analysis process, they provided significant amount of feedback during domain coding and cross-analysis. In addition, this researcher exerted sound effort to avoid imposing her perspective and to distribute equal power to each member. Accordingly, she reviewed team members' comments on cross-analysis carefully and made sure that she incorporated all of their suggestions on renaming, discarding, collapsing, merging, or adding categories. Team members were also notified with each change made to the categories. The primary researcher conducted Skype and phone meetings with team members following email exchanges to finalize consensus.

Following the completion of category construction and the cross-analysis, the primary researcher submitted the work to the auditor for an evaluation of the adequacy of the categories and cross-analysis (Ladany et al., 2012). The auditor's comments were sent to the research team, who individually reviewed and collectively discussed how to incorporate auditor's feedback (Hill et al., 1997; Landany et al., 2012). The auditor provided a number of suggestions for renaming categories and expanding the definition of categories to reflect the richness of raw data. Additionally, she identified a number of key themes that had been omitted during categorizing process and suggested that new categories capturing those themes be developed. The auditor also identified data missing categories which indeed captured them. Collapsing domains and categories and creating new categories were among the suggestions of the auditor. The cross-analysis was revised based on the feedback received from the auditor. The revision process was

completed in three rounds of feedback and response exchange between the auditor and team members.

The auditor initially suggested to elevate subcategories developed for three of the domains, including the Relational, Family, and Social experience, Stigma and Oppression Experience, and Emotional Experience to category level to reflect a neater and condensed presentation of the findings, with which the research team agreed. On the Emotional Experience domain, the auditor observed that the participants' narratives reflected dynamism and agency when coping with difficult emotions and suggested that the category named Resilience be renamed as Resilience, Internal Strength, and Agency to capture the theme of dynamism in participants' accounts. The team members agreed with the feedback and combined the Internal Strength and Agency category with the Emotional Strength category as their content overlapped. The auditor also observed that a category named Emotions did not convey any significant idea about participants' lived experiences and recommended to rename it Difficult Emotions, with which the research team agreed. Another recommendation from the auditor was to rename the category of Avoidance, Ignorance, and Blaming Others as Avoiding, Ignoring, and Blaming Others. The team members agreed with the feedback.

On the Stigma and Oppression Experience domain, the auditor suggested renaming the category of Empathy with Outgroup and Rationalizing as Rationalizing Stigma and Oppression/Understanding Outgroup. The auditor suggested expanding on the definition of categories by including themes that were prevalent across participants. For example, she suggested that the diverse emotions, such as fear be included in the description of the Emotional Reaction category, with which the research team agreed.

The auditor identified a number of themes, such as being bold, ignoring, intrusiveness, rejection, sense of protectiveness toward loved ones, and denying experience in the narratives and recommended to see if new categories could be developed to capture these domains. Upon a careful review of the data, it appeared that these themes either occurred rarely or were already captured within other categories. The team members responded back stating that these themes would be noted within the definition of relevant categories. The auditor noted the diversity of emotions in reaction to stigma and oppression and suggested to break the Emotional Reaction category into several emotions to reflect that diversity. The team members responded back stating that breaking the category down would significantly increase the number of categories, which would not occur enough across participants to warrant the creation of these categories. The auditor suggested descriptions of indirect experiences of stigma and oppression by the participants be included within the definition of relevant categories to reflect how participants observed others experiencing stigma and oppression.

On the Immigration and Cross-cultural Experience domain, the auditor suggested changing the names of categories to better describe the data within them. The auditor also observed a number of themes related to persistence that occurred across several participants. Accordingly, the Struggles of Immigration category was renamed as Adversity, Pressure, and Perseverance. The auditor also suggested renaming Change, Adjustment, and Growth category as Acculturation, Adjustment, and Growth, with which the research team agreed. The auditor identified the themes of curiosity, open mindedness, and tolerance occurring across several cases. She was responded back indicating that the themes would be added to the definition of Acculturation, Adjustment,

and Growth category. Likewise, she identified the themes of fear, insecurity, trauma, and tragedy, which were added to the definition of the Adversity, Pressure, and Perseverance category.

On the Identity and Self Experience domain, the auditor noted that the size of the domain was big compared to a number of others and recommended to break the domain into two different domains. The team members responded back stating the domain became naturally big because of how themes of self and identity were prevalent throughout participants' accounts. The auditor still recommended breaking the domain up. Therefore, two domains, including Descriptive Features of the Self and Identity, and Dynamic Features of the Self and Identity were constructed. The auditor also observed that some of the categories needed to be renamed because they were ambiguous.

Accordingly, the Comparison category was renamed as Comparison of Self and Social Group to others, and Practice and Abstinence as Behavioral Involvement. Additionally, to improve clarity, Challenges and Positive Experience category was broken up into two categories named Disadvantages and Challenges Linked to Identity and Advantages and Positive Experience Linked to Identity. Later, Disadvantages and Challenges Linked to Identity was subsumed within the Stigma and Oppression Experience domain because their themes significantly overlapped. Advantages and Positive Experience Linked to Identity was dropped because there was not enough cases to warrant the construction of this category. The auditor identified several common themes, including mothering, physical appearance, pride, and confidence. In response, the category of Mothering and the category of Physical Appearance were developed. Additionally, the Self-esteem and Growth category was renamed as Self-esteem, Confidence and Growth, and the themes of

pride and confidence were added to the definition of the category. Later on, the category of Self-growth was broken apart as the theme reflecting growth of oneself was prevalent enough to stand as a category on its own. Finally, the auditor noted achievement and independent thought as two themes, but there was not enough data to support the development of categories to capture these themes within the current domain.

On the Education and Career Experience domain, the auditor indicated that the names of the categories were too ambiguous and did not reveal much idea about the content and themes involved within. In addition, she identified some themes that occurred frequently and suggested creation of new categories. The team members agreed with the feedback and after a careful review of the data, several categories were broken into new categories based on commonalities across themes. Therefore, the Career Trajectory category was broken into three categories named Change in Career Direction, Path of Education and Career, and Barriers and Disadvantages of Career Pursuance. The auditor suggested renaming Change in Career Direction as Career Changes, Path of Education and Career as Education and Career Path, and Barriers and Disadvantages of Career Pursuance as Education and Career Barriers. Team members agreed on these changes because the suggested names provided greater brevity. The previous category named Education was combined with the category of Education and Career Path. The Ambition category was broken into two, named Career Goals and Seeking Better Opportunities, Ambition, and Motivation. To better reflect relevant themes, the Profession category was renamed as Description of Job/Profession, Positive Work Experience as Career Achievement and Satisfaction, Work Challenges as Struggle and Strain Performing Job, and Work-Family Balance as Work-Family Integration. The auditor identified the themes

of career advice and input occurring frequently. Thus, a category named Relational Influence on Career was created. The team members also noted that participants often mentioned having a sense of offering assistance and support to others through their jobs. To capture this theme, a category named Experiencing Job as Relational Activity was created. Upon the auditor's recommendation, it was renamed as Experiencing Work as a Relational Activity. The auditor also observed that the theme of self and identity was prevalent across narratives. Upon a careful review of the narratives, it appeared that these themes appeared in two different forms, namely how participants perceive and construct their self-concept within the context of career as well as how participants' marginalized identities manifest in their career-related experience. Accordingly, the category of Self and Others Perceptions was broken into two categories named Career-related Self-construction and Identity Manifested in Career. Later on, the two categories were merged and renamed Career Self-construction. Finally, to capture participants' occasional reference to faith and a higher power in the context of career, a category named Spirituality Related to Career was created.

Following auditor's feedback for the Identity and Self experience domain, the Relational, Family, and Social Experience domain was broken into two smaller domains, Family Relational Experience and Social Relational Experience, due to large amount of data it involved. Per auditor's advice, Service and Support category was broken into two smaller categories, named Caregiving and Support Received from Current and Extended Family. On auditor's recommendation, the categories were later renamed Support Received from Family and Support and Caregiving Provided to Family. The category of Struggles with Family was renamed Pressure and Conflict within Family, Family

Description as Family Descriptive Information, Family Modeling, Values, and Expectations as Family Modeling, Expectations, and Transferring Values to better convey the themes involved within these categories. Per auditor's suggestion, the category of Social Service was renamed Community Service. Following auditor's recommendation on renaming several categories, the category of Social Support was renamed Providing and Receiving Social Support. In light of auditor's previous suggestion on collapsing categories to improve depth, the Outgroup Interpersonal Experience and In-group Interpersonal Experience categories were broken into the following: Positive Relational Experience with Outgroup, Interpersonal/relational Struggles with Outgroup and Positive Relational Experience with In-group, Interpersonal/relational Struggles with In-group. It was later noticed that there were not enough cases for each of these categories to be constructed. Therefore, these categories were merged with two categories later constructed to capture the four previous categories: Quality of Social/Relational Interaction with Outgroup and Quality of Social/Relational Interaction with In-Group

Finally, for the Life Challenges domain, the auditor suggested renaming Loss and Its Impact category because it did not adequately reflect the intensity of accounts. The team responded back indicating Loss appeared as the most suitable word to denote participants' diverse experiences of loss stemming from such issues as death, grief, and bankruptcy. For the Worldview domain, the auditor recommended renaming the category of Career and Education Perspective as Value of Career and Education, with which the research team agreed. For the Future Orientation domain, the auditor suggested renaming

the Apprehension category as Apprehension of Past and Future, with which the research team agreed.

After reaching final consensus version of the data, a list of domains, categories, categories' representativeness, and definitions was formed. The megatable sorted by domains was modified based on revisions. Within each domain, raw data was organized by category to allow the data and findings to be clearly visible and easy to read for findings to be presented (Hill et al., 1997).

Descriptive Features of the Self/Identity

This domain refers to participants' narratives describing oneself in terms of multiple identity categories, personality traits, roles, and intersecting identities. It also includes participants' evaluation and definition of their identities in regard to physical appearance, pride, self-esteem, confidence, and spirituality. Seven categories emerged within this domain, including self-definition (*general*), cultural and relational aspects (*general*), self-esteem and confidence (*general*), identity salience (*typical*), humility and spirituality (*typical*), centrality/importance of identity (*typical*), intersecting identities (*variant*), and physical appearance (*variant*).

Self-definition. The first category, self-definition (*general*), described participants' definitions of themselves, their roles, and identities. Participants described themselves in various ways and endorsed identification with multiple selves, including gender, nationality, ethnicity, and religion. In addition, they described a wide range of personality traits and social roles as a way to define themselves. Below is an excerpt from the interview with Participant #1, a 47-year-old African immigrant woman, who described herself in regard to different traits, roles, and identities.

I'm a hard working person. First of all, I'm a black African woman. I'm a mother and I'm divorced. I work hard. I own two shops and I have a couple of houses I rent. My father is alive. My mother passed away. I have a lot of sisters, a lot of brothers.

In addition, Participant #1 identified being a woman distinctive from being a man and described engaging in multiple tasks as part of her gender identity as indicated in the excerpt below.

Being a woman is being myself, first of all. Being a mother, being a hard working person. When I go home, cook, clean. Being a woman is being opposite from man. Being a woman is being myself. Being a woman and being mother.

In response to a question about other ways to describe herself, Participant #1 responded accordingly. "I'm a fighter. I don't give up. I work hard. I came here to make it, and I will make it."

As seen in the excerpt below, Participant #2, a 50-year-old woman of Turkish descent, described herself in terms of personality traits that helped her navigate social pressure and maintain a sense of autonomy in her actions.

And, um, again, during growing up, going to college, I really did not care who or what people thought about me. And that still holds true for me here, too. I'm that kind of a person. I don't yield under yield, under peer pressure. If I decide on something, I wanna do it, I don't care who the heck thinks about me what. Because I will do what I think is right. And, um, like, if I want to put on a pants in college, you know, pants in college

and, and my mom wanted me to wear a skirt, I didn't care about it.

[laughter] And if I did not look the fanciest in the school, and did not spend so much money on my clothing, and just got out of the house, because I need to go to school, and my friends looked me down because I didn't dress up that fancy, I didn't give a shit about it. I'm sorry about my language. [laughter] So, so I do what I think is right. I don't yield under society pressures at all. Neither do I under the corporate pressures. I think that, um, that my strong mental, that's who I am.

Answering a question regarding gender identity, Participant #3, a 41-year-old woman of Palestinian origin, offered an account of the accomplishments below to express her sense of pride being a woman.

I think I never thought that I am a leader. Yeah. I think woman, we are a leader. I think I am a leader. We do a lot, I do a lot and I never get credit for it. There's trouble because when I came here I didn't know the language. I feel like I'm a leader. The way I help my family.

The excerpts above reflect diverse and dynamic ways in which the participants experience and express themselves. They described various personality traits, roles, and identities that they put into action to achieve their goals. Autonomy, persistence, leadership, and strength were among prevalent personality traits while being a mother and woman were among frequently cited roles and social identities.

Cultural and relational aspects. The cultural and relational aspects (*general*) included the impact of cultural, social, and familial factors on how individuals construct, define, and adjust their sense of who they are. Many participants offered accounts of

identity or sense of being closely linked to relationships and connections within their sociocultural contexts. In the excerpt below, Participant #4, a 55-year-old dentist of Pakistani origin, described how her roles and identities derive from a desire to help her family thrive.

I want a... My house is like a... My family is a successful family. I don't like a broken family. I don't like my kids don't achieve their goal. That is all my sacrifice because you are a mom, you are a wife, you are a daughter... Yes, intact and my kids successful in their life. That's my goal of my life. I achieved my goal but I have to provide atmosphere whatever from my kids so they can reach their goal too.

Participant #5, a 36-year-old refugee woman of Somali descent, offered a good account of how relational factors generated an awareness in regard to her religious identity.

When, I think the first time I thought about Muslim, being a Muslim, is when my kids asking me why I wasn't wearing the hijab like every other mom. Like, how I, I didn't wear the hijab until, I wouldn't say my kids pointed out, but I was different than their mom-, their friend's mom. That's when I felt that I was a different Muslim. Like, why I was not wearing the hijab. And, you know, I mean, my kids, they don't wear hijab to school, but they wear hijabs to the masjid. They wear hijab when it rains, but they don't wear hijab, like, they're not conscious, like, they have to wear all the time. And I don't make them wear the hijab. Like, you know, they know their Muslim. They know their Qur'an. They go to the Saturday and

Sunday Qur'an they learn. You know, they have lesson that they have to come up for every Friday, Saturday, Sunday. They know the meaning; they know the religion. I don't make them wear the hijab. But, my high schooler, she started wearing the hijab when she finished, uh, when she... I want them to have that knowledge. That, yes, if you want to wear the hijab, you could wear it. I didn't want them thinking that I wasn't Muslim enough because I wasn't wearing the hijab.

Participant #7 similarly highlighted the impact of family on her personal identity. What makes me, me? That's a very complicated question. A lot of what I am at this point in my life is my family background, what I have gone through, the hardships that I have gone through over a period of time, and what that has made me or what that has prioritized my aims and goals in life.

All three participants illustrated how their selves and multiple roles as Muslim, women, and a person with a career formed and developed within their family context.

For Participant #3, her identity was deeply anchored in an ability to help clients of the same religious and cultural background as her. A question about rewards she gained from her work elicited the following response from Participant #3.

Being able to know the three languages... Being able to identify, yourself, what they're talking about when they say, "I have to fast in the month of Ramadan. I have to pray." I can say, "Well, let me just find something for you, a space, so that you can pray." People would not understand that. It's

being like being like a bridge to those people. I don't know how to say it in English.

In the excerpt above, Participant #3 mentioned that one of the rewards from her work was to gain sense of identity by helping others of the same background. This illustrated how identities are constructed socially and relationally, rather than in isolation from these factors.

Self-esteem and confidence. The self-esteem and confidence (*general*) reflected participants' subjective evaluations and judgments of their sense of worth on the basis of their diverse identities. Almost all of the participants recounted examples of achievements, overcoming barriers, accomplishing goals in regard to several areas, such as education, career, family, and social relationships, which helped them develop confidence into their skills and abilities in navigating life as immigrant Muslim women. Some of them also described a sense of pride in regard to their multiple identities, such as ethnic, religious, and gender identity. Below is an excerpt from interview with Participant #6, a 37-year-old Moroccan-American woman, who responded to the question of how she sees being Muslim a part of herself.

I think I feel very special because with all this, with living in a different country and different culture, and you have a lot of people around you, they don't have the same religion. And a lot of stereotype.

Participant #7, a 47-year-old physician of Pakistani descent, on the other hand, spoke to the positive feelings she endorsed toward her ethnicity in response to a question about her ethnic identity.

I'm proud to be a Pakistani....That's the bottom line. From that small part of the world, so many talented people have emerged. I think proud to be part of that group. Yes, there is a lot of that negativity about the country because of obvious reasons, but then you have to put it in the back of your mind. That should not bring you down... That's actually one of the things that, "Hey, on one side you have people like that," and then on the other side you have people like me coming from the same place... The most recent case was San Bernardino's. Where they were from? They're from Pakistan.

Participant #9 described the sense of pride she has for her heritage, history, and language, which appears to provide the basis for her self-esteem.

I'm from Turkey. I am a Turkish woman and I'm proud of that. I have a very rich history and heritage behind me. The culture that we have, the language that we have is I'm all proud of those.

The following quote from Participant #8, a 29-year-old Albanian-American woman, indicates sense of self-esteem in regard to accomplishments and growth attained as an immigrant woman in the United States.

I don't know, there've been a lot of moments in my life. Like when I graduated, when I got the job, when we first actually came here, there was a lot of difficulties. And actually, I was the only one, I was the only one who spoke English, so pretty much, I took care of my whole family. That made me proud. It shows up, like it didn't show up right away, but through the years, and now I'm the to go person for everyone. [laughs]

Many of the participants described a clear sense of self-esteem and pride into their identities, achievements, and personal assets. Two of the participants highlighted having a sense of pride into their ethnicity and heritage while the other two weighed on personal strengths and achievements as sources of self-confidence and growth.

Identity salience. Identity salience (*typical*) referred to the visibility or accessibility of a particular identity in situations and contexts that evoke that identity. Additionally, it included participants' accounts of awareness, visibility, and insight into their identities. In response to a question about which identities became more emphasized or visible within the U.S. context, Participant #10 described how she feels visible with her Muslim identity in the society.

If somebody sees me on the street, he will see I'm hijabi [Person wearing hijab], that's it... he or she will see the religion, that's the first thing they will see. They don't know me; they don't know I'm Lebanese. I heard a lot of stories here, whoever sees it is like a covered girl, they will think that she's from Saudi Arabia, for example. I don't know, I'm sure you've heard this before.

In contrast to the theme of visibility shared by the previous participant, Participant #5 described how her Muslim identity always remained in the background while she was in her home-country.

I never knew any other cul-, religion other than Muslim, to be honest. Because, being the nine years old, I was never taught there's something different. Being a Muslim it was getting up, that was all I knew. I- I woke up, and I was a Muslim. Like I went to bed, I was Muslim. I went to

school, I came back from school, then I went to Qur'an [Sacred Islamic text believed to be revealed by God] place. And then every day we went to Qur'an place. Monday to Thursday.

Participant #11 described visibility and salience in terms of skin-color below.

We are visible, I mean, because of our color, especially mine, I'm brown...

Participant #7, on the other hand, spoke to the salience of gender as she described gender as a non-salient aspect of who she was. On a different account, she continued to mention that being a woman did not pose her any challenges to pursue a career despite her background in a Muslim country that she described as mostly male-dominated.

I don't know. I don't think that I'm the type of person who would feel as gender is going to make a difference in what I'm trying to achieve. So no. Muslim countries are male-dominated for the most part, but did it hinder me from pursuing my education? No.

Participant #10 described a theme of visibility as a woman, similar to that of Participant #7. While she offered her viewpoint on culturally formed comparisons between men and women, she stated that she has not been impacted by these impositions by virtue of her upbringing.

The thing is that I've never felt I'm a woman. It's...

I know what is it like to be a woman, but I've never thought the difference like, I know woman more emotional, I know woman take care more about the cleanness of the house than a man. My husband helps me a lot, but whenever he does stuff, it's not the same that I do it. I'm telling you, it's the culture. It's your family, it's the culture it depends.

Participant accounts demonstrated varying degrees of awareness into multiple identities they endorsed. While some experienced a sense of intense visibility, others described being somewhat unaware of their certain identities. For many of the participants, race and religious identity appeared to be associated with more salience while gender was more frequently relegated to a lower degree of awareness.

Centrality/Importance of identity. The centrality/importance of identity (*typical*) applied to cases where participants described the extent to which an identity is a significant part of their self-concept. It also refers to the effort put to maintain a specific identity. In response to a question about how she viewed being Muslim as part of her self-concept, Participant #9, a 41-year-old college professor of Turkish origin, explained the following:

It's very important. The very core of my life, the direction of my life is my religion. So the objective of my life is to please God as described in my religion. That's basically to serve people in the good way and to be a good person, and to do my religious obligations. Pray and help others, and be a truthful person and all that. So the religion directs my life. It's the core of my life as a person. I try to keep that aspect in my work, in my family, in raising my children, when relating with my neighbors, my friends, all the time. It's really the core of my identity.

Similarly, an example of this category was conveyed by Participant #4 who emphasized the importance of attending her daily prayers.

Yeah. Praying is important for me. No matter what time at night when I go back home, whatever Salah [Islamic prayer] I miss. I-, I-, I do Qaza

[Prayer done to complete missed prayers]... You can see in my lunch bag I have a scarf. I... My, my, my prayer is my first priority of my life. But, this is reality of life too. To do a job, to do other stuff too. Whatever is important. So, before sleep, I pray. I finish my prayer of the days. I can't sleep.

While the accounts above indicate the centrality of religion in participants' self-concept, Participant #14, a 22-year-old Palestinian woman, offered an account of centrality based in her national identity.

Being Palestinian is a really, really big part of me. That's I think even one reason why I want to go back is, I'm so connected to my country, I'm so connected to my people, that I want to help with whatever small thing I have. Especially the Palestine issue, we get that a lot, people talking about it. It is a big part of me. I care about my country, and I care about, whenever I get the chance to represent my culture, defend my culture, make people know about my culture, my country.

Most of the participants described a strong sense of importance and centrality assigned to their multiple social identities. For some, being Muslim was of primary importance while others accentuated the centrality attributed to national, ethnic, and role identities.

Humility and spirituality. The humility and spirituality (*typical*) included two aspects. First, many of the participants described a sense of humbleness and self-criticism expressed in terms of practicing the religion ideally. Second, a sense of close connection and an effort to relate to a higher power were also common themes across participants.

Both Participant #4 and 12 described a sense of humility and self-criticism in regard to practicing in accordance with their religious identity.

I am not, I won't say that I am a good Muslim, but I really, uh, believe in my religion and I have faith in my religion...Um, yes, I try my best. I don't, I don't, um, I'm not a very prac-, I, I shouldn't say practicing, I'm not a very practicing Muslim. Not five times but I try my best. Um, with work, it's hard (Participant #12).

I'm not a good Muslim 'cause I don't cover my head. If-, I feel bad about it. But, I don't know, one day, I keep praying for myself, one-day God give me hidayat [righteousness] so I can cover my head (Participant #4).

Participant #8, on the other hand, described below how she has gained a sense of connection with God and religion following difficult life circumstances.

So Islam came to my life gradually, I would say. It was like I met a friend, and then from there I just got some information, and then years passed.

And then the moment that my dad was diagnosed, that's where everything changed because I needed like, I don't know, like that support really. Like

I wanted like someone to help me. Who better can help you than Allah

[The Aramaic word for God]? So that's how I started practicing.

Participant #10, a 31-year-old Lebanese-American woman described how being close to God included a sense of self-reflection on one's mistakes as well as an effort to treat other people with compassion.

I'm not saying only Muslims that help people, but as for me, I'm talking about me, being near God more...Even in your job, whenever you have to

act with your colleagues...I'm not talking about helping or something, but how to deal with them, not to hurt anybody. Try not to hurt anybody.

Everybody is a human. Everybody makes mistakes sometimes. I'm not a perfect person too, but still sometimes you think a lot about this stuff. I shouldn't be doing this. I shouldn't have said this. I hurt that person even though I didn't mean it, but I did. My words did, or something. I do think about this stuff at the end of the day, sometimes. I shouldn't have done this as a Muslim.

Several participants described humbleness, reflected by an in-depth reflection, self-criticism, and sensitiveness toward practicing their faith in its true sense. Most of them also discussed a sense of approaching God, being near God, or God approaching them, indicative of spirituality. For several of them, such as the last participant discussed within this category, humility and spirituality were interweaved. They viewed a tight connection with being down-to-earth with other people and being close to a higher power.

Intersecting identities. Another category emerged within the Descriptive Features of the Self/Identity domain is the intersecting identities (*variant*). This referred to how participants' many identities overlap, creating experiences of identity at the intersection which are unique from each identity on its own. After being asked about her experience being an immigrant Muslim woman, Participant #3 responded below by describing how her identities overlap, introducing unique challenges for her.

Like I mentioned to you, I have triple markers. Not only being an immigrant, Muslim, and a woman but a person who has an accent too.

That plays a huge barrier too in terms of jobs. In terms of, yeah, it is good speak three languages, but sometime people dislike you to have an accent. People dislike you have an Arabic name because they know that whatever Abu is a Muslim. Already they know. Even the people who are less educated, they know because of, again, the media. It's going through, in general, that I mentioned that you work very hard. I think we work, all woman here, Muslim, very hard to achieve our goal when we are immigrant because we value. We value...For my own self, I value education. I want to succeed.

This category was also captured well by Participant #2 who described how her three stigmatized identifiers intersect, potentially introducing disadvantages in society.

Exactly. So, there's nothing I can do about that. So much to begin, uh, in addition to that my downfalls is that, I'm am foreigner, I am woman, I am Muslim woman. So, I'm not only not white male, I also have three other negatives on my behalf.

Participant accounts described how intersecting identities brought up multiple challenges and disadvantages within society. Participants who displayed an awareness into their intersecting identities also displayed an awareness into multiple levels of social oppression directed at these identities.

Physical appearance. Physical appearance (*variant*) included descriptions of how cultural constructions of beauty and physical attractiveness could be closely linked to discourse on identity. Accordingly, some of the participants described how culturally-formed standards of beauty worked towards their disadvantage when they belonged to

stigmatized groups of people. The account of Participant #12 illustrated this category successfully.

Yeah, one thing I wanted to, uh, forget about being like a woman, you said. So, like few generations ago. In fact where we live, my, my fe-, my father's village, uh, is where we lived is, [Village], is called. [laughs]
Yeah. So, that's how. But then they came here, and then as tu-, like, I don't how, when, when they came, uh, but on my mother side also...Like I said, she's from, uh...her fore, forefathers came from, uh, Persia, I think, Iranian. Yeah, like, uh, whatever is called, yeah... Heritage, probably right. So, um, they're all... Both my side of...I'm the most darkest. [laughs]
I was considered to be the, the ugliest, uh, person in my family, the girl in my family. [laughs] they are all like quite fair and, uh. So, they was considered an... Always had very... That was the most thing I had, like I was, because I'm not beautiful [laughs] enough.

Participant #2 offered a description below explaining how a sense of belonging in with the mainstream thanks to her white phenotype was easily compromised by a disclosure of ethnic identity.

So, in this country, it's, um, racism, I guess global problem in a sense. I came here, what, 1980, and, uh, I- I look, um, maybe, um, I- I have a light brown hair and, uh, I look like a blonde and you know, I have a very light skin and, I dress like, you know, modern Turkish, you know, females coming here and you don't look very different than them. But, still, um, not being open to diversity, uh, it doesn't really matter, you know. It

doesn't matter if you're Turkish or you're German or this and that. Um, that the ethnicity, that coming from all the way from Middle East, um, you are just not European. Although they will tell you, I look like a North European person. And if I tell them I'm Turkish, then it's a different story, right?

Participant #4 described how others' negative comments about her skin color and appearance caused her to avoid practicing hijab for fear of "not looking good".

Participant: ...Some people say, "Oh, your color is so dark." Or, "You're not pretty." Or, "Blah, blah, blah."

Researcher: Some people said that to you?

Participant: Yeah. So... Not now, a long time ago. So, I just think like, you know, "Oh, if I cover, maybe I'm not gonna look good." Because they have a fair color, they are pretty. That's why they look nice when they cover. You Know?

These accounts illustrated how phenotypical or physical features introduced several disadvantages within society. Several of them emphasized the negative impact of being labeled "dark" while another participant described how the social status and privileges of her "whiteness" were suspended once she was out with her cultural identity.

Dynamic Features of the Self/Identity

All lived experience that is linked to one's social identities, such as gender, ethnic, personal, career, and religious identities were included within this domain. This domain includes encounters and experience stemming from multiple identity categories.

Different from the previous identity domain, which focused on the descriptive aspects of the self and identity, the current domain refers to more dynamic and fluid aspects of identity. In other words, identity-in-action and/or identity-amid-action is the focus of this domain. Six categories emerged, including self-growth (*typical*), acculturation and identity construction (*typical*), behavioral involvement (*typical*), gender roles and expectations (*variant*), proving oneself (*variant*), mothering (*variant*), and comparison of self and social group to others (*variant*).

Self-growth. Self-growth (*typical*) was a common theme across participants. It included accounts of individual growth in the form of maturation, resolution of identity conflicts, having an expanded vision, becoming more tolerant, forgiving, confident, independent, learning, having more information, becoming more aware, trusting oneself, opening up, and feeling accomplished. In response to a question of whether donning a headscarf pushed her out of society, Participant #9 provided the following response, indicative of self-growth.

It was just other way around, because I covered my head, I thought that I want to be out there more often. But I was always a goal-oriented person. I wanted to graduate. I wanted to get my Ph.D. I wanted to have a career as a college professor. Those things never changed even after I started wearing my head scarf. But like I said, wearing headscarf made me more confident and made me realize that I have a responsibility not as a college Professor, but as a Muslim woman to show everybody that Muslim woman can be just as much involved in the society just like anybody else.

I'm not breaking any religious rules or anything by being out there. This also helped me realize that.

Participant #3 also offered an account of self-growth she experienced over a long period of time, which included an emphasis on improving oneself.

I think the way I have evolved through the past 20 years from a person who didn't have an education, from a person that always loves to improve herself, that knows how to speak three languages and my ability to understand other people. I think because of this three-cultural background that I came, in Puerto Rico, Palestine, United States, I'm very sensitive in dealing with people from diverse culture.

Participant #7 described the role of higher education in her self-growth. She emphasized increased confidence, tolerance, and open-mindedness she gained through education, which provided opportunities to meet people with diverse backgrounds.

Getting higher education makes you a better person. It opens your eyes. It's a chance to meet people. It's an ongoing education for every one of us. It's just an outlet for me to be very confident of myself and to learn...It's not, for example, if I had not achieved what I achieved I might have been a homemaker. I might not have had the opportunities to do what I do. My mind might not have been that open. It gives you avenues to explore...Makes me more open-minded and more tolerant, because you're not living within your bubble. You're meeting people from different walks of life. You're meeting very educated people and on the other hand you're seeing people from the slums. It gives you humility.

Many participants described experiencing self-growth. The contexts in which growth occurred varied among them. Some spoke of improved self-confidence with increased religious involvement, others emphasized gaining superior social skills, following immigration, and still others described becoming more tolerant and open-minded with more education.

Acculturation and identity construction. The acculturation and identity construction category (*typical*) included participant accounts illustrating lived experience of identifying and integrating with American culture over time, indicated by changes in viewpoints, sense of self, and behaviors. This category also refers to how identities are constructed and reconstructed through lived experience. Participant #7 described below how she was able to incorporate values encountered in the American context into her personality while maintaining her own values.

I don't think I became Americanized. You pick up a lot of good things from this culture. It is not bad. An average American, for the most part, they're not bad people. There are certain I would say characteristics or things that you learn from them. You're like, "That's pretty nice. Why can't I be like that?" At this point in my life, yes, I have my own values, but then I have certain other values, too, that have integrated into my personality. If you ask me what, I wouldn't be able to tell you what. [laughs] I think that you learn the patience that these people have, the humility that they have. I'm not talking about it across the board, but these are things that you learn on the way.

This category also applied to descriptions of adjustment and change in regard to other identity categories, such as religious and gender as a result of novel experiences. What Participant #5 described below illustrates how motherhood increased awareness into her religious identity and introduced some behavioral change accordingly.

On the outside. Yeah. From the inside, I knew I was a Muslim. I never wanted to be not Muslim. It's just that that was all I knew. So, when you come here, you change how you dress, you change how you think. You different. But then when you become a mom, then you think different way. You go like, OK I want my kids to know that they're Muslim. But I don't want to stop them being themselves. So, I change when I became a mom. I did not change into, what I went crazy like, you have to cover this, you have to do this, you have to do that. But I changed from the person I was before... Coming, being a mom, and then looking at my kids. And then I want them to know that, yes because you live here, but you're still Muslim. That you have friends that's not Muslim, but that's OK. But you're Muslim. You have to act that you're Muslim.

In the following interview excerpt, Participant #9 explains how she was able to resolve a phenomenon she referred to as "identity conflict", indicative of identity construction.

After I came here, my Muslim personality became more visible, more dominant, because I realized that this is a free country and I can wear my headscarf without being kicked out of the school. I guess, before I was wearing my head scarf, I was having an identity conflict. I consider myself

a practicing Muslim woman, but I wasn't wearing the headscarf. This was really a conflict in my head, but after I started wearing my head scarf, that conflict was resolved and I was more peaceful, more confident and my Muslim identity became more dominant.

Many participants described appreciation of the American culture as well as opening themselves up to American way of life by learning from a different culture. Incorporating American values while retaining one's own, improved cultural adjustment, increased awareness into one's identities, and behavioral changes were indicative of acculturation and identity construction participants experienced.

Behavioral involvement. The behavioral involvement category (*typical*) refers to the “doing” aspect of an identity. Many of the participants recounted lived experiences of the extent to which they were behaviorally involved in activities associated with a particular identity. They also provided examples of abstaining from certain behaviors to fulfill enactment of an identity. Participant #3 offered an example of the two aspects of this category in two different excerpts below.

I don't pray five times. I used to. When I told you I was 16, I was very religious. Religious, because for me, religious is like I follow everything. What is the teaching of the Prophet Muḥammad, all the things I must do, not do. Here I'm not. I don't pray five times a day. Because you are distracted with so many things. Distraction pull you from everywhere. Yeah. I don't believe it's time, because you can make time for everything. It's the distraction you have in your life, like work. Things you have to do at the moment that you don't think about it unconsciously. That you think

about, "That is a must." Sometimes they ask me, "Let's go to a bar." You know, it's normal here to go to a bar. There's nothing wrong with that. They drink. I don't do that. The name of a bar, even this I dislike it, even the name. It's because sometime I have that because of my parents. Again, the influence you have your past. Sometimes the name of a restaurant called [Bar] where it's only chocolates, and it just... Yeah, it's just exaggeration but again it's the association they give in my mind that is bad.

Participant #9 described the importance she attributed to her ethnicity as well as ways to maintain her ethnic identity as an immigrant woman within the U.S. context

It's also important to keep my identity as a Turkish Muslim woman. To keep my children identity as Muslim American Turkish children. They have even more identities than I do probably, but being involved in the Turkish Muslim community is very important to keep those identity... American life can be so easy to adapt. Like I said, I am proud of my Turkish heritage, Turkish culture. I want my children to have that sense of pride of their own heritage and learn about their culture. You can only teach a person about a culture by just lecturing them out so much, just a little. The cultures can be learned by example, by living. And here we can only live that culture among the Turkish community. We celebrate our holidays together. Our kids go to the Turkish weekend school. They practice their Turkish language, learn Turkey songs and during our holidays like Ramadan we come together and have dinners together. It's

like the family events everybody does here in America. We get our support, emotional and social support from each other. We're feeding ourselves with the support we need to spread our energy out in the society.

[laughs]

Behavioral involvement in identity was a common theme across participants.

They described behavioral involvement through performing activities specific to a certain identity. Some described being involved in religious while others discussed performing ethnic identities.

Gender roles and expectations. Another category emerged within the current domain is gender roles and expectations (*variant*), which included participants' accounts of lived experiences as women. Both Participant #4 and 5 offered great examples of many roles and tasks placed onto them, which they attributed to being a woman.

So, that's the woman. Maintain your job, maintain your house too. I keep thinking because right now, I don't have any food at home. I know that. I have to go and cook. Yesterday, there was no food but actually, I have a flu so yesterday I had a fever so I asked my son, "Go and order pizza. I, I don't have time. I can't cook any." He said, "Yeah, that's fine." Today, you cannot order pizza every day, right? No, you don't want. No, you can. Your husband don't like it. He said, "Everyday pizza and I can't eat everyday pizza." I say, "Yeah. I understand. I have to cook something." Me either, I don't like everyday pizza for sure. Kids like every day. They're different so I think I drive, I clean, I cook. Now, I have a job and I have to take everybody moods too no matter he's a husband, no matter it's

the kids. I'm always in the middle. Sometimes kids mad with dad. Dad mad with kids so who was the one. I'm the middle one. So, as a woman, I'm proud of it (Participant #4).

Sometimes I say it, I wish, I tell my husband, "Sometimes I wish I was you so that I don't have to do a lot of stuff." Then he goes like, "No, you don't have to wish will be," because then he...being a man, he has other things, like he thinks about, he worries about. But sometimes it's hard being a woman. When you have to do a lot of stuff. And I feel like being in America, woman do more than man do. Like, even though I go, yes, I go work, but I also be the mom. I'm also the person who takes to the doctor. I'm the one who gets up to cook and clean and go to work. Which means being multitasking, being a woman (Participant #5).

Multitasking was a common theme across participants. The excerpts above reflect various roles and tasks placed onto the participants. These include caregiving, performing household activities, and working jobs.

Proving oneself. The category, proving oneself (*variant*), emerged in response to participants' descriptions of their efforts to represent themselves in regard to the identities they endorse. Some of the participants expressed engaging in efforts to show their potential as immigrant women, while others emphasized striving to represent Islam positively in response to prevailing stigma toward Muslims. A good example to this category was offered by Participant #3 who spoke to the excellence she thrives to bring into her work so as to avoid negative stereotypes of being an immigrant.

I don't care how many hours I have to work in a project, I just make that commitment to do the best I can. I don't want to be labeled lazy or, "Poor thing, she's an immigrant. She doesn't know what she's doing." Just it's certain, sometimes some people have perceptions that when you have an accent, you think with an accent. Something here is broken. It's not the case. You have to speak all that languages because we think abroad. Maybe some, like me, they don't express themselves the way they want me to...like them. We are very knowledgeable about different areas. The thing is, just to prove it's just hard. Sometimes to prove that you can do it is not easy. It's not easy.

Similarly, the excerpt below from Participant #7 captures another good example of this category.

I guess it's the same thing if you're holding down a job for that many years, people start knowing you more than your background. Your identifiers as an immigrant, or Muslim, or whatever, it just goes in the background. When people start seeing you in a different light. You know what I'm saying? Maybe when I started a job that might have been a certain idea in people's minds, but then with time you are proving yourself over, and over, and over again, again, and again. I guess it changes their mindset. Has anyone said anything? No.

Participant #6, on the other hand, described engaging in efforts to represent a typical Muslim as a way to counter widespread stereotypes regarding Muslims.

I show all the people around me that's...my religion doesn't make me different than anybody else. I am the same person like everybody else they say, "Oh, because you're Muslim it's gonna be different now." No, I am American citizen, like I do whatever every person do, it doesn't make me any different than anybody. Like I said it's just the name, we are just normal people. I just trying to explain to everybody, we're normal people. We do normal activities. We take our kids to have fun. We do have fun with our family. We travel. We do everything normal people do, like, we're no different. But like I just want people to understand this Islam, it's a religion, don't, I wish people don't mix, like business mix everything with just religion, religion. Because I show them who we are, real life, this is me. I'm not different. They say, "Well... you are very different." ...then I was like, "Well, this is most other Muslim they're just like me." See, I don't agree with a lot of different thing, I, I'm just like them... You think if I'm Muslim I'm gonna believe in killing, believe in the... No.

The excerpts above indicate that several participants engage in efforts of self-representation and self-proving on the basis of diverse identities. Some described a desire to repel stereotypes regarding immigrants while others described a desire to self-represent as good Muslims.

Mothering. Mothering (*variant*) included participants' narratives of identifying as a mother and their meaning making surrounding the mothering experience. Participant #7 described the sense of pride she experienced from instilling values in her children.

I think I feel proud every day of my life being a woman. I feel proud of being a mother. I am at a point in my life where two of my -- I have a 20-year-old and then I have a 16-year-old -- and I've seen them grow, and I see the values as a parent that I've tried to instill in them, they have those.

Participant #9 described how she experienced change following becoming a mother. She indicated perceiving mothering as a primary aspect of being a woman. She also described her meaning making regarding the mothering role.

I became a mother three times here, of course it's a big change. With that I'm more forgiving, more tolerant now than I was before. I believe part of that is because I am a mother. I'm part of that because I learned to tolerate people different than I am here. That makes me a happier person, happier woman, in fact. When I think of myself as a woman, not as a human being, but as a woman human being, [laughs] the very thing that comes to my mind is motherhood, really. That's probably the first identity of myself as a woman. Also, I see myself as the other half of the society, other half of the human beings. Without the woman...without all woman, including myself, the society, the human life, wouldn't be where it is right now. I see that as a very important role. This includes motherhood, also. I see that as a very important role. Motherhood is a reflection of God's mercy and compassion. Again, I see myself, and all the mothers in the world, as a mirror of God's mercy and compassion. I don't believe any mother can hurt any other child, another human being, because they're a mother. They

can feel how another mother can feel about their child. Every human being is a child to another woman. That's how I see my role as a woman.

For several women, mothering emerged as an integral part of their self-concept. Mothering as a role identity was associated with a sense of pride, responsibility, happiness, increased spiritual reflection, empathy, and worry for the participants.

Comparison of self and social group to others. Comparison of self and social group to others (*variant*) included participant accounts comparing themselves with others on the basis of their identities. Additionally, it included narratives comparing one's own social group to others. Participant #10 offered a comparison of her national group to other national groups emerging from nearby countries.

Being Lebanese, hmm... I don't want to compare us to other Middle Eastern groups or countries. The thing is, in Lebanon you are more open to accept more people, even though some of the Lebanese are so racist.

Participant #1 described the differences she perceived between the conceptualization and practice of Islam in her culture and Muslims of other cultures, which she deemed would pose a challenge to a potential marriage with someone outside of her own cultural group.

It's hard to marry other people, because they're not Muslim. It's hard to find black American men, Muslim. The way they see the Muslim religion, that's not the way we see it, where I've been raised. The way they worship Allah, and the religion, that's not how we've been raised to worship Allah.

It's hard to marry another culture Muslim, because we don't see it the same way. It's difficult.

Participant #3 approached comparison from a gender perspective and indicated how she drew boundaries on the basis of her intersecting identities of being a woman and Muslim to abstain from certain activities other women with different values engaged in.

Like I say, it's by the way I behave, the way I interact with others. Certain things I will not do, like going at nightclubs, things like that. Even though some women, they will do it, I will not. I will not engage in...As a woman, I respect myself. I won't go with men without, just dating... there is certain things I will not do that I think identifies me as being not only a woman but being Muslim too.

The excerpts above show that comparison can take a variety of forms. Some participants offered examples of comparing their ethnic and national group with others. Several participants compared the way they understand and practice Islam with those from other ethnicities. Comparison also occurred on the basis of being a woman of diverse background in the Western context.

Education and Career Experience

Description of education, work, and career trajectory of the participants were included within this domain. Themes such as struggles related to pursuing career and education, work-life integration, goals, family influence, changes in career orientation, and barriers, such as difficulties transferring skills and credentials earned in their home country - as well as failures -were included within this domain and were subsumed within the following categories: career achievement and satisfaction (*typical*), description of

job/profession (*typical*), career self-construction (*typical*), education and career barriers (*typical*), relational influence on career (*typical*), career changes (*typical*), education and career path (*typical*), seeking better opportunities, ambition, and motivation (*typical*), work-family integration (*typical*), career goals (*variant*), experiencing work as a relational activity (*variant*), struggle and strain performing job (*variant*), and spirituality related to career (*variant*).

Career achievement and satisfaction. Common themes of achievement, accomplishment, and fulfillment related to work/education experience fit within the category of career achievement and satisfaction (*typical*), which was prevalent across participants. The category captured themes such as sense of happiness from one's job, liking one's job, finding a job, passing exams, good pay, being accepted into further educational and career ranks, completing academic credentials (such as degrees), feeling proud of accomplishments, awards received for years of service, perceived success in career, developing successful products, positive work history, lack of problems at work, and confidence, skills, and knowledge gained over time. Participant #11, a 60-year-old retired librarian of Pakistani origin, offered an account of this category by expressing a sense of accomplishment and pride gained from her job which involved a good salary and benefits.

And then all these jobs. So, I was, kind of, very, I felt very accomplished.

Like, how I started. I always tell this to my daughter too. With, very few years at school, schools you get your foundation. So I, I felt, like, I don't know how I did. I survived in America. I got mashallah [As God has willed it], alhamdulillah [Praise and thanks to God], had a very good job. I

mean, librarian job very, uh, good pay. And very, very good atmosphere and good benefits. Very good benefits, pension system. So, I, I'm fortunate really. I thank Allah for all this. So kind of, you can [laughs] say proud.

Participant #2 described developing an unprecedented technology related to her field.

One thing that I have done, that I can share, is that, there was one of this new technology that I have developed. One of its kind... State of the art. In the industry, not just my company, but in the industry nobody was able to develop that. I did... All the things I have done technically has been very advanced and very good stuff. You can look at my resume and not understand it, because, you know, they're highly technical.

Participant #14 elaborated on the sense of satisfaction she gained through her job, which included working with refugee children. Her sense of satisfaction stemmed from activities of helping refugee children which elicited a sense of connection to her home country from which many refugees emerged, seeking shelter around the world. Opportunities to improve her English and the supportive relational network also added to her sense of satisfaction.

I got to meet so many awesome, awesome people there. That means a lot to me. This is my last week at my job, and just because it overlaps with my school schedule, I had to leave it... The idea of seeing these kids, who their parents don't know anything about American culture, they don't know English. When they come to school, they don't know English. We

offer help not only in academic math, reading and writing, we offer social. We're like big sisters for them. We sit there and listen to their problems when in school. There are so many people out there in the world who are facing the same thing, especially the Syrian refugees now, or even Palestinian refugees... This job was special, because I'm not helping them, they're helping me a lot. Because at one level, I feel like I'm close to my country, because I'm helping refugees and immigrants, and I've been learning English. These kids, when they start learning English, they learn so fast and they know more than you do. I would never stop talking about how this job helped me and supported me... I got there an awesome staff. My supervisor was really helpful through the years. Even though she's American, she's white, she just loves helping people, she loves helping immigrants and helping refugees. She supported me on so many levels.

Achievement and satisfaction was a prevalent theme across participants. Salary, benefits, accomplishments, contributions to their field of study, supportive relational atmosphere at work, and job activities were among significant sources of achievement and satisfaction.

Description of job/profession. The category of the description of job/profession (*typical*) addressed participants' descriptive accounts of the professions, jobs, and work activities they were involved in. Participant #6 offered an account of what activities her current job involved.

Well, like I say, I work very close to people... I prepare people to go to surgery so... and that's what I was telling you earlier, people comes very

nervous, and they wanna talk about anything rather than surgery... To relax, just to forget about the surgery is coming up later. So, like they come two hours before surgery, I have to help them up, do the vitals and get EKG and all that kind of stuff, IV. So, you have to talk about something. I always try to make it fun for them...

In addition to typical activities related to the job, Participant #6 also described how she presented as a convenient employee by serving multiple roles at her workplace.

Well, when... A, a lot of times like they use me so much because... But I don't work there as an interpreter, I mean, but I help them anyway. If, if we don't have an interpreter available, I have to talk to the patient and get them ready and send them to the OR. I mean, we're not gonna be waiting. If they're in an emergency surgery we're just gonna go ahead and do it. And I think one of the...the manager wants to give me a different position, so I'm just kinda of like thinking about it. [laughs] But I'm still gonna be at the same hospital. I still wanna be a medical...

Participants' narratives reflected great diversity among the roles, duties, and tasks involved in their jobs.

Career self-construction. Participants' meaning making and construction of selves in relation to career were included in career self-construction (*typical*). Common themes included descriptions of fit between personality traits and profession, self-confidence linked to one's career, descriptions of personality traits and identities, such as being hardworking, dedicated, persistent, being a leader, being a woman, being Muslim and how these shaped their career perspective, description of oneself as successful, and

descriptions of reflection on one's self-concept through job. Participant #9 described how she perceived a fit between her personality and job.

All these really fits my identity perfectly. I like to teach and help others. I like to collaborate with others to improve the courses, to improve people's education, to improve people's learning and even teaching. This fits perfectly to me...I always loved teaching. It affects my personality though. If you think of a researcher, they are not very social. They do their research in their own world. That wasn't exactly for my personality. I'm more social person and I like to help others and teaching math, making other people understand the hardest subject they think of. It's not everybody's favorite subject after all, makes me happy.

She also described how her self-construal as a Muslim woman in a managerial position spurred an ambition to prove her competency so that she could best represent Muslim women.

I feel like they took a risk by hiring me because they didn't know me. I was so different than anybody else that was hired there before. I just wanted to prove that I could do this job just as much as anybody who's also qualified to do the job, maybe even better. [laughs]. Part of that stress was because I'm a Muslim woman who is in a managerial job, administrative job and I didn't want to screw because if I screwed I feel like I was failing the Muslim woman also, [laughs] not just myself. This put a lot of pressure, a lot of stress on myself.

Participant #3 described how her desire to represent those with disadvantaged backgrounds manifested in her job both as an asset as well as a risky inclination when expressed vigorously in an attempt to protect her clients.

Not only a leader, a voice for the voiceless. This is the way I see. I think this is the way I got in my evaluations because some people will be afraid of talking or advocating on behalf, but I will take the risk. I could lose my job because I want to protect the client. But I think that I didn't care. If I feel something that is very unjust, I will just talk.

Career self-construction reflected how participants engaged in meaning making and self-construction in the context of career. Participants often described how their identities, personality traits, and interests emerged in the jobs they performed. These indicate that career is a significant context for identity enactment.

Education and career barriers. Participants frequently discussed various barriers and disadvantages they encountered or anticipated while pursuing as well as progressing in one's career leading to the category of education and career barriers (*typical*). Participants mentioned structural obstacles as well as more personal ones. Failure on admission tests, difficulty transferring foreign credentials, financial barriers, rejections, difficulty obtaining licensure, and perceived discrimination related to hiring process were some examples of structural obstacles. More personal barriers included disliking school, lack of confidence, feeling tired and burned out, language barrier, anticipated stress, perception of age, and time strain. Participant #4 offered a striking example of barriers she encountered as well as effort she exerted to tackle those while seeking her residency training in dentistry.

Participant: I apply, apply, apply. Reject, reject, reject. It was so tough. I applied in schools. I apply in residency. Reject, reject. [Hospital] start residency program, I applied. They reject. That time I cry. I been working here, like, almost three years. They know me and why they reject me. But that time I was so frustrated. Like, you know. And I resigned the job. I said, “No. I can’t continue this job if they don’t respect me.”

Researcher: Uh huh. Why do you think they didn’t accept you?

Participant: Because I, my graduation is...the reason they said my graduation was in ‘86 which is an old graduation. I can’t change my graduation time. That is a time. They accept all, uh, like, uh, fresh grads. It means like five year or six years old school grads. Like, they went to school, they accept the fresh ones. So, according to them, my graduation is more than 20 years old. They said, like, you know, that is, that’s the reason they gave me... OK. I said, “OK. That’s fine.” ...OK, I skip one part of... Then... I went to [State] because the [State] has, uh, an option for foreign-trained. You don’t have to go to school. You don’t have to go to do the residency. They offer two clinical exams. If you pass after part one part two, the written exam, there is two clinical exams if you pass two clinical exams they can, they give you

the license to practice. I try so hard. I try, like, I took those courses four time.

First, first time I went to the [University] to take a course. There was some dentist. He offer a course for foreign-trained to prepare those exam, and I took the course. It was a 11 day course. It start from 7:00 to 11:00. 11 night. Those 11 days I never saw daylight. Those days, I have no idea where those 11 days goes. The courses. I mean, like, the classes. The course end, like, a teaching and something, six o'clock. But we stay in lab to practice up to 11. Because lab goes up to 11 o'clock. And we stay in a hotel. I share with some, like, you know, some other Indian. Like, because I can't afford, like, the whole room. And, you know, we just sleep there. The whole day we in work. Right. And it's expensive course. It's almost, like, uh, you can say a \$10,000 course.

Researcher: You paid that?

Participant: Yes. I spent a lot of money.

Researcher: Whew.

Participant: I spent a lot of time to get here. So, anyway, because you can, you can add, like, not only the course. You can add, like, staying in a hotel and the fare. You can say, like, the whole, the whole thing is mostly, like, 11...11 days. We...even

though we, I cook food from here and take it...because I don't have time to buy, go and buy food. Everything is closed at 11 o'clock. We just ate cookies or something. No food. But, anyway, we go on. And after that course I took the exams fourth time. I couldn't pass.

Researcher: OK. Couldn't pass?

Participant: Yeah. I couldn't pass. It's, it's, uh, it was tough. It was really tough. It was really tough. You can't imagine. It was, whoever passed, lucky of those boards. That is the reason they put us on. Because people come, they take courses, they take money. You know? All the foreign-trained goes to take all those courses.

Participant #1 described financial circumstances surrounding her career choice, illustrating the barriers and disadvantages she encountered while seeking a career following immigration.

When I first came in this country it was hard for me to go to school because my background is poor. My parents couldn't pay nothing, so I have to work, take care of them, work, take care of myself so I couldn't go to school to have a big diploma, so I went to school for hair. Two years to get my license and start braiding hair, because that was the easiest job I could do to have my income honestly and take care of myself honestly.

Participant #12, a 43-year-old scientist of Indian origin, offered a description of factors that she perceived as barriers for advancing her career.

Participant: Well, I, I don't know. It's so...I wanted to do something but I'm limited also. I cannot go out. Um, it's too late, uh, to do, uh, to do something.

Researcher: Like, to do, like, a Ph.D. kind of thing?

Participant: Yeah, I would like to do. Uh, but, I don't have the, it's so much gap now that, um, it's hard to do it. It's hard to...

Researcher: OK.

Participant: Um, to think of that. [laughs] And then, like, "Oh, my memory doesn't work. I'm old." [laughs] So, it makes me...And one of my friend actually, one of my colleague, because of the funding, um, she was laid off. And then, uh, although she is a-, she is a PhD actually. From A..., very good, A... University. Um, she went back to school doing PA, physician assistant. And she, like, for a while she kept pushing me too. "R... you should do something too." Um, 'cause research is, there's not much left in there. Um, yeah, so...mo-, more, there's no, not much stability. Funding problems plus...I don't know. I don't have that much confidence. Um, in that way I don't have that much confidence, yeah. I wish I would have. I wish, I regret now. When in the beginning I should have and I came here, I should have started doing it. I should have forced myself to do.

Participant #2 described how her intersecting identities introduced significant barriers to her mobility toward higher career ranks.

Because, uh, being a foreigner, being a woman, and being a Muslim. It's a threefold of, um, diversity barriers that brings your career. And I had to fight really hard, and work really hard, to get to where I am right now.

And with all the things that I have done, I could easily have been a division-wide president, if I wasn't wearing hijab, or I was maybe not a foreigner, or this and that. And those are some of the things that puts you back...

Participants described perceiving a variety of barriers for seeking further education and progressing in their careers. Some of the barriers were systemic while others were more personal. Several participants described persistence in overcoming these barriers while others cited several factors such as age, financial issues, and tiredness which make it difficult to tackle the barriers.

Relational influence on career. Participants frequently described the impact on relational factors on their career development, which led to the emergence of relational influence on education and career (*typical*). Examples of relational factors included advice, support, encouragement, guidance, influence, and role modeling provided by family members (i.e., parents, siblings, spouse), mentors (i.e., teachers, professors, supervisors), colleagues and friends (i.e., fellow immigrants) while pursuing and sustaining a career. Participant #4 described the advice received from her friends concerning license requirements after moving to the States.

So we moved here, it was in 199..., and I tried to contact with my friends, how do I get my license? How do I got my degree? What is the process? So my friends advise me just do first the Theory Boards, my National Boards, it's a theory exams...

Relational influence was also evident in how Participant #4 went on to describe the impact of her siblings on her decision to seek a different career.

So, that time the computer is, is in boom. You know. [snaps fingers] Everybody got a good job in computer. So, my, my brother and sister say, "You're smart. You can do it." So I say, "OK. Let's do the six-month course and start making some money."

Participant #11 described how the information and advice provided by an American friend made her aware of an opportunity to pursue graduate education with funding from her job.

At that job there was, my colleague she was going to university and, and she finished her master in library science. And she told me, "N...., why don't you go and get master's from here. The library will pay for your tuition. So, I said, "Wow, that's a good opportunity." So, I applied and I got admission at [University], and I finished my master's.

Participant #7 described the impact of her family on her career choice. I'm originally from Pakistan. I have a very strong background that my family was full of doctors. That led me into the career that I am in at this point in time.

Participant #14 described the support she received from her supervisor, as well as her colleagues at work. Despite her sense of incompetence, which led to a number of attempts to leave, her supervisor offered constant encouragement for her to stay in the job.

My supervisor was really helpful through the years. Even though she's American, she's white, she just loves helping people, she loves helping immigrants and helping refugees. She supported me on so many levels. I had so many hard times in my job, where I thought I'm not good enough to help these kids. These kids need someone really, really good to help them, and they don't deserve someone who just came to the States and they have no idea what they're doing. "I'm not good enough for them." I went to her to say, "Oh, I'm quitting, I'm not good enough." She's like, "No, you are, you are." She supported me and she didn't let me quit. In my first year, I went to her and said, "I want to quit," two times. In my second year, I went to her I think also two times. This is my last year, I didn't go to her and say I want to quit [laughs] because all the staff, all of them, my supervisor, all my co-workers, they're really great.

Participants frequently cited the positive impact of relational influences on their careers. Parents, siblings, spouses, children, friends, mentors, and supervisors were among significant people having an impact on participants' career.

Career changes. Career changes (*typical*) captured descriptions of change occurring in participants' career trajectory. Themes included choosing a career that is different than the initial career plan, entering the workforce for the first time following

immigration, adjusting to change of job post-immigration, and changing area of study.

Participant #13, a 55-year-old woman of Nigerian origin, described why she switched her career plan of becoming a nurse to a social worker. She explained that the lengthier process of completing prerequisites in nursing was a primary reason of switching her career choice to that of social work.

I actually didn't plan to choose social work as a profession. I had planned nursing but I realized that I needed 2-3 years to complete the prerequisites.

In social work, I could do the prerequisites in a year and apply to the program.

Participant #6 did not imagine she was going to work following relocation in the States. Elsewhere, she described her decision to enter the workforce was sparked by the bankruptcy and subsequent health issues her husband experienced.

The first time when I came to US, I never thought about, I'm gonna work... To be honest, like I said, I used to have everything. So, I never thought about like, I'm gonna work harder to do something else. It's just me. It's just me. Uh, nobody stopped me. It was my choice. I never thought about, I'm gonna go to college. Never. And I'm, I'm sure, if I did, maybe I'll make it.

Participant #15, a 42-year-old Egyptian woman, mentioned that due to the lengthy process of transferring her credentials to the U.S. context as a physician, she decided to adjust her career as an interpreter helping patients with limited or no English language skills to express themselves during doctor's visits.

It's hard, for me not... start overall these again, and to be a doctor and maybe, this is what makes me to think about to change my career here and, uh, I feel it's OK. Maybe, this interpreter, physician, uh, I'll be in contact with patients but in different way. [laughs] It's like, yeah... Uh, that's it.

Many of the participants recounted how their career evolved in the context of immigration. Changes happened for a number of reasons, including anticipated difficulties transferring credentials earned in the home country, anticipated length, difficulty, and financial strain to complete requirements of the original career plan, exploration of career interests, and financial problems.

Education and career path. Many participants offered an account of the route or trajectory they followed in reaching their current careers, which led to the category of education and career path (*typical*). This included descriptions of the course of their education (such as schools attended, trainings and individual projects completed), and stages passed (such as exams and prerequisites toward their current career. The excerpt from the interview with Participant #4 exemplified the education and career path category. She described the course of completing an individual project, and then taking an exam toward a professional license called EFDA related to her area of specialty.

I went down there into the program and talked with the program director. She said, "OK. I'm gonna take your test and see what level you are." OK. So, she took my test. And she said, "Oh, you don't have to do the whole year." Ex-, you just do like, you know, the project I give to my students. You just finish the project and take a Board. If you pass, you get the

EFDA license. I say, “OK.” And I think I did only four of five month. I took her, um, the project. And I have a key of the department. And I sit down and keep doing practicing, practicing, and keep showing her. You know, I finished a project...So, when she saw my...the program director when she saw all my project complete she said, “Oh, you are ready to take a Board for EFDA.” You have to have a take a board. It’s a very tough board for EFDA...It’s a tough exam. So, I went to the Columbus and took my exam for EFDA. And luckily I passed in first attempt. Luckily.

Participant #7 described the course of individual study and training leading to the completion of her residency in pediatrics. Her account illustrates a description of career path intertwined with several important life events, including getting married, coming to the States, losing her father, and becoming a mother.

I pursued my specialty training here in America. When I came here in ‘99, this was just a few months after I got married, my father who was an ENT surgeon, he passed away. That made me go back for a few months. That solidified my ambition to specialize and move forward as a pediatrician. I wanted to make him proud. I spent the next few years taking my boards and going through rigorous residency training. This entailed three years. In the interim I had my oldest son. I finished my residency in 2005.

Participant #10 offered a description of the course of steps she has followed, which culminated in a master’s degree in accounting.

I came here three years ago. I started my master’s right away, after three months I came, I applied. The full semester was already started. I waited

for the spring. I started the spring, 2012. I started right away, and got a job on campus on the same semester. I'm done now, in two years.

These examples illustrate that the education and career path followed by the participants is not always smooth. Many participants described experiencing significant life events, encountering barriers, and engaging in hard work in overcoming these barriers as women of diverse backgrounds.

Seeking better opportunities, ambition, and motivation. Seeking better opportunities, ambition, and motivation (*typical*) emerged to capture narratives describing participants' efforts and reasons to advance their career. Many of the participants described a desire to move up to higher occupational ranks for a variety of reasons, such as higher pay. Some of them revealed that immigration to the States was prompted by an intention to seek better education and career opportunities. Others mentioned several motivational factors surrounding their career development, such as motivation to succeed, find a job, and finish degree requirements. Participant #11 described that having some level of education elicited awareness into further ways to improve her career regardless of being financially well-off.

Participant: You know this is like every, every person who is, who has some education, they want to go up. They want to do something better, something better. So that's how I did, I was not very content with what I had, I said no.

Researcher: Financially or?

Participant: Uh, not financially, my husband has a job, good job. But just, if you, like for you, I suppose I give you example, you have

your master's and this and that having this and that, if you are working as a, like a lower job in the bank or any of that, you, you don't want to restrict to that, you want to do something better. So I was always looking for better chances, and then finally that library job I was a little satisfied. So that's how I moved in my carrier.

Participant #4 described pursuing further training to fulfill requirements for her area of specialty.

I signed the contract for my job. I... and I, I start my job, and my interview was... I start like maybe two, three weeks. After my two, three weeks job I had an interview for my second year residency. Because I already passed the board. Those are all plus points. If you pass the board. If you pass your all exams. Everybody look your resumes. You know, how it looks like. And the program director when she saw I passed my clinical board, she call me. She said, you know, "Come, I want to do, I want to do interview with you in Boston." ...And I...and then of course she offer me...right away in the interview she offer me second year... I was making good money as a dentist. Everybody go-, a lot of people said, "Oh, why you wanna go to second year? You already are making money." I said, "No. I want to finish my requirements first."

Participant #10 described her motivation to improve herself prompted her to take several exams to obtain a specific credential with the expectation that she will be exposed to better job opportunities.

Whenever I apply, I have a Master's Degree with the CPA, is different than having just a Master's degree. It's more opportunities definitely, better jobs, better situations, and there's a lot of accounting jobs that ask for CPA. I'm planning to stay a year, because I'm expecting a baby... That's why I'm telling you to open more opportunities and you will grow stronger in any job that you go to. What it makes me, I like to improve myself a lot. Whenever I have the chance to improve my education or my personality, I work on it. I try to work on it, and I have the opportunity now, since I'm staying a year at home, I should do it.

Participants' accounts reflect a tendency to seek better education and career opportunities. Themes of improving oneself, finishing requirements, and moving up indicated that participants displayed ambition and motivation for career progress.

Work-family integration. Work-family integration (*typical*) included descriptions of activities, struggles, conflicts, and achievements when integrating occupational and family spheres. Participant #4 described how she studied for a board exam while simultaneously taking care of two small children.

Researcher: But you studied, right?

Participant: Yeah, I studied, with my one and a half year old son. And at that time I was babysitting of my nephew. And he was only three month old. Three or four month old.

Researcher: Wow.

Participant: So, two babies was playing next to me and I was studying. I don't have choice.

Participant #4 went on to explain how she displayed persistence for pursuing her career despite strain placed by cultural gender-role expectations.

You know our culture. In our culture, man is the house of the... He's the leader of the house or whatever so sometimes it is so hard to convince our husband about I want to do. For example, when I was accepted in residency, first-year residency, my husband was not mentally prepared because I never leave the house so he said, "Who gonna take care of all these things?" I say, "I don't care." That time, I sure am selfish but in life, some points you have to be selfish. If you're not, you cannot reach your goal. If that time, if I say, "Oh, my gosh. He's right. How can we do it?" Blah, blah, blah. I, that time I say, "No. I have to go." I make a decision. I make a strong decision.

Participant #5 described difficulties of multitasking posing a challenge to balancing work and family activities.

But sometimes it's hard being a woman. When you have to do a lot of stuff. And I feel like being in America, woman do more than man do. Like, even though I go, yes, I go work, but I also be the mom. I'm also the person who takes to the doctor. I'm the one who gets up to cook and clean and go to work.... I'm tired. I need someone else to do something. Like, I wish I had someone else that was doing everything. Because in me being here is only me, the kids, and my husband. Yes, I do have friends. I have family, but they don't live in [City] You know what I mean? Like I have a community, but not one that can take over for me, kind of thing.

Participant #7 described she avoided working full-time and opted for part-time work as a way to integrate work and family.

I could have worked full-time. I could have been in a tenure position, but I didn't opt for that, because at the end of the day you have to find that balance between your work and your family. I think for most of us or all of us, we feel that our biggest investment in our life is in our children. I could have worked full-time and had a nanny. Did I want to go that route? No, I didn't have children to be brought up by a nanny. That's a sacrifice that I made that I opted to work part-time. There was a time that I was just working one day a week, eight hours a week, when my kids were younger, but then once I realized that they don't need me as much then I went up on the work. I'm still not working full-time.

Work-family integration emerged as a significant finding among participants. Muslim immigrant women of the current study described diverse ways of balancing the responsibilities of their home and work life. In general, they described maintaining their household as a primary responsibility, which seemed to interfere with work and education. Some of them, as in the first quote of this category, also described how work or education interfered with family life.

Career goals. Participants' career goals were described in regard to past, present, and future. Goals, such as applying to graduate school, finding jobs in higher occupational ranks, descriptions of the type of workplace in which one aimed to find employment, childhood career goals, retirement plans, research goals (such as producing more publications), and career advancement goals (such as receiving certification or

licensure) were among the themes of the career goals category (*variant*). Participant #4 described her childhood goal.

Since, uh, when I was child, I was...I liked to become a doctor. That's my goal of my life. I love to become a doctor.

Participant #14, described her career goals for the future, including the job she would like to pursue as well as the type of context in which she would like to perform her job.

My career goals are, I know I want to teach English, I know I want to teach for all ages. I don't want to work with the government, as in public schools. I want to work on my own. Where, how, I have no idea now. I'm still learning. I'm only 22 and I have so many...

Participant #3 described her main career goal which she has been pursuing for a while.

Yes, I always wanted to go to law school. I did apply a long time ago, 2006... But I wasn't accepted because I have a low score in the law admission test. You have to score higher. I tried again, but I didn't score. It was a fail. I just give a chance. I did score a little bit higher, but I wasn't accepted the second time. I'm tired. Sometimes, just going to school, I do a lot. I would like it. Maybe who knows when, but that is one of the main career goals that I have.

Participant #1 indicated that her career goal includes retirement.

At age 50 I will stop. I just turned 47, April 15th. I've got three more years, and I'm done.

Participants described diverse career goals. Some of them mentioned a fit between childhood career goals and their current job. Others described where they would like to see themselves in the future. Several participants conveyed uncertainty regarding their career in the future.

Experiencing work as a relational activity. A number of participants described a sense of helping, supporting, and relating to others, including clients, customers, and coworkers through work, in addition to work being a means to an end, which led to the category of experiencing work as a relational activity (*variant*). Participant #9 described how she has reached a sense of connection to her students through her work as a college professor.

I always admired those people, those students who still...they are adults, they're working in their lives. They are in their thirties, forties more example, but they're still trying to get their education. I feel privilege to actually to be working with them, to help them get their dreams, to help them get their education.

Participant #14 similarly described feeling connected to the children she served through performing her work.

The idea of seeing these kids, who their parents don't know anything about American culture, they don't know English. When they come to school, they don't know English. We offer help not only in academic math, reading and writing, we offer social. We're like big sisters for them. We sit there and listen to their problems when in school...This job was special, because I'm not helping them, they're helping me a lot. Because

At one level, I feel like I'm close to my country, because I'm helping refugees and immigrants, and I've been learning English.

Participant #4 emphasized the relational aspect of her job while describing how she as a dentist gained satisfaction from easing others' pain.

I told you since I child, I know I want to become a doctor so I can help people. If that's the way even the people come in pain and when they leave my clinic, they are out of pain. Those expressions I never...I mean there is nothing when you saw those people, you're like, "Oh, my gosh." When they hold your hand and they kiss you and say, "Oh, my gosh. Thank you, doctor." It makes you satisfied. You helped somebody.

Despite the age difference between the individuals served, both Participant #9 and 15 described a sense of connection by offering education to their students. Participant #4 described gaining a sense of connection to others through her job.

Struggle and strain performing job. Struggle and strain performing job (*variant*) emerged out of prevalent themes surrounding participants' physical, emotional, relational/social struggles in performing previous and/or current jobs. This category was portrayed by Participant #9 who described the stress associated with starting a managerial job position as a Muslim woman. Her sense of achievement was strongly grounded in a desire to represent Muslim women. This was reflected when she revealed viewing individual failure as a risk to her collective self-esteem.

Part of that stress was because I'm a Muslim woman who is in a managerial job, administrative job and I didn't want to screw because if I screwed I feel like I was failing the Muslim woman also, [laughs] not just

myself. This put a lot of pressure, a lot of stress on myself...It was challenging definitely and in the beginning I was so stressed. I was coming home and I was telling my husband, "I'm going to quit tomorrow."

Participant #1 described physical strain associated with learning how to perform her job duties.

It was difficult, because you had to learn how to do hair. I wasn't doing hair back home, I was at school. When I got here, I had to take care of myself. You've got to learn how to do hair. My hand was getting sore. I was getting sore, my body was hurting. It was bad, but you have to do it in order to take care of yourself, legally. I think that's legal. That's better than the other way.

Participant #6 described the emotional strain her previous job with dementia and Alzheimer patients involved.

You have to have eye contact. I work, I worked with dementia and Alzheimer people for four years. So, it was like amazing. I never know about, like, it's kind of like it's nice and it's sad at the same time because I was so depressed when I came from work every single day, because [sighs] I see how...

All three participants described struggle and strain associated with their job duties. While Participant #9 and 6 addressed emotional strain, Participant #1 underscored physical strain.

Spirituality related to career. A number of participants referred to a higher power, such as God or Allah when discussing their career and the process in reaching their career goals and achievements. This led to the category of spirituality related to career (*variant*). Participant #2 described engaging in spiritual practice in the form of praying to a higher power to achieve a career goal.

...There was one of this new technology that I have developed. One of its kind...State of the art. In the industry, not just my company, but in the industry nobody was able to develop that. I did. And, um, I also prayed Allah that, please, make me able to translate that into commercial skill manufacturing. Because I want people to say, a Muslim woman did that. So, it's coming alive. Allah accepted my prayers...But for this one, that I have never done before, is that I prayed Allah that, please, make this happen. And then make people say that a Muslim woman made that. So it's happening. And I'm proud of that.

Participant #13 described how she perceived a higher power as the only conveyor of rewards associated with her work.

Researcher: How is it like to be at work as a Muslim immigrant woman?

And what are some of the rewards?

Participant: I don't think any reward. You don't get any reward. You just get reward from Allah, that's it.

Researcher: From where?

Participant: From Allah, to pray, that's it.

Following a description of an intensive preparatory course she attended related to her field, Participant #4 discussed how she integrated spirituality into her effort to succeed in licensing exams.

I waste whole money for [State]. And I said, “OK. Allah. Just keep start praying again. So, let’s see what Allah can do for me.”

Participant #4 went on to describe that despite her hard work and expenses, she failed the exams. She then indicated how she identified continuous engagement in spirituality as a means to achieving her goals.

I couldn’t pass. All gone my, you know. My hard work, my money, everything is gone. I still have to do it, not give up. I have to go to my goal no matter what. Keep praying that Allah listen one day.

The narratives indicate that participants often engage in spiritual practice in regard to their career. Some engage in prayer to appeal success and achievement while others expect positive outcomes from a higher power.

Immigration and Cross-cultural Experience

This domain included lived experiences of what individuals went through pre-, during, and post-immigration processes. This included difficulties and enriching events related to the immigration process. Other lived experiences such as acculturation, cross-cultural experience, and social comparison processes were also included within this domain. Four categories emerged, including acculturation, adjustment, and growth (*general*), adversity, pressure, and perseverance (*typical*), description and reason for immigration (*typical*), and cross-cultural experience (*typical*).

Acculturation, adjustment, and growth. Acculturation, adjustment, and growth (*general*) was constructed to capture themes of personal change, cultural adaptation, maturation, growth, bicultural competence, perspective change, curiosity, open-mindedness, and tolerance toward diversity, and an ability to navigate different cultural situations upon gaining a deeper understanding of the host culture. Participant #9 offered an account of how impressions of American people she made out of TV images were somewhat disputed once she entered the actual lived context. She also described how her acceptance of diverse cultures has become solidified following relocation in the United States.

Before I came to America, the only Americans vision in my head on the American people I knew, were from the soap operas. From the TV shows. I thought every American woman is blonde and beautiful and they didn't have any real problems and every American man was tall and handsome and rich. [laughs] They didn't have any financial problems, no health problems, they only had relationship problems. That was the image in my head, but after I came here, after I started to know people, I came to realize that these people have real problems [laughs] other than just relationship problems. They are people. They are just like people. We are people. They have families, they have kids, they have education problems. They have family values; they go to church like we go to mosque. They are just people like us. This was a really big change for me. Another small example I can tell you when I first arrived in the [Airport] about 18 years ago we were waiting for the transfer flight to [City]. I was just walking in

the airport to pass the time. I noticed people eating their French fries with their hands. And I felt like that was disgusting. [laughter] Back then in Turkey, we always used a forks or picks or something to handle the food to eat French fries which is a greasy fatty food, but here people were eating their French fries with their bare hands dipping in ketchup and eating. Then it looked like a gross action. [laughter] A disgusting action. Later, when I started graduate school, I had a Moroccan student friend. She invited me to her home for a meal, and she ate the entire dinner with her hands. The rice, meat, chicken, salad, and everything. She said she could use utensils, forks and spoons but it just tastes much much better that way. [laughter] This opened my vision even more. There are people who are out there who are different than me and they are happy being who they are and it's OK by me. I eat meat with my fork and she eats with her hands and that's fine. The diversity here really changed me a lot. In Turkey people are always welcoming and open and all that but we don't, at least in my neighborhood we didn't have much diversity, everybody was Muslim Turkish and everybody was alike, but here, I got to meet so many different people. So many different ethnicity, religion, all different. That really grew my tolerance and my understanding of other people, of other cultures. I believe that was the biggest change in my perception of America, in my personality also.

The excerpt below from the interview with Participant #5 indicated how she experienced change in the form of acculturation. Having to navigate two different

cultural territories, she described how her sense of ethnic identity was blurred. Challenges associated with bicultural navigation were evident in the domain of language, manifested by a difficulty to retain her mother tongue.

I almost became American. Like, not knowing to speak my language. Not knowing how, uh, what food that I had in my country. Like, I, I didn't even know what food that we ate. I forgot what kind of food we had. Because, uh, being little, not knowing a lot of the stuff. I didn't know half of the language. So, I become more American than my own language. Even though I was not American. Like, I was not, I was not Somalian, but I was not American either. I was in-between. Like a parallel universe... So, it's like, I had to go back and learn being Somali. Like, when I was teenager, I had to go back in my, you say, Somali roots. Like I was, I, I started speaking, uh, Somali language. But then when I speak Somali language, I was, like, a third person. Like I was referring myself to the third person. Like...She's doing this." But I, I was talking about me and then people like, "Who's doing this?" And I say, "She wants to go and do this." I meant like, "I want to go do this." It's like, you don't say it like that, you have to say it like this. Like, I had friend who explain it to me. Like my husband. My husband will go like, "You don't know, Somali." Because my husband, I get married when I was 17. And then we didn't live together until almost 19. But he's 10 years older than me. So, he knows more Somali, more culture, more of the stuff. Like, I'm like, he goes like, "You're not Somali, you're American."

Participant #13 described an expanded perspective in response to a question regarding the cultural change she experienced after relocating in the United States. She referred to the change as having an impact on her thinking and mentality ingrained in her ethnic culture and described increased openness to other cultures.

Thinking and Nigerian mentality has changed. Nigerian mentality is like “this is the way I am going to do this”. I became more tolerant. Meeting people from other cultures helped. I got more of the American mentality that goes “do whatever is comfortable for you”. In Nigeria, you don’t have a voice. You have to do whatever they tell you to do.

Participant #11 described change and growth in terms of becoming more verbally expressive compared to her self-conception as “shy” prior to immigration to America.

Yeah, it changed a lot in my personality. Like I told you, I was very shy in Pakistan, I was like, I don’t know, it was lots of girls in Pakistan, they are a little shy, because of the way they’re raised, like Islamic teachings. Like you’re not supposed to talk to men, you’re not supposed to, without any reason, go, going with boys, we never did that. And those kinda things I was...and in my, my, all my sisters, I was the most quiet one. And I was shy. So, once I came here it was a big change for me. And that changed my life slowly, I, learned, to, then I said, "You know, this is not good, so, if I want to accomplish in my work, at my, everything, I have to open up myself." So, I started, uh, talking more, like that changed completely. And now, like I told you before, lots of good things I learned from, American people.

All four participants described examples of acculturation, cultural adjustment, and growth following immigration to the United States. Similarly, many participants described experiencing positive changes in their worldview, personality, and mindset. Struggles or confusion were present as well as indicated in the excerpt from Participant #5.

Adversity, pressure, and perseverance. Adversity, pressure, and perseverance (*typical*) included descriptions of challenges encountered, as well as persistence, perseverance, endurance, and determination displayed by the participants pre-, during, and post-immigration. Intensity reflected in lived experiences varied, including tragedies and traumatic events, as well as more typical struggles and pressures encountered in the context of immigration. The events seemed to cause fear, insecurity, and anxiety in participants. Participant #11 described the tension between a need to stay within the boundaries drawn by her faith and a pressure to join the activities of the mainstream culture. She described attempting to ease the tension by explaining outgroup members some of her hesitations and limitations that derive from religion.

...when you, um, go in the society, American culture, it is a struggle to... like, you will face a lot of uh, things different in American culture. Like, suppose for instance if there is Christmas party going, uh, you don't want to just not go and they will think, oh, our parties, she doesn't come but we go there. But then all of the stuff, some of the stuff you can't eat and you can't drink, you can't dance. So that is kind of like... Sometimes you explain. People ask you, "Oh, why aren't you doing this?" So you explain to them, "No, this is our, not in our, not in our culture. More importantly,

it's uh, our faith. We are Muslim. We cannot drink. We cannot eat some of the things they eat." So, that is kind of a challenge for us to stay. Like, for so many years I work at uh, one place 12, 13 years. This was like a day they were having parties and they were having like a picnics or this and that. There are so many things you cannot do because of, of your religion. And mostly, because you're a Muslim, you cannot, you know, do this or that.

Participant #1 offered an account of struggles encountered when she first arrived in the U.S. as an immigrant. She described the weight of family pressure placed on her which was the primary source of motivation for her continued effort to make a living in the U.S. rather than go back to homeland despite homesickness.

Researcher: ...Let's talk about the changes. Think about the first time you arrived here.

Participant: It was bad. When I first came in I missed home. I was crying all the time. I wanted to go back. My mother say, "You cannot come back. You're going to put shame on me because it's like you weak. You've got to be strong to stay there, to make it, because I'm here. I'm poor. I don't have nothing."

Researcher: It was a long time ago. It was bad. You were crying. Your mom said you've got to be strong.

Participant: I've got to be strong. I've got to stay. I cannot go back. If I go back she going to be ashamed. People going to laugh at

her and say, “Your daughter is too weak, so she came back. You’ve got to stay and make it. Whatever happen, you’ve got to stay and make it.”

Researcher: Tell me about, then, how being a woman then was different than how it is for you now.

Participant: I have a pressure on me, because my mother was in a marriage where she has other women rivals (referring to other three wives). I have a pressure on me to make my mother happy, so I was working seven days a week, and I was eating once a day, just to save my money and send it to my mother.

Researcher: It was hard for you in the beginning.

Participant: It was hard for you, but it made me who I am, yes.

Researcher: It made you strong?

Participant: Yeah.

Participant #1 also indicated going through the adversity of losing her brother to death following immigration.

The only bad experience we got, when we first came in there was a young guy who killed my brother. They didn’t kill him because he was Muslim.

They killed him, maybe, because they was doing their own thing.

In response to a question about how she overcame the difficulties associated with immigration, Participant #12 mentioned the dedication and determination she displayed.

If you feel your responsibility and, um, you just like you very dedicated, no matter what, you have to like, you be "I can do it." Uh, always sometimes in the beginning, I had was advance. I came from back in India, where I didn't knew much. And then I got a job, thank God I was lucky that I got a job here. And, um, I was very hard for me. Um, I was, it was very, I used to cry. [Laughs] But I said, "No. I have to do it. I can do it."

Participant #5 recounted a different story of adversities faced in the course of reaching final destination in the U.S. as refugee. She also described the perseverance she displayed to overcome the difficulties in the process. Elsewhere in the interview, she also revealed living in two other countries prior to relocating in the U.S.

...Yeah, in Kenya. I lived in two years in refugee camp, where you don't... Is basically like live in a tent. You have to look for a water. You have to look for a food. So it's different living, living in different thing because when I lived in my country, my dad was a police. My dad was in the army and my mum was a judge. So leaving from having a body guard to drive you around where you're going, to being in refuge line looking for water and food. It was big different for me. And then coming to another country where I don't speak the language. You go into school being 9 years old, 10 years old, going to school where you don't know how to speak English, when you don't know how talk to the teacher. You know how to do the work, but you don't know how to say it, how to communicate. That was a harder for me to do that. And coming over that, and then getting married, being 17 years old, being a stay at home mom, and then doing all of that.

All four participants described varying degrees of adversity and pressure stemming from challenges encountered upon immigration. Closely linked with struggles were the determination and tenacity they displayed to overcome difficulties and adapt to their new living context.

Description and reason for immigration. The description and reason for immigration (*typical*) included participant accounts narrating their immigration process and explaining why they chose to relocate in a foreign land. Participant #5 described in two different excerpts below why she left her homeland to relocate, as well as the home country experience preceding the decision to immigrate.

...When I was nine years old, my country's civil war happened. And then, we had to leave my country. So, I had a different living environment than I was living in when I was born. Going from refugee camp, to another country where you don't speak the different language. I mean, you don't know what the culture is, the people, all of that... With me it was, when the war happened, the government shut down. So there was nothing that no one can stop. It was just like people coming, robbing people, killing people, because they can do it. Because, I know with us it was a safety issue because my mom being a judge, it was that people would come looking for her. Him being in the army, people would come looking for... So we walked away with the clothes that we had, nothing else. We just drove out in the middle of the night.

Participant #1 explained that the easier procedure of getting a visa to the United States at the time was the primary reason why she relocated in America. She also spoke to the risks anticipated if she were to immigrate to Europe as a woman.

Researcher: What year did you come to the US?

Participant: I came here to make a living.

Researcher: In what year?

Participant: 1994. America is good for an immigrant, black woman because when we come here we've got other black female. We can do their hair. If it was Europe you become a prostitute because there is no job there to do. You've got to go to school. Even if you're Muslim in Europe, you're going to be a prostitute, because it's hard. There is no job. You're going to go to school, nobody's there to pay. Here, we are lucky. We are blessed to have this job. You work with your own hands. You don't steal, you work hard, you make your money, and you help others.

Researcher: Is that why you chose America because you didn't want to...?

Participant: I didn't choose America. America chose me, because when we were trying to go to Paris, it didn't work. It was hard to get the visa. It was easy to get a visa to come here at that time.

Participant #14, on the other hand, offered a relatively uneventful process of immigration compared to the participants above. She revealed that even though she received an immigrant visa to travel the U.S., she is eventually hoping to go back to her home country upon completion of her education.

Researcher: What brought you in here?

Participant: Education.

Researcher: Education. Are you intending to go back?

Participant: Oh, yeah, I am. Hopefully, yes.

Researcher: You'll go back.

Participant: Yeah.

Researcher: Do you see yourself as an immigrant though?

Participant: Yeah. I basically came here on an immigration status because my family are here, and they applied for me. If I didn't get the immigration visa I wouldn't come here.

Participants had diverse reasons for making the decision to immigrate. Some immigrated to flee political chaos in their homeland, others arrive to make a living, and still others look for better opportunities for education.

Cross-cultural experience. Cross-cultural experience (*typical*) consisted of participants' narratives comparing social and cultural differences encountered in diverse contexts across countries, as well as cities within the same country. Themes included comparison of diversity, values, freedom, equality, behavioral etiquette, communication patterns, life styles, prejudicial attitudes, self-expressions, life conditions, and behavioral conduct encountered in the United States compared to those experienced or observed in

their home country. Below is an excerpt from an interview with Participant #11 who offered a comparison of emotional expression and behavior between the people of her ethnic culture and American people. She later indicated modeling behaviors and attitudes she deemed good in American culture.

The American people are more patient, than Pakistani people. I noticed, in the, when they have lines, like, uh, at Walt Disney there are lines, long mile lines, nobody breaks the line and going in front of other people. No one, they just wait hours and hours. In Pakistan, I have never seen that. They would just sneak and go ahead of you...And here no one. So, there are so many good things. Patience is the first one. I always tell, "You know, they are so patient." Somebody told me people from cold climates, they are more patient than the people from warmer climates. That's, maybe that's right.

Participant #1 offered a comparison between two cities she has resided in following immigration.

[City] is more different. [City] is good. [City] is best place to be. I love [City]. I've been here 17 years. [Other City] is hard, it's dirty, it's got a lot of trash, they've got a lot of roaches, they've got a lot of mice. People are mean there. Places are too little. I stayed in [Other City] for three years, so I know [Other City].

Participant #15 offered an account of diversity in America compared to that of in her home country.

There's differences, yeah, of course in the culture here, but, uh...I'm still like this like diversity here, uh, you can meet people from different countries, different experiences, uh, which maybe knowing of...In Egypt I didn't meet that much people, from different countries, but here, yeah. It's...you have these chances to meet different people with these different religion, different cultures, different habits, uh...So it was, uh...Actually good experience for me...

Participant #5 offered a comparison of culturally-acceptable behavioral etiquette to follow in a restaurant in American and Somalian cultural context.

Like, when you walk down, this person is eating food but he's yelling that person over there two, two table that side...So, it's different culture than American. American they don't do that. When you go to American restaurant, everybody sitting there...Quiet. But then, if you go to Somali restaurant and this person is eating, but two table down, the other person, he's talking to...That cultural difference.

Participant #4 contrasted how she experienced life on the basis of being a woman differently in two different cultural contexts, pre- and post-immigration.

As a woman here, from [City], I drive by myself an hour, I never drove in Pakistan one hour but here I drove eight hour from [City], [City] for 10 hours. I flew everywhere. I flew [State], different parts of [State], I, by myself, flew and take a taxi, go to the hotel, stay in a hotel by myself. My life is different.

Many participants, like the ones discussed in this category, offered comparisons between their home country and the United States. Life style, behavioral etiquette, emotional expression, communication patterns were among the factors contrasted across cultures. Exposure to diverse cultural frameworks appeared to enrich participants' cultural experience as well as perspective.

Stigma and Oppression Experience

Stigma refers to negative sentiment that society or a group of people have about something (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2017). Stigma “exists when elements of labeling, stereotyping, separating, status loss, and discrimination co-occur in a power situation that allows these processes to unfold” (Link & Phelan, 2001; p. 382).

Oppression refers to a “complex web of structures and processes” that inhibit individuals with less power from developing and using their capacities and expressing their needs, thoughts, and feelings (Holley, Stromwall, Bashor, 2012). Accordingly, all descriptions of stigma and oppression, including experience of labeling, stereotypes, prejudice, exclusion, racism, and discrimination, were included within this domain. In the context of current study, stigma and oppression experienced in both pre- and post- immigration were conceptualized within the stigma and oppression experience domain. Additionally, various reactions to stigma were also included within this domain. Categories that emerged within this domain included: stereotypes and prejudice (*general*), emotional reaction to stigma and oppression (*typical*), using resilience to cope (*typical*), discrimination and social exclusion (*typical*), advocacy and educating others (*typical*), self-consciousness and self-protectiveness (*typical*), stigma perceived from in-group (*variant*), and rationalizing stigma and oppression/understanding outgroup (*variant*).

First, findings of stereotypes and prejudice, discrimination and social exclusion, and stigma experienced from in-group will be reviewed based on common themes of stigma and oppression. Findings of emotional reaction to stigma and oppression, using resilience to cope, advocacy and educating others, and self-consciousness and self-protectiveness will follow, due to the shared theme of being reaction to stigma and oppression.

Stereotypes and prejudice. The category of stereotypes and prejudice (*general*) included descriptions of labeling, stereotyping, overgeneralization, and assumptions one perceived to be directed at his/her social group within a society. This category was captured well by Participant #5 who described encountering a number of questions from others in the form of micro insults on the basis of her intersecting identities as a Muslim woman of African origin.

Participant: People doesn't understand. I have a lot of, a lot of friends that's not Muslim. And when I, when I explain it to them about the religion, it's like, "Oh, OK. Now I understand." But they were like, "Oh, I used to turn around when I see someone wearing a hijab. Like, what's wrong with them, it's hot outside, why they wearing this big thing." And then they just go the other way. Or they'll, or I speak, as soon as I speak, they go, "Oh, I didn't you know educated person." I was like, I would tell them, like, sometimes we have something in common. They be like, "You guys do that too?" I'm like, "Who's guys'?" They be like, "Islam people." I'm like, Islam is not people, it's the religion.

Researcher: [laughs] Islam people.

Participant: Yeah. They say that, “Islam people do that?” I don’t know, what do you mean, like who’s Islam people do that.

Researcher: [laughs]

Participant: For me, and then it’s like a different, uh, I have different things that, I, I’m not only Somali, I’m also a Muslim. Not only am I a Muslim, I’m also Somali. And then when people look at it like, “You Somalian?” I’m like, “Yes.” “Where are you from?” “Africa.” “Oh, you guys have houses, or you live in a hut? Like, you guys live in the bushes? Where do you guys use the bathroom?” [laughs]... Yeah. They ask me all the same question. And then, I explain to them. And they be all “Oh, you guys used to have a pool in your house? Islam people go to pool?” I’m like, “Yes.” ... Yes we do. We go to the beach. So, I explain it to them and they understand.

Another example to the stereotypes/prejudice category was delivered by Participant #9. She described an instance of being presumed to have limited English speaking skills due to her headscarf. She described responding in English to a person who assumed she could not speak.

In the grocery for example, [laughs] just a few weeks ago. I was getting in line in the grocery store to make a return, and there was another gentleman in front of me. I don’t know why he did that, but he...he didn’t speak to me but he showed his watch and he meant like he’s been waiting for a long

time. He did something with his hands. He pointed his watch and he did some hand gestures like he was waiting for a long time and maybe I shouldn't also wait behind him. I just spoke to him and, "Oh, you've been waiting for a long time?" Then he acted surprised. [laughs] He said, "Oh, yes. It's been...They've been taking so long." Pointing the person in the front. I assumed just because I am looking different. He maybe he assumed that I didn't know how to speak English. [laughs] I don't know, maybe I could have been insulted by this, but I just felt this was funny and I just moved on because you cannot just educate everybody on the spot. I guess he got his answer right there. He got his education right there when I responded in English, "Oh, you've been waiting for a long time." And then he responded and then, we had a little chat there. [laughs] Now he knows that not every Muslim woman doesn't know English. He shouldn't act like that. Things like these, small things. I didn't feel I am disadvantaged in any major area.

Another striking example was conveyed by Participant #3 who described experiencing bias in the form of prejudice on the basis of her religious identity. The following narrative was revealed in response to a question about a story of difficulty experienced as a Muslim individual.

Participant: The second experience that I have is when after the terrorist attack. I was working as a student assistant in College. This lady, she knows I'm Muslim, and she handed me the Bible and said, "You are a good woman. You need to save

yourself from that religion.” I was shocked, to be honest. I didn’t say anything. It’s just all these things, the perception some people have. Like, “You are a good woman but that religion is brainwashing you. Save yourself for the Jesus,” or whatever, “in the name of Jesus Christ.” I think it was most weird experience. Crazy experience.

Researcher: How did that make you feel like about yourself or about the woman? What were your feelings?

Participant: I was completely shocked and confused, why she did that. A lady that she works across from my office, and we don’t have any relationship. She’s not my best friend. I didn’t understand. I was confused.

When asked a question about any disadvantages she felt as a Muslim immigrant woman, Participant #5 shared the following examples illustrative of prejudicial attitudes experienced in public spaces and at her workplace.

I think that’s almost every day. When I go to the store and I see people looking at me. When I stop at the gas station and I get out, and I ask for something and people look at, and they keep going. Some days you feel like not wearing the hijab, because you think that people are going to look at you different. And I don’t I, I never felt that before, until people started talking about it. You know, Islam and Muslims, things like that. Even when my head was not covered, I never felt like th-, even if I go outside right now, my hair uncovered, like I don’t have a hijab, but I still feel it

inside. I feel like people are looking at me. Because they can see that I'm a Muslim. That I don't feel like it. Like, when you go to, um, sometimes when you sit down at the doctors and people sit right all the way on the corner. Somet... happened to me sometimes. You sit down, and then they don't sit next to you, they'll sit all the way on the corner.... When I'm here at work, I feel like that... When it's, when it's enrollment time, a lot of different people come, and they come at the office and instead of talking to me they talk over me to Miss C... Because they think that I don't speak English. Or, I'm not supposed to be here. Or, sometimes people come up, "Oh, you work here. And this is a school. What kind of school is it, is it Islam school?" I say, "No Islam school, I just work here." And then they just turn around and they leave.

Muslim women involved in this study described rich examples of how they perceived stereotypes and prejudice in society. The excerpts above indicate that negative attitudes were often experienced on the basis of diverse identities. Some described being queried and labeled based on their immigrant background, others described visibility as a Muslim for the source of bias.

Discrimination and social exclusion. The category of discrimination/exclusion (*typical*) describes lived experiences of actual negative behaviors and actions directed toward participants on the basis of their social group identification that intersects as women, Muslim, and immigrants. A question of disadvantages introduced to her based on intersecting identities and several follow-up questions elicited the following responses

from Participant #15 who described a discriminatory procedure she and her family went through at the airport.

Participant: I told you before this about, yeah, my story when I was coming here and there was my daughter. Because almost, yeah, like about two months only after this September 11 and, yeah, it was like I was really worried about it, and I am...Because this experience also is...my relatives were telling that," You're gonna be in trouble in the airport." All these stuff. So it was like very bad and again also in the airport, but this is not exactly of me as a woman, it's in general concept about the Muslims. It was like...also when we came and this is not so far, it was like maybe four years ago or something like this also my son was sleeping and also in the airports they were like, "No you have to check everything," and I was like cuddling him and my shoulder and he's sleeping. And he see him sleeping it's like two years old baby and of course it's...he not wake up or try to, [laughs] and but at the airport sometimes yeah they were very tough and we feel this, OK, we are maybe terrorists," and yes...Sometimes you don't feel this humanity it's like a baby but you think about this yeah so it's...

Researcher: So they wanted to search him?

Participant: Yeah, yeah so they'd like, of course he wake up and he was crying [laughs] and it's very hard but yeah this...

Researcher: How did you feel?

Participant: I was feeling so bad and actually no...I remember no one...when we were done and yeah of course for the woman it's like the search and...after this search in generally this we went back for specific place so they checked us again and it was like for nothing.

Participant #2 described exclusionary and discriminatory attitudes directed particularly at women in the context of world of business, which became more complicated for her given her diverse identities.

Participant: This part of [State] is actually considered as being very redneck, and it's very true. And even if you go to more rural areas, it's considered very redneck. And it's very true. And, um, living in [City], [State] when I was doing my education, everything was fine and everything. But then, you know, as you move to more work places like, you know, and here and all that stuff. Um, it gets worse and um, in the last 14 years or so, even in, it's a, it's not just, uh, th , the diversity, um, was bad, but also there's like, network of a white men at work places that is very discriminatory. In addition to everything else that you have to overcome, you have to overcome a whole white male network that, that support and treat each

other well, but nobody else. In fact, I guess, I can give and share this very clearly is that, um, corporate America, back then, uh, initially, initially directors when I was talking to them, they would say that, it used to be that they would be free to even say that the women will get always much less than the men. And they were not afraid of that and now they don't say but it's still, it's true. And think about the other factors that comes in addition like being a woman. Like, diversity and all that stuff.

Researcher: Yeah. Those put, uh...

Participant: Exactly.

Researcher: ...extra layers. Right.

Participant: Exactly. And even at work places, like corporate America, the way that were, they will network, it's very interesting because they will go golf outings together and whoever is in that golf outing and then they will actually network and they will support and promote each other and, uh, people in that kind of group that will get promotions. Although they may not be skilled enough. They may not deserve it and all that stuff. But, um, so.

Researcher: Interesting.

Participant: Right. As I have been living has not been a piece of cake.

Participant #11 described how she felt disadvantaged on the basis of her diverse social identities when she was not offered the position for a job she had already been serving in a lower rank within the same workplace.

First, when I got my master's fromI applied for a job in this, this is at the library I applied. And my supervisor was, she did not give me a job, but she gave me to some person who came from outside. I was like, at that library I was assistant. I should have gotten that job for the children's librarian because I was assistant. And I got my master's. She should have given me that job, and she didn't. She gave that job to an outsider. That was I felt disadvantaged. I felt very discriminated at that. Yeah. I forgot to tell you that.

All three participants, like many others in this study, offered in-depth descriptions of perceived social exclusion and discrimination. Workplace was the most significant context for exclusionary and discriminatory encounters.

Stigma perceived from in-group. The category of stigma perceived from in-group (*variant*) emerged out of narratives regarding perceived bias experienced among members of the same ethnic and religious social group. What Participant #7 revealed below offered a striking example of how in-group bias could impact individuals' sense of freedom and safety, even in the context of immigration to another country.

Researcher: You said you are from a different denomination. Does it make any difference in terms of the sense of pride, or difficulties you experience in the US where back in where you come from?

Participant: Back in Pakistan, yes. I am a Shia. According to that certain ideology, our sect is a sect of infidels. It's just their perception. Around the time of 1999 onwards, we as Shias have been persecuted in Pakistan. After my brother's incident [he was killed], a lot of Shia families have gone out of Pakistan to seek refuge elsewhere. Yes, as a Shia there's persecution.

Researcher: But not here? It's better?

Participant: Here, it's better, but not that it's not there. For example, when we had purchased our mosque on [Street] there were hate mails that had come.

Researcher: From other Muslims?

Participant: Yeah. What do you do? You can't do anything about that. It's not just limited to a certain part of the world. It's everywhere now.

Researcher: That's too bad, frustrating. People's intolerance about...

Participant: Exactly.

Researcher: ...people who just want to live their faith and their lives, like they're doing.

Participant: They say "Live and let live." It's not happening.

This category was also captured by Participant #3 who offered an account of in-group bias directed at her due to her distinctive practice of the faith. In response to a

question about an instance when she felt negatively about herself due to others' negative attitude toward her, she conveyed the following response:

It's between Muslim to Muslim sometime. Like I mentioned to you at the beginning because you are different, you don't wear whatever, and you don't follow the culture. There's two things. There is the Muslim religion. There is the culture. They see you see as a... they look down upon you. They look down upon you, you Americans. They look down upon you, Puerto Rican. Sometime it's difficult to please. You cannot please everybody. You please God and yourself. Try.

Both participants offered striking examples of in-group bias. For Participant #7, bias was intense and entrenched in an historical political division which still thrived in a Western context. For Participant #3, her distinct aspects prompted contempt of three social groups she identified and interacted with.

Emotional reaction to stigma and oppression. Emotional reaction to stigma and oppression (*typical*) addressed common feelings participants described in response to stigma and oppression experience. Participants voiced experiencing a variety of feelings, such as fear, anger, and sadness when faced with stereotypes, prejudice, and discriminatory practices at various contexts of the society. Participant #11 offered an account of feelings emerged in reaction to what she heard about Muslims in the media and how her coworkers treated her the next day after September 11.

Like these days you hear things about Muslims. And especially after 9/11 I, like if you hear anything on the news, right away, I just pray, "Oh, please, please God this is not from a Muslim..." [laughter] "...this news is

coming.” Someone either did this or that. I’m, every Muslim, I heard actually every Muslim, they pray. Shooting here or bombing here, we just say, “Oh, please, this is not a Muslim. I hope this is not a Muslim who did this.” That kind of a feeling, always I get. Especially after 9/11, I noticed. I was also, after 9/11 when I went to work. I, I was so scared. Once I know this was Muslim, I was so scared at work. And I saw, I don’t know, this I not in your question, but I want to tell you... Uh, when I went there, the next day, it was 9/12, September 12, and there were two groups of people I noticed. One was like giving me comfort. And the other one was, like, not even looking at me. Uh, the one was very good friend of mine, and she was not even looking at me. Her face was so with anger... So, there were a couple of people who don’t even look at me. I can tell they’re angry at me like I did something. I cried. I even, I came home. I said, “My God, she was so upset. She was, like, treating me like I did this.” So that kind of a feeling I had.

The excerpt from the interview with Participant #6 also exemplified emotions arose in response to stigma regarding Muslims.

Researcher: So, we talked about some of the messages you hear about Muslims in the media.

Participant: Exactly.

Researcher: I was wondering if that impacts your thoughts, feelings about yourself.

Participant: It hurts my feelings, I mean every single time. I, like I said, I watch a video or anything, it really hurts my feeling. And that people use some Arabic words and out of Qur'an and interpret it in the, the negative way. It's just like. I watch another video, it was in France. They have one guy came in and say, "Allah Akbar," [God is great] and everybody run away. It was in the mall. So, it was a joke, it was a prank. So, they prank people, I, I just think it's...I think it's racist. And I think it's, it just, it bothers me so much I would explode. It hurts me so much because I don't want my kids to see that.

Participant #5 described how Muslim bashing articulated in political speeches and broadcasted through media channels prompted in her and her children a sense of fear and anger.

Participant: [laughs] I heard where Donald Trump says all Muslims shouldn't be here they need to go back to their country, my kids asking me where we're going because they were born here. When my six grader say that, "But Donald Trump says we have to go back to our country." And she was like, "Where is my country? I was born here, I don't know anywhere else outside the United States, where am I going?" I mean, in a sense they know they're Somali, you know, they are from Somalia, but they're American, they don't know anything else. So when I, when you say all Muslims need to

go back to their country they get mad. They get scared, you know.

Researcher: How do you feel when you hear things like that from people like Donald Trump?

Participant: I don't know. It, it makes me mad.

In response to widespread prejudice and discrimination toward Muslims, many participants experienced intense feelings. They described feeling anxious, angry, and sad upon encountering direct and indirect forms of stigma and oppression.

Using resilience to cope. The accounts of the participants revealed that many of them responded to stigma with resilience, indicating a capacity to ward off the potential negative impact of stigma or an ability to recover from difficulties quickly, which were conceptualized within the using resilience to cope category (*typical*). The participants described a variety of examples illustrating resilience, including displaying emotional strength, positive meaning making out of adverse encounters, being bold, using social support, ignoring negative events, and denying negative experience. Below is an example of resilience by Participant #14 who described an ability to bypass the potential impact of negative treatment when asked if others' attitude compromised her self-concept. "No, how people treat me doesn't affect me at all. I know who I am, I know where I'm coming from, I know where I'm going, so no. It doesn't affect me."

Participant #1's responses to several questions also conveyed resilience she displayed when confronted with misconceptions about Muslims. She described how she was able to keep her self-concept unaffected and intact from potential impact of

widespread negative bias. To reflect the full context of conversation, the whole researcher-participant exchange on the related theme was offered below.

Researcher: How does that make you feel like, these misconceptions?
What feelings do you have for people who misinterpret
Islam?

Participant: I don't have hard feeling against them. I'm sorry about it,
because they don't know about it. They need to be taught. If
they get somebody teach them what's going on, they will
understand, but they don't know what's going on. That's why
they got misconception about it. I don't have hard feelings,
because when somebody don't know something, they need to
be teach. You don't have to be mad at them or say anything
bad about them because they don't know.

Researcher: Thank you. You said that you haven't felt disadvantaged
because of being Muslim?

Participant: No.

Researcher: Does that mean that you don't experience daily stress?

Participant: No, I don't. I don't even think about it.

Researcher: The negative messages you hear about Muslims, such as,
"Oh, they're terrorists. They kill people," how do those
messages make you feel about yourself as a Muslim woman?

Participant: I'm Muslim and people would think that Muslim think,
"Kill," or "Bomb." That's because they don't know. In

Africa they usually say, “In one bag of orange, when one orange is spoiled, then all the bag is spoiled.” It’s everywhere, in every ways, in every ethnicity, in every color. When one person is bad, they’re going to say everybody’s bad. Muslims don’t have to feel bad about it because somebody think that, “Oh, Muslim kill.” I know I don’t kill. I know I’m not bad, so whatever they say, I don’t think about it. I let the rest to God. That’s how I’ve been raised. That’s how I think.

Researcher: Do these negative messages make you feel bad about yourself?

Participant: No, never, because God love me and I love myself. I don’t think about negativity.

Participant #6 described in detail how she displayed resilience toward intense negative bias and harassment from a neighbor. For brevity, some parts of the exchange were removed from the excerpt.

Participant: Uh, just for a very, very small example, my neighbor. I have a neighbor. She hate us.

Researcher: Wow.

Participant: She thinks we’re terrorists. She hates me so bad, I, you cannot even imagine. OK? Um, she puts signs in her window... She puts signs in her window because she saw my mom... she see my mom...My mom, she’s a very active

person. She likes to go and clean up outside. She likes to stay, go and sweep outside but she's wearing hijab. She's never taken that, the cover off. This neighbor she, like I lived there for almost 14 years. She's now been my neighbor for 14 years, never talk to me, always stabbed me in the back, always against me... I show her who I am, she look at me and she give me a bad look, and I say, "Good morning," doesn't respond. Every morning, "Good morning," no respond. Uh, "Good evening," never respond. Didn't say anything until it gets so worse. One day she was parking the, her van right in the street, like this is my driveway, she park her van too close to my driveway. So, I get off 4:30 in the morning from my house... Because I start at five o'clock, so I trying to get off and she block me. She have her car here, she already have two cars in her driveway, she's blocking my driveway and blocking the other sides so when I get off in the morning it was so difficult for me. It was dark, and I'm afraid to hit her car. So I ask my other neighbor to talk to her because I'm afraid of her, 'cause one time I asked her, "Can you, uh..." I said if you need help to clean up all this garbage because she has too much garbage, and when the wind come and bring all the garbage to my front yard. I didn't like it, my mom cleaning up that trash every day, and it isn't our trash.

So I knock her door with all the respect. I said, “Ma’am, if you want help you to pick up all this trash, I’ll be more than happy to. But I just did not like the fact that all your trash comes to my front yard.” She’s like, “I’m too educated to get to talk to you,” and she slapped the door on my face... So my neighbor called the cops and said, “That’s not fair. She’s parking right in front of your driveway and it’s not right.” And my friend, she’s American, she call the cops and police come, come knock her door. She didn’t want to open the door. She was inside the house. So the police give her the ticket... Police come and he said, “Listen.” He said, “I’m on your side. I’m not on her side. First of all, she didn’t wanna respond. She’s out inside.” He’s looking at her from the window, she didn’t want to get out... And I told him, I said, “She’s giving me trouble all the time. She disrespects me.” And, right after the police took her car and gave her the ticket, she had a big sign of Pakistani woman, with the hijab, OK? And another one behind it, like leaving. Like, she’s telling us to go away. She has a big sign that says, “Go home.” ...She told my, [laughs] she told my other neighbor that I’m illegal. [laughs] And I’m from ISIS, or whatever Muslim...

Researcher: OK.

Participant: And that makes me stronger, and stronger, and stronger. I was like, I always stood up for my parents, and I always stood up for my family. No matter what. It's not gonna make me bad.

Both of the participants above offered striking examples of holding onto their resilience and personal strength to keep their sense of self intact from stigma and oppression directed at them. The excerpts above indicate how these women continued to have a positive outlook on others, themselves, and the world despite intense encounters of negative treatment in society.

Advocacy and educating others. The category of advocacy and educating others (*typical*) was constructed in response to the prevalent themes of activism narrated on behalf of participants' diverse social identities as woman, Muslim, and immigrant. The forms of activism participants engaged in included such examples as taking formal action against oppression and discrimination and educating others on issues of diversity. What Participant #9 conveyed below exemplified a sound attempt of activism in response to an assumption made by a mainstream person about Muslim women.

I want to add something here. One time I was giving lecture about...I was invited to be a guest lecturer about Muslim woman in [State] in an institution. Somebody asked me a question, "How about the other Muslim woman?" He asked, "You obviously got your education because you came to the United States." Again, he assumed. "And what about the others, how are the Muslim woman in Turkey?" he said. I said, "I didn't get my education because I came to the United States, it's the other way round. I

came to the United States because I got my education in Turkey. I graduated from a very well-respected university in Turkey, I got my degree and then I was selected to get a scholarship to continue my graduate study here in America. All the Muslim woman are required to get educated by the religion and also by the government. I hope I corrected his assumptions back then. That's also another notion. People think that I am successful because I'm in America but that's not true. Success is a personal achievement, not a religious thing. I don't know, If I see myself as a successful person it's because I worked for it and also because God helped me. My faith also had important role in it. It's not because I came to America. Yes, America contributed to my success in my career and my identity a lot, but I would have been successful just as much in Turkey, I believe.

Participant #2 discussed her emotional reaction to oppression and described a formal and structured method of intervening in face of perceived maltreatment in workplace.

I actually take, take things very seriously. And I, I, honest to God, think that I have made serious, serious positive contributions to the corporate life in, in [redacted city and state name]. Because every time I have been, um, maltreated, or treated in a way that hurt my career or myself, I took serious actions...I hate oppression, as God does. That's something that is, I guess, as being human, and I was able to associate with being Muslim as well. I always hated oppression in my life. And that's what Allah says too,

“I hate oppressors.” Right? I hate oppressors too. Even I’m not oppressed, if somebody within my vicinity is oppressed, I will take actions against those as well. And I make sure that the, um, those people are penalized. And Allah always help me to make that happen. But even though initially... Or maybe even permanently, it may have hurt me, I didn’t care about it. I truly did not care the final impact on my professional career. But I made sure the people who try to oppress me, or people around me, for reasons that were not ethically right, I took really, really serious, um, actions. They...most of them are no longer within the company...I would have or incur consequences, because of my actions. But that did not stop me. I took all the way to the, um, corporate level officers, of the things that are happening. And I know there’s a couple of managers at director levels that were put down, and moved from their current positions, because of their favoritism, or from their all the wrong things that they were doing. Not just for me, but for other people, too. I speak up. I take actions, yeah, but also I’m very calm too. And I take very, very smart actions. And, um, I may write very long, detailed and exemplified letters, all the way to the corporate officers and, and share with them. And I try to find the right hats to do this stuff. And it may take a year, or so, for them to take an action. But it happens.

Participant #6 described how she used an opportunity to address the negative prejudice toward Muslims displayed by a patient being treated in the hospital she worked.

Once a while. I work in the hospital and I work with people all the time. And I hear a lot of different stories... Just one time a guy was, um, he was afraid of a woman because she was gonna draw his blood and she's wearing hijab. And I can, uh, change his mind because I said, uh, "What's the matter?" He said, "I don't want this girl, inside my, my bay." I mean room, we call it bay in the hospital. And I ask him why, "Sir, can you tell me a reason why? Did she did something wrong, and I can report her?" He said, "No, she didn't do anything wrong, I just don't want her to come over here because she's wearing hijab. I don't want her to touch me." He said, "Why, because I don't like Muslim people." And I said, "Did you never have bad experience with them?" He said, "Well, I see all the stuff on the TV." So, he only see the TV, he didn't have friends or, like, like, he doesn't experience how, like, he doesn't have like, somebody to talk to, or like. And I said, "Sir, a... a... are you sure, this woman..." I said, "I'm Muslim." And he was shocked. Because actually, because I'm not wearing hijab. So, he was feeling more comfortable with me than her, but we have the same religion. And I explain of what I am. I said, "Sir, it's only the cover," I said, "You know what, you could sh..." He said, "Yes," and he said, "I respect you for that." OK. And I give him a little reminder, when you go to the, to the Church, they have nuns. Nuns wear hijab. Because they just want, they're very conservative people, OK. Are they bad people? Are they radical people? Are they kill people? Of course, he going to say, "No." He said, "No. They are very clean womans." And I said,

“That’s exactly what I want you to think.” That’s the reason why we wear the cover. It’s exactly the same thing. It just, it just different. Like, you are Christian and I’m Muslim. And you know what, it’s all about the heart. It’s not, and also, I don’t have no right to judge you and you don’t have no right to judge me. And I was just telling him too, and he said, “You know what, I w, when I get out from this hospital,” he said, “I’m going to do more research about Islam. Because you make me feel interested to look what’s going on. This is totally different than I see on TV.”

The three women discussed above, like most other women in this study, described actively confronting bias and discrimination directed at them or others. It appears that Muslim women in this study endorse keen awareness into situations that call for advocacy and action to correct misconceptions about Muslims and other groups with contested identities.

Self-consciousness and self-protectiveness. This category of self-consciousness and self-protectiveness (*typical*) included descriptions of intensified awareness into participants’ diverse identity markers, increased self-monitoring, a sense of surveillance, intrusiveness, and increased sense of vigilance toward oneself and significant others. Participant #5 offered a good account of this category when asked about the daily stress she experienced linked to her diverse identifiers.

Participant: It makes, it makes us because when, when I wake up in the morning that means I get ready to go to work, I get ready to get my kids ready to school I’m coming out. Then there’s another mom next to me who’s not Muslim, she getting ready

to go to work, she's getting ready to take her kids to school. We won't have the same day like when I leave in the morning and she doesn't feel that, uh, she has to watch how other people treat her, because she's not wearing hijab, she doesn't have to watch how she talk because she doesn't speak in other language except English. For me, is I have to watch how I dress, I have to watch how I talk, I have to watch how, who I talk to, or who I say stuff to because you don't want people making the assumption.

Researcher: You always have to self-monitor.

Participant: You always have to self-monitor. Always.

Researcher: That can be exhausting.

Participant: Always. Even when I stop in the light and people stop right next to me and they look at me and then I smile and then I turn around, and they still keep looking at me. Then I go like this, and then if the second, three light that person keeps after me, there's some kid driving after me like, "What do you want?" You know. That's when in [State], my brother lives in [State], when there are two girls and the guy get shot, my brother he lives right there in the city.

She continued to describe how her self-monitoring tapered off or intensified based on the racial composition of social contexts she entered. She expressed feeling more comfortable with her hijab being less salient in settings composed of mostly black people,

while she described increased self-consciousness around white people. She rested her discrepant attitude in two different contexts onto her anticipation that black people's own history of racism and discrimination would make them more tolerant of her differences.

I feel different and I don't know whether it's the right to say it or not.

When I go a place where there's all African people, African American, even if they're not from Africa they're black people I don't feel stand out even if I'm wearing hijab. But if I go to another restaurant where there's, um, the majority is white I feel I stand out. Like I am a black. I'm wearing a hijab, you know. I stand out when I got into... Like, if I go in a restaurant and there is more, a lot of black people, I do stand out because they're looking at the hijab, but then they're just like, "Oh, OK." Because they felt that, you know, color is why people look at them before. They're curious about the hijab but not so much as the white. They will look at you and then they will look at the hijab, but then they just turn around. But while the white people they just keep looking at you. Black people might look at you first, but then, like, in the back of their head, like, "Oh, OK. She's wearing that." They felt that before. Like, maybe one of them felt like when they went into white place and then someone was looking at them because of their color. It's different. Like, if I go in... it's the same thing when I'm driving in the north side I feel comfortable. But if I go outside the north, like, if I go on the west side it's different.

Participant #2 also described an increased sense of awareness and vigilance in response to potential dangers she may face due to her diverse identities.

Participant: Yeah. Like even if somebody sees me in the street they, them identifying me as an ISIS person that, that is really horrible feeling. It's not that I am scared physically from them, it's just that horrible feel of being equal to, equated to an ISIS person, right?

Researcher: Right, exactly.

Participant: And, um, that makes me worry a lot.

Researcher: So, days you're living has become a little more stressful, maybe. Like, going out, or going to different places.

Participant: I still don't get impacted that way. Of course, I'm not going to endanger myself and I live my life, um, I'm also a very careful person, too. And I, I do live in nice part of the town. And then I, you know, travel as a professional, um, I do have a TSA clearance. [laughs] So, I don't even have to go to security very extensively. So, some of those things are something that I take care of, that doesn't mean that, you know, as overall Muslim identity, I will never travel to somewhere in middle of nowhere all by myself and put myself in danger. Even if I'm a Muslim man or Muslim woman anyway. That is not what I am saying, but you know, overall it's just, just a state of the Muslim identity, being this torn, it's very scary.

Both participants described a sense of surveillance in society. For the first participant, perceived surveillance caused intense self-consciousness and monitoring. For the second participant, the possibility of being linked with extremist groups brought up a sense of vigilance.

Participant #9 described the self-consciousness she experienced at her workplace. For her, being known by everybody was due to her diverse identities.

Participant: I feel like always the big elephant in the room, [laughs] everybody knows me but I don't know them. Everybody knows who [Participant] is, everybody knows what I do, but I only know the people I work with, not the other people because I am unique, people know me. I feel like I really have to watch my actions. This also put little pressure on me because I'm always on the spot, I'm always being watched, I'm always being known by other people. I feel like there are no room for mistakes for me. This is pressure for me.

Researcher: Everybody knows you because you are in charge of them, right?

Participant: Not because of that.

Researcher: Because you're different.

Participant: Because I'm different, yeah. When I introduce myself to a person that I see for the first time, I'm this, "Oh I know you." I say, "Yeah." Other reason might be that we're a small university so we don't have hundreds of faculty or professors

so that might be another reason. I feel like people know me because I'm different.

For the last participant in this category, the sense of being under constant watch by others caused stress and pressure making her feel like she should excel in her administrative position, leaving no room for mistakes.

Rationalizing stigma and oppression / understanding outgroup. The category of rationalizing stigma and oppression / understanding outgroup (*variant*) described participants' attempts to empathize with others and justify the negative attitudes they received from outgroup members, namely non-Muslim and non-immigrant individuals. This category was conveyed by Participant #14 who described social exclusion she experienced by her peers in her department and offered a justification of their attitude with a reason.

I'm the only Muslim in the class. I'm the only hijabi in the class. I got a few situations where teachers asked us to work together, but no one wanted to work with me because they never got to know me. I don't know, they made assumption about me that I don't speak English, I'm not that good in English, stuff like that. Just a late experience with that, in one of my classes, the teacher said, "Well, for this upcoming group project you need to get in three members of a group." Everyone worked together and I was the only one left out because no one wanted to work with me. Even if you say that's how it had to happen, but they were actually asking each other, "Oh, we're two. Could you come and work with me?" No one asked

me. It was in an obvious way but I kind of understand they're young. They never experienced cultures. They never experienced different religions.

Participant #13 also gave an account of how she makes meaning of micro insults she faced at her workplace. She justified their attitude with lack of knowledge regarding other cultures.

'Cause sometime, when you work with the ignorant people...I'm sorry to... I don't li... like to use bad language as I'm trying to culture myself. Some ignorant people, they don't know better. They will tell you... some people will insult you... you came from... They ask you foolish question, like, "In Africa, do you work naked, there?" and "The animal live in your... the lion live in your house, or do you live with the animal in the jungle?" They ask you stupid questions. It's not funny, but they... it makes me angry sometime when, but what can you do? We just look at them that they're ignorant, but, I always told them that, "You guys are ignorant." "You don't have foolish mind, you don't ask foolish question." ...So, look at them like, well, you can't blame them, 'cause they are... they don't know. They don't know better. Because, you gotta tell them, "No, listen, everyone", they know what is nice neighbor. But a country, much nicer than them, but they don't even know the place. So, you can't blame them. They just know, what they know is American, that's it.

The excerpt from the interview with Participant #5 also captured the rationalizing stigma and oppression/understanding outgroup category. In response to a question about

how she feels upon facing stigmatized representations of Muslims, she described being able to make sense where the negative sentiment may be stemming from.

I don't know. It, it makes me mad. I-, it makes me mad but in a way I understand, because it is their country, that we invaded their country, we came to their country, you know. This is... they didn't know anything about Muslim.

In a similar example, the exchange below between the researcher and Participant #4 exemplified the current category.

Researcher: ... How does it feel like, how do you feel about being Pakistani in America?

Participant: Oh, sometimes people don't like it.

Researcher: Who doesn't like it? Muslims?

Participant: No, no, no. no.

Researcher: Americans?

Participant: Yeah. It's just a common thing. Other Muslims of course like some American. I don't know. It's African-American or White American or Jewish or... Sometimes, I mean we are foreigners, foreigners, right? If somebody come into your house, you don't like it. If somebody comes to your house and stay forever you don't like it, right? Same thing.

All four participants offered striking examples of how they made meaning of outgroup bias and macroaggressions. Some justified bias based on perceived outgroup

cultural incompetence while others empathized with outgroup resistance to host immigrants.

Emotional Experience

This domain refers to descriptions of emotional experiences in relation to positive and negative life events. The variety of emotions, psychosomatic symptoms, emotional strength, and coping experience were included within this domain. Based on common themes across participants' accounts, the following categories were developed: difficult emotions (*general*), resilience, internal strength and agency (*typical*), religious/spiritual coping (*variant*), advocacy and taking action (*variant*), self-care (*variant*), psychosomatic symptoms (*variant*), and avoiding, ignoring, and blaming others (*variant*). First, difficult emotions and psychosomatic symptoms will be discussed because of the shared theme of being reaction to stigma and oppression. The categories of resilience, internal strength and agency, religious/spiritual coping, advocacy and taking action, self-care, and avoiding, ignoring, and blaming others will follow based on the shared theme of coping with stigma and oppression.

Difficult emotions. All of the participants described experiencing a diverse range of emotions in response to life events linked to their diverse identities. Thus, the category of difficult emotions (*general*) was constructed to capture the expressions of emotional distress. Sadness, fear, powerlessness, worthlessness, disappointment were among the feelings voiced by the participants. This category was demonstrated well by Participant #4 who narrated struggles and ensuing feelings related to establishing her career in the U.S. context as a dentist with foreign credentials.

During that time depressed. Like, when I did not pass my first...first attempt my part two, I was depressed. I did not...I will say, "OK. Let me change my field. I can't do dentistry here. It is so tough in America."

She explained that she decided to pursue certification in computer science by attending a six-month course out of state. In the following excerpt, she mentioned the feelings arose in reaction to failure finding a job even after receiving the required certification. "Then after that, I apply everywhere for job, but I could not get a job. I spent money to get this course. I don't know how much. I don't remember. And then, no result. Again, depression."

Another example of emotions was conveyed by Participant #7 who mentioned feeling insecure and alienated in response to major events involving Muslims.

At times you do, especially after a major incident in the world happens. It does make you insecure. You feel as the world has become very small for you. You just want to go back in your home or in your bubble and hide. I'm sure that a lot of us feel the same way. ...When certain events happen you just feel that you're back in your cocoon. You don't feel a sense of belonging in this country when these things happen.

Participant #12 described experiencing anxiety and sadness in reaction to offensive remarks regarding Muslims.

Researcher: OK. So, what are some of the things you hear about Muslims in the media or elsewhere, in general?

Participant: Yeah, I... sometimes when...That makes me... I'm a very emotional person also, and then, some like, when I use to

read all these, uh, Islamophobic things, it would get me, um, anxious. And I used to get, like, re...

Researcher: Mm hmm. Maybe in the news, or...?

Participant: In the news or...It's mostly, yeah, in the news. Or people send me emails about this, um, I, I would. But then...So I, then I stopped doing that, because that makes me anxious and, and, um, I don't like that. I just stopped it. Like I stopped doing, reading in, into that. Yeah. ...Well, same thing like all this 9/11 happened. Or, um, or the first thing when you heard, like, "Oh God, I hope it's not Muslims. I hope it's not Muslims." And then when it turns out to be they were Muslim, [laughs] most of them, you feel sad. I feel like very bad now, yeah, that, um...And I, I, I take it personally very much, like deep in, that they are kind of...I don't know if it's... it really, sometimes I think maybe there's a purpose behind it. Maybe something that God was doing it, like making to the... Or I don't know the reason, but it makes you sad.

All participants described experiencing some degree of emotional distress in reaction to negative life events. The intensity of emotions was significantly moderated by challenges specific to holding diverse identities as an immigrant and Muslim which intersect with being a woman. Among other societal settings, career was a significant context of struggles, precipitating intense emotional distress.

Psychosomatic symptoms. The category of psychosomatic symptoms (*variant*) emerged in response to physical disturbance aggravated by psychological conditions participants experienced, such as insomnia and headaches. This category was delivered by Participant #11 who described experiencing difficulty falling asleep during times of distress.

I had this like, I have insomnia. So once, whenever I had have these kind of things I wouldn't sleep all night. Like the day my, my boss didn't give me that job, or the after 9/11 the, the attitude of that woman with me, like those kinds of thing, when I can't sleep. My, I, I, my, I get like racing thoughts they say, so I just, I'm just keep thinking, about that, and then, the next, and then the next, so I, my sleeping pattern affected. Eating I, I don't know, I'm not that big eater either.

Participant #9 conveyed how stress related to starting her current job elicited painful backaches which did not respond to pain medication.

Especially when I started my current job the first time, the first six months. I was managing people. The instructors were teaching the course, I was teaching myself, I was helping course design and curriculum development. So I got so many responsibilities and I was so scared of screwing up. [laughs]. I was really on a lot of stress, I put myself under a lot of stress. I got really severe backaches, stress related backaches. It started from my neck all the way down to my back.

Several participants expressed emotional distress through psychosomatic symptoms. Similar to the previous category, contested identities complicated the intensity

of psychosomatic issues. Both of the participants above described elsewhere how pressure of holding diverse identities intensified their stress, causing psychosomatic problems.

Resilience, internal strength, and agency. A number of participants described ego strength, minimal vulnerability to as well as an ability to deal with the struggles arising from diverse identity markers. Accordingly, resilience, internal strength and agency (*typical*) was developed to include participants' efforts to access resilience factors and personal resources to cope with difficult emotions caused by stressful events. Common themes included taking a positive perspective, strengthening mental skills, and displaying inner strength and resilience in face of difficulties. Participant #11 described how she employed a method coined training oneself to cope with anxiety related to expressing herself in social settings.

Participant: It's like a, like a just, prepare yourself. It, it's like you have to just train yourself. Like if sometimes some friends can help you too. They will say, "Yeah." What do they'll say, just go ahead and do it. Even that one sentence, will help you, "OK. I'll try." So, I say, I don't know how I'm going to do this and do that. People say, "OK. I'll, you know, go and do," just speak and just have a, wear your clothes. Somebody just give you a hint and then you train your brain too. Like a, you will just train your brain. OK. I mean, what will happen? I, I, think about my, like, what will happen next. Then I said, "OK. Nothing will happen." What will they say? They will

just, they will, they're not going to kill you. They're not going to say, "No, you can't do this." If they don't like, they don't like. It's, so, that is kinda, that's how I changed myself.

Researcher: Some sort of self-talk.

Participant: Right. Self, like you are, you are training yourself. OK. And, in your head, you are just saying, "what is the worth?"

Researcher: It also seems like a coping skill.

Participant: Yeah. Coping a skill. And mentally training yourself. Like, OK, I'm going to just go and say. Sometimes I was so, I was just shaking. Like, my first, I remember that my first oral presentation at the university when I was doing my master's. It was so hard for me. It was so hard for me, because I never did in Pakistan. Like, in front of 50 people that the, you are, you have to tell, the oral presentation. She gave me a book. Read the book and give the summary of the book in front of all the people. Like a, what you call that, book discussion.

Researcher: OK.

Participant: So, that is why I was shaking.

Researcher: OK

Participant: And then, you know what? I've prepared myself. I said, "My God." I was praying. I saw some other American girls and boy, one man I think. One boy and a girl, they couldn't even

say a word. They just came and they were so, so nervous.

And she just left. I was [laughs] better than her.

The following exchange between the researcher and Participant #10 revealed the emotional strength she endorsed as a way to keep others' undue influence at bay.

Researcher: When you get those kinds of looks, comments from people, sounds like you probably feel, even though, like you say that it doesn't affect you, sounds like it makes you a little uncomfortable, getting those looks.

Participant: Actually, I feel more proud.

Researcher: Proud?

Participant: Yeah, I don't feel uncomfortable. I feel laughing sometimes.

It feels like... It just makes me smile.

Researcher: It doesn't upset you at all?

Participant: I just make sure to look at them back, and smile. They will not change me. Whatever they think, they don't know me.

These people don't know me.

Following a question on how she coped with difficult emotions, Participant #8 provided the following response.

No. I really don't, because how long am I going to live in this world? Why would I worry about this? I have other things to worry about. This is the easy part.

What is quoted below is from Participant #6 who displayed ego strength when dealing with misperceptions and negative attitudes projected onto her by others.

Like if, like just reminding myself, as I'm not gonna change for the people. This is the way who I am, and they need to accept me. That's what it is. Like, uh, like, I'm gonna be wise, and suck it up. You like it or not, I'm here. I live in this country. I work hard, just like you do. I do everything just like you do.

Descriptions of resilience, internal strength, and personal agency was typical across participants of this study, showing that Muslim immigrant women endorse significant emotional strength in face of various stressors. Many of them seems to have mentally constructed a protective shield to ward off the potential impact of negative events on their self-concept.

Religious/spiritual coping. This category of religious/spiritual coping (*variant*) included turning to a higher power, religious practice, and spiritual experience as a way to deal with struggles posed by diverse identities. This category was captured by Participant #2 who described seeking refuge and relief by relying on a higher power only and engaging in a religious practice called tasbih, which involves repetitive utterances of a prayer or short statements in the praise of God, to increase her sense of connection with a higher power. Throughout the following narrative, she also mentioned dedicating this practice to people who have been affirming of her religious identity.

I mean, literally I turned to Allah with my problems and I, if I can, I do, do tasbih a thousand times a day. And, um, I try to do that most of the days for a long time now. And it increased over the time. It's, I started with 100 now and it's thousand. And, um, I, um, pray a lot. I actually even pray, do tasbihs for others too. Like, I remember, I started this tasbih because

somebody, a teacher in my daughter's secondary school, was so good presenting Islam, she even taught, um, some kind of a presentation of talking about Islam. I felt so close and so good for her, that I promised Allah that I will do this hundred tasbih as much as possible. And every time when I do it, I will dedicate it to her. So, you know, over the years I started doing these tasbihs at times for other people. And now I do it about a thousand tasbihs... But, um, there were multiple times that I was strongly down. I will turn and, and cry to Allah, but nobody else.

When discussing how she turned spirituality as a way of coping, Participant #4 mentioned engaging in a form of praying called tahajjud, which includes waking up in the middle of the night to perform a structured prayer followed by personal verbal praying called dua. She went on to explain she intuitively knew that her prayers were responded to as reflected by her acceptance into the residency program she had been longing for.

Participant: Right! I pray a lot...Tahajjud. Tahajjud is my main thing.

Whenever, whenever I have a difficulty I start that, and because...

Researcher: OK and you believe it helps?

Participant: Oh yes. One hundred percent I believe, because this is the only time I, I did not think any single thing. I feel, I feel like that's me and my Allah, that's it. There's nothing between me and Allah, and I can say whatever I can say, and with very strong belief, believe me! Whenever I say, like, "Allah,

can you have this one for me?” And I have a feeling that time, honestly, like, I try so many times to get into the residency program, but I still remember that day that time when he accept my Dua [Calling out to or praying God for one’s needs]. We went to Pakistan for some...my husband’s nephew, or niece’s wedding... and when we came home... There were a lot of... a lot of things happened that time, and I was so, so depressed like why I could not get my, my goal. Why? Because people say, “Oh you are in America, you don’t have a license, yet!” I, it makes me, like... it hurt my feelings. So when I came home, and then I think about, like, “Let me start my Tahajjud [Night prayer] and see,” and I start Tahajjud. One day I remember that day. I remember that place where I sat down in my home, ...and I sit, and I was, I was crying, and I feel like, “But this... it’s just me, and my Allah,” and I got a feeling! I got a feeling! I still have that feeling. Like, Allah accept my Dua, and believe me or not, next day, when I call [City], and the program director accept me.

Several participants described a number of spiritual practices that helped them cope with the intensity of struggles faced in daily life as women of diverse identities. The narratives above indicated that women who engage in spiritual practice experienced several benefits of connecting with a higher power during times of distress.

Advocacy and taking action. Advocacy and taking action (*variant*) included activism and engaging in activity as a way to cope with difficult emotions that arose due to stigma and oppression experience. While a category partly named advocacy also emerged within the stigma and oppression category, the current category is somewhat distinct as participants occasionally linked their activism to an effort to cope with their emotions. The example below illustrated how Participant #7 described feeling the need to be more vocal when coping with emotions that arose as a result of negative events.

When certain events happen you just feel that you're back in your cocoon. You don't feel a sense of belonging in this country when these things happen. Then you have to try to struggle out of that little bubble that you find yourself in, and go about your day to day life and be resilient. Everyone has life stories that happen that either they pull them down or make them more resilient to move forward in their lives. You gain strength from inside of you and you try to do the right thing. That has transpired where I'm headed at this direction in my life. My profession is where it is, but then I feel the need that I need to be more vocal. Be a voice for an average Muslim person.

Participant #3 described how her advocacy on behalf of a client was misconstrued as indicative of an emotional struggle by her supervisor. She described gaining a sense of validation from consultation with a counselor upon authenticity of her feelings rather than being diagnosed with a psychopathology.

Also my supervisor thought I need treatment because the way I respond, because I was trying to help that person. She said, "You should see

somebody, because maybe it affects you. I never seen you crying for the five years you work with us.” I was confused. I said, “Maybe she's right.” We have in the same place a psychiatric unit, and I spoke with the director of counseling at [Counseling Unit]. I told him, “I need to talk to you about something,” and we talk. He say, “What is going on?” and this is what has been happening to me, and I told the story. “I was told maybe I need treatment. Maybe I’m affected by this.” He said, “No. Your response is part of being human. If you were affected like month and month and month, you crying for over eight month about the same thing, OK. But because you defend, and because you help this person, doesn’t mean you are affected by it. It’s a part of human, you want to help that person.” So I feel good. At one point I was in the point to believe that I really need treatment or something. But not! It’s not the case, because you crying, you advocate your case, you are depressed? No! ...That is about, you care. Because you care, you are labeled being the depressive, or in depressive maniac mode, or who knows? This is the point, that not every time you cry about something...It’s OK to cry, because you respond. It’s just a way to relieve bad emotions.

Both of these participants described a desire to move beyond experiencing emotional distress in reaction to stressors. They both described altruism and a tendency to express difficult emotions in an effort to overcome structural barriers and systemic oppression to help those in need. Participant #3 even risked being labeled depressed or

unable to detach from her clients by displaying determination to advocate on behalf of them.

Self-care. Self-care (*variant*) included activities participants engaged in to maintain a healthy life style, get their physiological needs met, and cope with psychological symptoms. Themes such as eating a balanced diet, exercising, and seeking healthcare were deemed to fall in this category. Participant #2 illustrated self-care well by discussing different methods of taking care of herself and her daughter.

I'm a very healthy person. I'm very healthy person. I, I strongly believe in taking care of my health physically and mentally. And I sleep well. I, I don't get enough sleep, [laughs] except the weekends. And as soon as I put my head on the pillow, I'm usually am out. [laughs]...time, and I, um, don't cut down on my eating. But I try to choose healthy eating styles at home or at work, needed to be. I use vitamins all the time. I do detox quite often. And I use things that are going to detox my body, because I strongly believe that those are the things that you need to do to, uh, cure all the ailments that you may have in your body as well. And those are physical detoxes... So, I think that I being a scientist and engineer, I believe that all the ailments, whether that's a mental or physical is because of either toxins or some kind of chemical imbalance. That I know for sure, being in science and engineering for such a long time. So, I take care of myself well. And I try to do same thing for my daughter as well.

Participant #1 indicated seeking health care as a way to cope with insomnia and sense of insecurity she had following 9/11. She described benefiting from an antidepressant prescribed by her primary care physician.

Only after 9/11 my sleep pattern got very affected, so I had to go to my doctor. I don't know for what, though. I don't remember now. Oh, maybe because of the sleep. I was not sleeping, not sleeping. I went and I told her, my doctor, I told her about after 9/11 I just I'm very, I feel like unsafe kind of. Like I'm driving or in the mall or whatever, I'm walking, I, so I inside I felt very kind of a scared. And people were all doing things to Muslim women, like attacking or saying things. So I told my doctor about, like I just mentioned her like, "I feel very unsafe and scared, and am not sleeping." I told her I'm not sleeping, uh, so she said not, maybe because of the...I can, she told me exercise those things, then she gave me, "Oh it's a depression," she said. She said, "Oh, I think you are depressed." I said, "No, I am not depressed, I just have this, like a, like a, insecure feeling if I'm out in public." I, because I even told her after 9/11 I have started this, and sleeping. I'm not sleeping well. I keep telling the doctor I'm not sleeping well. She said, "Oh, it's because of the depression, I'll give you a medicine," and so she gave me a medicine which is, now it's banned...It helped a little. I always tell other the people, "I don't know why they banned this medicine it helped me."

Both of these participants indicated being tuned their self-care needs and engaging in activities to maintain a healthy life style and get their medical needs met.

Avoiding, ignoring, and blaming others. Avoiding, ignoring, and blaming others (*variant*) included descriptions of avoiding, ignoring, and blaming other people as a means of coping with intense emotions arising in response to challenges. Participant #11 conveyed how she ignored coworkers who began exhibiting prejudice toward her following September 11.

Researcher: So, when you were having those difficulties with a couple of colleagues you had, how did you cope with these feelings...?

Participant: I just, I just ignored them. Because I didn't say a word. I didn't talk. Sometimes time heals. And they saw my, attitude, my, how...and, I, she, she used to praise me about how nice I am, and this and that. And all of a sudden, her, her attitude change. After, like, maybe a year or two, she forgot all about it then we started talking.

Participant #12 mentioned an inclination to partly blame the global Muslim community for September 11 attacks. She described the political content of hutbas [Islamic sermon], she attended during Friday gatherings at the mosque.

Participant: I, I used to get very uncomfortable during hutbas. Um...

Researcher: Right.

Participant: It was very like...It's actually changed now. If you see the hutbas are really nice. They, but, that time it was all about Palestine, Kashmir, Palestine...All political. It was all political, especially hutbas should not be for political, they should be more for how you lead your life, how the Imams

[Person leading prayers] should give you not, not preaching the other stuff. [laughs] And then...I hope, I was just like, "I hope nothing happens...Nothing happens." But...

Researcher: But then that happened.

Participant: ...that happened, yeah.

Researcher: How did you cope with those feelings, like sadness and...?

Participant: It was very...It was hard. It was really...Part of, part of me blamed my, my like my Muslim...

Researcher: Sisters and brothers.

Participant: Yeah.

Like the two participants discussed, a number of participants mentioned a few reactive ways of coping with intense emotions arising from difficult encounters. This category mostly applied to participants' reactions to events linked with their diverse identities. While Participant #11 described ignoring coworker prejudice directed at her at work, Participant #12 described blaming other Muslims for 9/11 attacks.

Family Relational Experience

Narrated lived experience surrounding current and extended family was involved in this domain. Experience of relating to family members, family influences on - and expectations from - participants, parental role-modeling observed and performed in families, and transmitting values of education, culture, and religion were prevalent themes of this domain. Additionally, narratives of pressure and conflict, including marital discord or imposition of family expectations were included within this domain. Support received from current and extended family, difficulties in family financial and living

conditions, and descriptions of family background, racial, ethnic, and religious lineage were also coded with this domain. The categories that emerged within this domain included family modeling, expectations, and transferring values (*typical*), support received from family (*typical*), support and caregiving provided to family (*typical*), pressure and conflict within family (*variant*), and family descriptive information (*variant*).

Family modeling, expectations, and transferring values. The first category within the family relational experience domain included family modeling, expectations, and transferring values (*typical*). Many of the participants described relational experiences with family members in terms of modeling, transferring values, and setting expectations among their current and extended family members. Accordingly, this category was developed to include descriptions of family values and expectations, modeling and transferring values, and other types of family influence among family members. Common values modeled, transferred, and expected to be adopted were moral standards, religious beliefs, cultural values, and values regarding work and education. What Participant #5 explained below is a good example to modeling and impact family members can have on each other. This participant described how by being involved in a job she would like to show her children the privileges afforded through education and work.

For me, working was that, means that I have to be independent and I can show my kids that you have to work hard to earn something. You have to go to school... I grew up... When I was nine years old, my country's civil war happened. And then, we had to leave my country. So, I had a different

living environment than I was living in when I was born. Going from refugee camp, to another country where you don't speak the different language. I mean, you don't know what the culture is, the people, all of that. So, coming here, going to school by myself, where no one else speaks same language as me, I wanted my kids to understand what is the privilege to be, in going to school, and me, be...I don't want them to see that I was not a working mom. I wanted them to see...I wanted them to have that, uh, advantage that I didn't had when I was in refugee camp, going to the school, having the people to talk to, and all of that. You get an education then you get a job. When you get a job, and then you can be anybody that you want to be. You can get any job that you want to be. You can work hard to do something. That's what I showed them, that.

In contrast, Participant #3 described significant divergence between the value of education she and her family endorsed, displayed through parental disapproval and despise toward women's education abroad.

My parents never believed that education in a way. Imagine myself when I went to study abroad to Costa Rica, when I did my master's. Oh, woman is totally abroad alone. It's a big deal. They look down into that. It was totally for eight weeks in another country alone. A woman, Muslim woman is a big deal. Yeah. I don't know if I answered the question but they look down on like, "Oh, my God." Their daughter's studying.

Another example to the modeling and expectations category was clearly illustrated by Participant #6 who described the impact of her parents on how she understood and practiced the religion as a Muslim woman.

So, it's just, my foundation was so strong, and my parents always teach me to be a strong person, and never judge others. And always be forgiving person, and they always tell me when I was little, "This is what the Islam about." This is how they make me look as, as a Muslim woman. This exactly what it is and they will never, like they never say, "OK, because you're a Muslim woman, uh, a man has to marry you, even if you don't love him, or if you don't want to stay with him." So, it's a little bit different. It's different. So, they gave me the freedom to choose my life, and I did. So, like I said, it's like whatever I got before, I delivered and I think it's, will be received, from my kids.

Participant #6 also exemplified this category by describing how she encourages her children to take the initiative to correct misperceptions about Muslims by expressing themselves openly.

Because I'm encouraging my kids to be stronger and express themselves to other people that we are not like that. Please interpret everything to them that we're not radical people. We love everybody. I grew up with Christian and Jewish people. In our, in my country, we have a lot of Christian and Jewish Moroccans we never have problem. Because everybody respects others...And we never like, judge each other. We eat at the same table and we don't have any problems.

Modeling, expectations, and transferring values were prevalent themes across participants. A number of mentioned how family values of education, culture, and religion were instilled into them while others described how they transmit these values to their children. They also occasionally described diverging from family values and adopting new ones after experiencing a different culture post-immigration.

Support received from family. Another common theme across participants was support received family (*typical*). This category included several forms of support, particularly financial and emotional support offered to participants by their family members. This category was captured in the following excerpt from the interview with Participant #7 who described the role of current and extended family support in being the person she is now and in her career goals.

My family. I am blessed that I have a very supporting husband. I have a very supporting in-laws structure. My in-laws live with me. You cannot be what you are unless you do have a support from your spouse, from your family, or your friends. Has that played a part in what I am? Yes, it always does. If my husband wasn't supporting of what I was doing, then I would not be here.

Participant #9 underscored the role of spousal support in achieving her career goals.

Oh my God. God bless him all the time. He supported me so much. He was always telling me, "Do you know how to eat a big whale?" I said, "No." "With small bites," he said. [laughs] Just every day, you do what you do, and you're going to succeed at the end, just with small bites.

[laughs] He supported me tremendously. Without his help and support I wouldn't, probably, be there right now. [laughs]

Siblings emerged as a source of support among a number of participants.

Participant #4 shared her sense of being supported by her brothers. "My brothers are my big supporter. Whenever I have a problem, I always call and discuss with them everything. They listen, they come to me and they try to help or whatever."

Responding to a question about the role of family support on education and career goals, Participant #14 described the support she received from her mother in regard to her education, career, as well as communicating with her father.

I have a really wonderful mom. She supports me with any decision I take in my life. She's the first one, I tell her about my grades, about my tests, about getting accepted to a fellowship, having an interview to a job. She's the one who is the way to talk to my dad about new things.

Family support was a common theme across Muslim immigrant women of this study. Support was most prevalent in context of career. Most women described being supported by current and extended family members in the course of seeking their career goals and ambitions.

Support and caregiving provided to family. The category of support and caregiving provided to family (*typical*) referred to descriptions of how participants engage in caregiving and serving family members. Common forms of caregiving and support included financial support, completing household chores, taking care of elderly family members, and helping family members with adjustment post-immigration. The excerpt below from the interview with participant #1 captured how the need to support

extended family members in home country was prioritized over pursuing education. She also explained how financial support she offered to her family in Africa was rooted in her religious beliefs instilled throughout her upbringing.

Participant: We don't want to go to school. It take long, plus we're not going to have money to pay for. Plus we have people in Africa, parents, sister, cousins, we send money all the time. We need to take care of home.

Researcher: You send money back to Africa?

Participant: Oh, yeah. We send money a lot. We help a lot. Yes, we do. We take care of family home. Ramadan [Muslim spiritual month of fasting]'s coming. All our money going to be going there.

Researcher: Tell me about why you are doing this, why you are sending money.

Participant: That's the way we've been raised, one. We've been raised with the Muslim religion. That's what God say, take care of your parents. Your paradise is under your parents' feet. Your paradise is under your husband's feet. Help poor people and God will help you. Do sadaqah [Charity] and God will pay you later on when you die. It's about the way we've been raised. We've been raised with the religion and we do it because the religion has said. When the religion say something that mean Allah has said. Nobody else has said.

Participant #8 described how she supported and took care of her family with adjustment following migration to the United States. “So I was the only one who spoke English. I was the only one who was the oldest one. I always took care of them. So pretty much everyone is like, ‘Do this, do this, do this.’” She went on to explain that she also provided support through taking care of her younger brother. “I had to take care of him. I was the guardian, actually the parent for him when he was in school.”

Participant #4 described that her caregiving and support role covers completing household chores in addition to supporting family through her job.

So, that’s the woman. Maintain your job, maintain your house too. I keep thinking because right now, I don’t have any food at home. I know that. I have to go and cook. Yesterday, there was no food but actually, I have a flu so yesterday I had a fever so I asked my son, “Go and order pizza. I, I don’t have time. I can’t cook any.” He said, “Yeah, that’s fine.” Today, you cannot order pizza every day, right?

Most participants described engaging in support and caregiving toward their families. For some of them, it included performing traditional gender roles, such as maintaining the house while others described prioritizing family needs over their career goals. Narratives indicated that support and caregiving role participants upheld became more vital in the context of immigration.

Family descriptive information. Family descriptive information (*variant*) referred to participants’ descriptive accounts of their families, such as descriptions of family background, customs, and values, introduction of family members, and explanation of circumstances encountered by family members. Participant #2 offered a

description of her family heritage and parents with an emphasis on intersecting identities of religion and race.

Both of my parents, although from very different locations in terms of geography. They both come from the same tribal part of the Turkic race, and that somehow it was planned for them to get married and they did at a very early time in their age. Both of their, also heritage comes from also strong Muslim heritage as well, strong Turkic in combination of strong Muslim heritage. My grandfather from my mom's side was supposed to be mufti [Expert of Islamic law]... He was very advanced in the religion of Islam. He spoke like six different languages... Um, I think that education, Islam, and freedom were key things in my heritage, and that, um, coming from both families. Um, mentally, my, both of my parents were very well off, even before they passed away. And they remember every details of their heritage. I was even able to, uh...just a couple of months before my father passed away, create our family tree that I know all the way far, far past, from both ends. So, um, and then, and um...So when I say from my father end, um, although neither my mom nor my dad, um, had an education beyond elementary school, because they married really young in their life, because they were first in their families as the oldest, um, kids, and these were really old times.

A number of participants engaged in lengthy descriptions of their family background, suggesting that their sense of self was deeply anchored in their heritage. The family narrative they developed also provided the basis for their self-esteem.

Pressure and conflict within family. The category of pressure and conflict within Family (*variant*) included struggles occurring in interpersonal relationships, conflicts experienced with family members (such as marital discord), and pressure participants perceived within their families. Participant #12 described how getting into an arranged marriage posed difficulties relating to her spouse in the context of immigration to a different country.

Researcher: So you think maybe that was a difficulty at that time when your father asked you to get married to this man in the United States. You didn't know him and...

Participant: No.

Researcher: You, you probably felt a little challenged?

Participant: It is, it was, oh, it was very, very hard and then when we got married, um, we didn't connect and it's hard, you cannot, and I was always, I was actually, into depression that "Oh, I'm going to this country, new country. I don't know anything." And I didn't had confidence in myself at that time that I'll do something and what would happen, um, finally, if he leaves me? Or like all those questions made me, because you going to new country, like you don't know anybody and I had nobody here. My, my family here so it was very difficult.

Following her disclosure about getting divorced twice, participant #1 described below why her marriage dissolved. "My first husband left because we wasn't getting along. The second husband, we didn't get along because he wanted to marry a second

woman, and I'm not for that, so we have to separate." She went on to describe why marriage is not an option for her anymore.

Researcher: If it's not too personal, can I ask you why you chose not to marry again?

Participant: Because they're marrying me for my money.

The theme of pressure was captured by Participant #1 who described the tension she experienced with extended family members following immigration to the U.S. due to demands that she find a marriage partner.

Participant: There was pressure, there was not too much freedom, and now...

Researcher: What kind of pressure?

Participant: Pressure not having a boyfriend. Pressure not going out. You've got to find somebody to marry.

Similarly, Participant #3 spoke to the pressure she experienced from extended family while living in her home country away from her parents.

Palestine was a different situation. I didn't have my parents. I didn't have my mom. I didn't have my father. I was under the dominion of my uncle so it's a different thing. Happening much because you live in their house, what you can do. Sometime you feel hopeless. You don't have that independence.

Though variant, a number of participants described intense periods experienced within their current or extended families. For some, marital issues arose as the primary reason for tension, for others pressure from several family members caused significant stress.

Social Relational Experience

Social relational interaction with fellow Muslims, with individuals from similar ethnic, cultural, and national backgrounds (in-group), with Americans, and with individuals belonging to diverse social identity groups (outgroup) were prevalent themes of this domain. Social support provided and received, perceived attitudes of others, and involvement in community service were also coded within this domain. This domain included the following four categories: quality of social/relational interaction with outgroup (*typical*), quality of social/relational interaction with in-group (*typical*), providing and receiving social support (*typical*), community service involvement (*typical*), and perceived positive attitudes of others (*variant*).

Quality of social/relational interaction with outgroup. Quality of social/relational interaction with outgroup (*typical*) illustrated participants' relational experiences with those that remain outside of their cultural and/or religious group, such as non-Muslims that identify as American or another cultural identity. Conflicts and mistreatments, as well as positive relational experiences with outgroup members within general society and the workplace, capture the content of this category. This category was exemplified well by an account of Participant #6 who described her interaction with a random person in the mall.

They're like, uh, just for instance, on Mother's Day, I took my mom to E... We went shopping, me and her. My mom wear hijab. So when I go out with my mom, I hold her hands, so we were just hugging each other, and I give her a kiss on the cheek, and her, and one American lady, she came from R... the restaurant, and she's like "Is this is your mother?" I

said, "Yeah," and she's like, "Why are you not wearing the cover on your hair?" This is the first question she ask me. [laughter] ...I swear, and it's the first question she ask me, and I just laugh and I said, "You know what, that doesn't make my mom different, if she doesn't wear..." I mean if she wears the hijab. I said, "I'm still her daughter." So, she give us a hug, both of us, and she said, "God bless you." She said, "You look like you love your mom." I said, "Of course I love my mom!" So she kinda like, she wants to make sure that I'm her daughter because she see me without her hijab. So, she, she was kinda like, shocked...

Several participants described outgroup relational experience occurring at their workplaces. Participant #9 described how a mutual celebration of important days with a coworker in an administrative position generated a pleasant relational experience between them.

I try to celebrate their holidays even though I don't celebrate them. The other day, a few days ago, I sent to my dean -- dean of the college -- a Christmas card. Happy Christmas and good wishes and everything. Then the dean came to my office the same day but a few hours later, and he said he was touched by my card. He was touched by my greeting and he wanted to respond the same way in a holiday of me. Then he searched on the Internet what the closest Muslim holiday near this time. He found out that it was Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him birthday in January. He said that, "I know that Prophet Muhammad was a very peaceful, very

smart and wise guy and his birthday should be celebrated,” he said.

[laughter]

Participant #4 offered a striking example of a conflict she experienced with an American coworker who reacted negatively when she accidentally completed a job task without the required license. On the contrary, she offered an account of how another American coworker in a managerial position helped resolve the conflict in a way that validated the abilities and credentials the Participant #4 actually possessed. Additionally, she mentioned the respect and appreciation she received from her coworkers regarding her perseverance.

For example, in [Hospital], when I used to work as EFDA [Expanded Function Dental Auxiliary], the girls work with me as an assistant and yesterday, I think yesterday I called because her dad passed away. So, she said, “I never forgot those days but I’m really, really amazed with you how much struggle you did and you, you got your license.” That time, they respect me because they know I’m a foreign trained dentist but I’m working as an EFDA. I’m not working as a dentist. They respect me but there’s still one time, the one hygienist when I start, that time I don’t have an X Ray license and accidentally, not accidentally but I thought I did X Ray and I pushed the button so she was so mad with me. “Oh, you don’t know. You don’t have a license. You’re not allowed to push that button.” And blah, blah, blah. She make a fuss so I thought why she’s doing that but somebody else complained to her with the program director so the program director, he came and he called her. He said, “You know what?

Why you treat her? You know she's a foreign trained dentist." She said, "Yeah, but she don't have a license." He said, "Yeah, but she already took classes. She already took exam. The license is in process. What's the big deal?" I did not complain. I did not say anything but I feel sometimes you have bad person but sometimes in around the bad person, there is some good people too so they know that... Now, she's my good friend. Believe me. Right. That's the rule. She was right. She was not wrong... But I'm just saying they respect me because they knew. They know that I am a dentist but if you go with the rules, she was right. She was not wrong but I feel bad why she treat me like that. When you move, you're new. You don't know a lot of people but it's just so hard if you are a dentist and you work a low grades. You don't like it.

After describing a rupture in her connection with a close coworker caused by 9/11 terror events, Participant #11 described being comforted by another coworker that she did not have a close relationship with.

Uh, when I went there, the next day, it was 9/12, September 12, and there were two groups of people I noticed. One was like giving me comfort. And the other one was, like, I'm not even looking at me. Uh, the one was very good friend of mine, and she was not even looking at me. Her face was so with anger... And the other person I didn't know her that much, she was hugging me and giving me comfort, "Oh, M... please tell me what I can do for you. I know how you are going through at this time."

That, there was one group like this and, a couple of people, they were not that many though. Bad people are very few in the world. [laughs]

Participant described various examples social interaction with outgroup. In many of these interactions, their diverse identities as Muslim and immigrant appeared to become figural, causing strain or satisfaction in social connection. In a number of cases, quality of relationship with outgroup individuals improved significantly following a tension, suggesting that conflicts afforded opportunities to better know each other.

Quality of social/relational interaction with in-group. Quality of social/relational interaction with in-group (*typical*) addressed participants' narratives of relating to other Muslims and individuals from shared cultural backgrounds. Struggles encountered, as well as positive experiences achieved while interacting with in-group members, were included within this category. Participant #6 described how endorsing divergent perspectives on Islam caused strain in her relationship with Muslims from different national backgrounds.

Uh, with my experience with my old friends, I have friends from Jordan, from Palestine, from Iraq, from Beirut, um, they think totally different about the Islam. And I think they...That's something they didn't like about me so much, because actually...It's not because I was bad with them. Basically, they didn't wanna believe it. They believe in their own little box. They're like inside the box. They don't wanna open up to the others.

As a case manager, Participant #3 described the ease in relating to her clients on the basis of shared cultural and international background.

Researcher: Tell me about the time when you felt good about yourself as a Muslim immigrant woman because of others' positive attitude towards you.

Participant: When I helped my Iraqis and they are very thankful. Like I mentioned because we are partners. Partners, I mean because we come from the same, not country, but same religion so they identify with me. They feel comfortable. That makes me feel proud. Makes me feel I can make a connection there. I can make a way to help them whatever they need. Without interfering with my job too.

Researcher: They are Muslim too, they are immigrant too so you have a lot to share, right?

Participant: Yes. They're refugees so they're easier relate to. We can relate to each other. I'm telling you I'm like the channel. They can navigate through me to find whatever they need.

As indicated in the excerpts for this category, relationships with in-group members had varying degrees of tension as well as enrichment.

Providing and receiving social support. Providing and receiving social support (*typical*) included participant accounts detailing social support activities they provided to - and received from - others, including Muslims and non-Muslims. It also involved accounts pointing out the lack of social support. Participant #1 offered a description of lack of social support she experienced when she was having a depressive episode that

required her to get medically treated. She also described experiencing a sense of isolation from Muslims of other race, which she attributed to subtle racism.

I didn't see nobody. I wasn't going to mosque, they didn't ask, "Oh, that lady's not coming to the mosque, what's going on? What is her number? Let me go visit her." Nobody did anything. Nobody noticed, even my absence. Maybe if I had died, then they're going to hear at the mosque, "Oh, that lady died," and that was it, they're going to continue their prayer. That's the sad thing about Muslim people in this country. We're not together, and it's like... Even when you go to the mosque, other colors don't want to be close to you. They don't even want to get shoulder to shoulder to you. I noticed that at the mosque, other colors don't want to be shoulder to shoulder with you. They want to be to themselves, because maybe you're black.

In response to a question about how other Muslims helped her become the person she is now, Participant #14 emphasized the support and guidance she received from fellow Muslims upon starting college in the United States.

When I started school, I got to meet first with Iraqi Muslim friends, who supported me along the way, and told me what to accept from people, and what not to accept, and what to do, and what not to do.

Upon describing the homesickness and sense of isolation she experienced following immigration, Participant #6 described the positive impact of making friends with an American woman who supported the participant with English language.

I was young. I came to a different culture. And when you don't speak the language, it just, it's like you feel you're isolated. And I have a phobia to go outside and talk to people because I'm just looking at people, my gosh, you just look at me, I'm just like, dumb. I don't... And, and until I made one friend. She is my friend from, since 1998, she's American friend. She is the one, encourage me more. Because every time, even if I say things wrong, she always says, "[Participant name], you doin' great job! You doin' great job!" [laughter] And I always tell her, "Please don't teach me bad words. I don't wanna be saying bad words." So we go out, she like, more open up and I feel special.

Participant #1 described support she provided for one of her neighbors, an act anchored in her conceptualization of what a good Muslim should be like.

Participant: To be a good Muslim you've got to love your neighbor.

Researcher: Is that what you do?

Participant: Yes. Last Wednesday I clean up my neighbor yard. She called me. She says, "Sarah, who cleaned my yard?" I says, "Me." She says, "Oh, thank you so much." Because I want our area to look good. I cleaned mine, so I cleaned up hers.

Closely linked with quality of interaction with in or outgroup, providing and receiving social support went beyond relational interaction and included an element of altruism or being there for others. A few participants complained about the lack of social support in times of need, while others described how receiving social support proved

essential in the context of immigration. Despite lack of in-group social support when she needed it, Participant #1 described helping her neighbors with yard maintenance.

Community service involvement. Community service involvement (*typical*) included participant accounts detailing the social service and advocacy activities they engaged in. Participant #12 explained that she has been involved in advocacy work which involved raising money to send scholarships to underprivileged students in India.

Help them in educating their further generations. If women don't have to work, she doesn't have to work, but at least if she's educated she can teach her kids. And this can grow and educate them. And it does makes a difference. It makes a difference. If you educate the, uh, women in the house, it does make the whole family educated...I mean I'd, I am...Oh, I am very much active in my alma mater. I'm like, right now treasurer. Um, so where I studied X University... in India. We have an alumni association here, uh... So I've been secretary, then I'm treasurer now. And we do try send lot of scholarships. And right now, we're doing fundraising for, um, underprivileged, uh, students and, um. Back in India. Yeah. I, I have lot of connections to my alma mater, yeah. We have really raised a lot of good amount of money.

Additionally, Participant #2 described being actively involved in local advocacy activities to help out people in need.

And then here also we have, uh, there's a, there's a women's committee here... I don't know if you have heard about it. Yeah. Um, one of my, she's quite older to me, but she's from same place, where I started. And,

um, the, uh, she started it actually. Um, and so we do, we do like lot of things. Um, we, um, just for, um... we, uh, like, we make food for [Community service center], we do help there. And, uh, we take food to shelters, women's shelters also.

Most participants described an inclination to engage in social service and advocacy efforts. Some of the participants participated in advocacy work for underprivileged individuals in their homelands. Others described performing social service to both Muslims and outgroup members following immigration.

Perceived positive attitudes of others. Perceived positive attitudes of others (*variant*) emerged in response to participant perceptions of others' favorable attitudes toward them. This category was developed within the relational experience domain because of how participants' perceptions of others' attitudes often influenced their relationships with each other. Participant #7 described her impression of how others' perceptions of her may have changed positively over time as she continued to prove herself through maintaining a job.

I guess it's the same thing if you're holding down a job for that many years, people start knowing you more than your background. Your identifiers as an immigrant, or Muslim, or whatever, it just goes in the background. When people start seeing you in a different light. You know what I'm saying? Maybe when I started a job that might have been a certain idea in people's minds, but then with time you are proving yourself over, and over, and over again, again, and again. I guess it changes their mindset. Has anyone said anything? No... You just feel it in their attitudes.

Participant #2 described the respect towards herself she perceived in her coworkers.

People in my organization, um, know me really well, and they respect me highly in terms of what I contribute to the organization.

Participant #3 described perceiving admiration in her co-ethnics towards her career accomplishments.

First, I was just a simple student. People sometime say that it was difficult to achieve the goals that I set because of these many challenges I have.

Now they see like an admiration. From this point to the point that I am now. Even between Arabs, Palestinian Arabs, they are amazed about how much I accomplished. Yeah. They are. I don't see it, but they do see it.

In response to a question about a time she felt good about herself based on other's good attitudes toward her, Participant #4 provided the following:

I feel good. As a foreigner, they respect me because I have a respectful designation. I was thinking, I keep thinking they're born here, they're raised here, they're American but they don't want to study. They don't want to work hard so now, they are assisting me, a foreign trained, a foreign person, not American. It makes you feel good.

A number of participants described their perceptions of others' positive attitudes toward them. The common themes included perceived respect, admiration, and trust that built over time. Positive attitudes were perceived both from out and in-group individuals.

Home Country/Culture

Discussion of issues and experiences linked to home-country and home-culture were included in this domain. These involved political issues, wars, conflicts, persecution, and discrimination experiences. This domain is also inclusive of cultural experiences linked to home-country, such as marriage practices, ethnic clothing, gender role practices, customs, traditions, culturally accepted norms and behaviors, and culture-specific communication styles. Issues experienced in the home-country, which precipitated immigration were double-coded and included within both immigration experience and the current domain. Three categories emerged, including culture-specific gender issues (*typical*), characteristics of home country/culture (*typical*), and home country political/structural issues (*variant*).

Culture-specific gender issues. Culture-specific gender issues (*typical*) included participants' narratives regarding gender-role expectations and women's issues rooted within one's cultural context. Below is an excerpt from interview with Participant #3 who shared a story of feeling disadvantaged as a woman in the context of her home culture.

When I lived in Palestine, I wanted to be educated. Back then, they didn't want me. "No, you are a woman. They don't get education." That I think was the greatest disadvantage because I didn't have the power. I couldn't. Though I tried, but sometimes the way society...it's the structure. You have to follow what the expectation that society wants you to.

On a different account, Participant #3 shared experiencing culture shock upon returning her homeland due to expectations and limitations placed on her even as a school age female.

I think my cultural shock came when I was 11. The first time I moved there. Because I couldn't do anything. I'm not allowed even to talk to cousins, male cousins. Nothing. But when I was 18, I knew what I was going to be expected, because I already traveled. Still, I have the passion to learn and still it's the same thing. You cannot do it. They make fun...Because, "Oh, my God. You're too old. You're 18. You are a woman. Woman stay home. You should learn to cook." I think you might know just what they said.

Another example was disclosed by Participant #5 who described feeling disadvantaged as a woman in a public space composed of people from her own community.

Researcher: Tell me a story of difficulty when you felt disadvantaged as a woman.

Participant: I get that a lot in my...In, uh, they do it here, too, in my own community, in my own culture. Womans are not treated in the same way as man like. Like, um, have a one example, I went to a new store one day. And it wasn't a store, it was an office, like where, when you fill out an application when you want to get a green card or when you want to get, you know, citizenship. They have people who work with immigration that helps you fill out papers and stuff. And I'm sitting there and there's mostly there's women and men there, but there's like eight men sitting there and I was the only one that was

sitting there. I'm waiting for my turn, but not one of them say, "OK, let her go through." But they all felt like that they were, you know, the man, that they needed to get their stuff before I did. Like, I had to be sitting there and then they all talk, and they all laugh, and they all get their stuff, and then I was the last one.

Researcher: OK. Was there an order or not?

Participant: There was no order. It was just because he was doing it, because he was the man and he was talking to him but I was standing there.

Researcher: OK. What about the officer?

Participant: Nothing it's just because, that's how Somali people, you know, the culture that the man come to talk, and he do it and then he leaves, and then like, it's all women after talk, like oh, you were here.

Both of these participants described striking examples of feeling disadvantaged and oppressed within their societies on the basis of their gender. This suggests that Muslim immigrant women may need to navigate multiple sources of oppression and inequality prevailing not only in a Western cultural context but also from their patriarchal cultural frameworks.

Characteristics of home country/culture. This category of the characteristics of home country/culture (*typical*) included participant depictions of culturally valid norms,

behaviors, customs, traditions, and communication styles. What Participant #10 shared below is representative of this category.

Participant: The thing is, in Lebanon you are more open to accept more people, even though some of the Lebanese are so racist. It's not that you are dealing only with Muslims, it's not that you're obliged to practice your Islam in Lebanon, it's not like this. You get used to accept other religions. You have your religion, practicing it freely, others have the right to have their own religion, too, and practice it freely.

Researcher: Is this a diverse society?

Participant: It is. Second, if I don't want to talk about the religion, the Lebanese are known to... [laughs] they like to have fun, nothing upsets them, whatever they are going in to, they like to go out and have fun, and laugh, and that's it. They don't stop. We have been into a lot of wars and a lot worst situations, but still you'll find people going out, having fun, going for parties, making parties at their home, nothing stop them. This is the culture there, actually.

Participant #5 addressed the culturally accepted communication styles displayed by the members of her ethnic community.

Participant: And the Somali people, it's like when they talk, and you feel like they yelling.

Researcher: [laughs] OK.

Participant: That's how they do it. Like they talking, but if you don't know, you like...

Researcher: This person's yelling at me. [laughs]

Participant: Yes. Why he screaming? Why he yelling at me? I didn't do nothing.

[laughter]

Participant: But they not yelling, that's how they talk. Like they talk their hand, they move their hand around. I don't know if you ever went into, if you ever go to Somali, like, um, I take the teachers sometimes at the [Mall]. I take them sometime, th , this, uh, the the one next to the, um, [Place]. There's a Somali Mall in there...It's, it's almost a 50 stores Somali in there. It's like going to the souk market. Like everybody has their stuff outside. So, you can look around, you can take, you can, uh, smell, you can, it's like, uh, flea market...So I would, uh, take them. They're gonna, "Why these people screaming?"

Researcher: [laughs]

Participant: ...because they talking to each other, and they talking that person that is talk and this little bit talking to each other, and people are walking but they yelling each other.

Researcher: Yeah. yeah.

Participant: And they talk with their hand. So, I take the kids in there and all days, like this...

Researcher: [laughs]

Participant: That's culture. They talk by hand.

Both of the participants above described salient characteristics of their home culture. Most participants similarly engaged in descriptions of their home country and culture. Narratives indicated that participants gained more insight into distinguishing characteristics of their home culture in the context of immigration.

Home country political/structural issues. Home country political/structural issues (*variant*) is illustrative of political issues and conflicts, wars, socioeconomic conditions, and structural issues, such as institutional barriers, poverty, and inequality encountered in homeland. Participant #7 disclosed the loss of her brother to exemplify how political conflict among different religious sects in her home country threatened safety of random citizens.

I finished my residency in 1999. Then visiting Pakistan in 2001, my older brother, who was also an ENT surgeon, was killed. This was the time when the ideology that is prevailing rampantly in the Muslim world was surfacing. At that time, the denomination of Islam that I'm from, we just feel very threatened to be in Pakistan. This expedited our coming back to USA. There was a fear of persecution and then you felt that when you're in USA you're in a safe place.

On a different account, she indicated how ethnic or religious differences that were once in the background abruptly became overemphasized and figural due to rampant divisive ideologies.

It didn't bother anyone before that if you were a Sunni or if you were a Shiite, if you were a Hebrew versus a Christian, or a Hindu. It didn't bother anyone. Once the seed of this was sown, then you are identified as belonging to a certain sect or denomination, but before that life was good. It's just that this has been so divisive, unfortunately, and the ideology has caused such a huge brain drain from Pakistan.

Participant #5 also offered an account of political and structural issues her home country has been facing due to chaos caused by civil war.

Participant: Mm hmm. My mum hasn't gone back to Somalia for over 24 years.

Researcher: OK.

Participant: She doesn't know how to deal with that. She doesn't know how to go back to it and... Because she have that mentality that there need to be a government in place, because there is no government in place. There is no education in place. There is no doctor in place there is no health care in place. There is no reason for her to go back to, when there is nothing. It's chaos, so she don't want to go back there. It's chaotic.

For a number of participants, issues of home country constitute significant reasons precipitating immigration. Both participants above described chaos and conflict rampant in their homeland.

Worldview

During interviews, participants often expressed their perspectives and viewpoints. To capture those narratives, a domain named worldview was constructed. Worldview included thoughts, sentiments, and ideas that were not necessarily linked with actual experience expressed by the participants. For example, sentences that start with “I think... I believe...” or begin with “you” instead of “I” pronoun, and refer to ideas rather than actual experience were coded with this domain. Within the worldview domain, five categories emerged, including perception of gender and women’s issues (*typical*), perspective of Islam and Islamic experience (*typical*), perspective on stigma and oppression (*variant*), values, assets, and qualities (*variant*), criticism toward in-group (*variant*), and value of career and education (*variant*).

Perception of gender and women’s issues. Perception of gender and women’s issues (*typical*) addressed participants’ expressed thoughts, beliefs, and viewpoints regarding issues concerning gender and womanhood. This category was conveyed by Participant #9 who emphasized motherhood aspect of being woman, which she conceptualized within a spiritual framework.

Motherhood is a reflection of God’s mercy and compassion. Again, I see myself, and all the mothers in the world, as a mirror of God’s mercy and compassion. I don’t believe any mother can hurt any other child, another

human being, because they're a mother. They can feel how another mother can feel about their child. Every human being is a child to another woman.

Participant #5 described her perspective regarding being a woman which included the superior multitasking ability women possess compared to men.

Being woman is that you can multitask a lot of stuff. I feel that being a woman you can multitask more than men. You have to be more than, you know, a mom. You have to be a worker, and then you have to do this. So I am thinking I like being a woman.

Perception of women's issues was also reflected by the excerpt from interview with Participant #4 who offered a comparison between women and men to underscore distinctive capabilities women possess which she believed to be endowed by a higher power. She conceptualized women not physically, but internally stronger, which helped women deal with stress of multitasking.

Being a woman, I think I'm proud being a woman. Because being a woman, you can, you can do a lot of things that is different from men. Men can't do that. Men, on the side of the men, men may be proud of them because they are men but as a woman, I'm proud I am woman. God gave us, I think so, extra strength woman as a daughter, as a wife, as a mom, as a sister or what else we have a relationship. Sometimes the woman's have a job 24/7. Men can't do job 24/7...God made woman a little more stronger, not physically. Internally, woman is more stronger. Men are stronger. Physically, men are stronger. We can do. We can lift.

We can do the heavy things too but we, we can take a lot of the stresses and still you can smile and you can do other things too.

Most participants described their perspective regarding gender and women's issues. All three participants emphasized various aspects of being a woman. The capability to take on and perform multiple roles and responsibilities were common themes described by the participants. They indicated that these aspects made women superior to men.

Perspective of Islam and Islamic experience. Perspective of Islam and Islamic experience (*typical*) described participants' worldview and meaning making regarding the Islamic faith. Participant #1 described how her understanding of jihad is different from extremist interpretations manifested in violent terrorist attacks.

Yesterday I listened to Tariq Ramadan talking about jihad. For the first time I learn about jihad. Jihad is to fight about yourself. It's to learn about yourself. It's to fight about Muslim course. It's to be for the right. It's to show other people how Muslim religion is.

Participant #11 similarly described her worldview of Islamic perspective on the legitimacy of violent behavior toward others.

Islam I, in Islam, like, you said, "If you kill one person..." And, uh, this is the sentence in the Qur'an, "If you kill one person, you killed the humanity." So, I believe, and most of the Muslim believe on this. We try to do this. We don't, even in our religion, we are not supposed to hurt a little, tiny insect....This is, this is not allowed in Islam. So, few people who are doing this, I have no idea what kind of people they are. They must

be, like either mentally unfit or, who knows? Maybe they are devils. So, they do these things and then all the Muslims suffer.

Most participants described Islamic teachings that reveal ideal attitude and behaviors Muslims should display. All participants in this study clearly rejected definition of Islam conducive of violence and extremism. They also expressed contempt toward people engaging in fanaticism in the name of Islam.

Perspective on stigma and oppression. Perspective on stigma and oppression (*variant*) described participants' meaning making and worldview with regard to stigma toward those with diverse identities, particularly Muslims. Participant #2 described her perspective regarding how stigma toward Muslims intensified recently as a consequence of antagonistic political campaign that has received positive recognition by a significant amount of American population.

Clearly the, um, the way that the public sees is that Muslim equals ISIS. And worse part of that is that, um, American population is very ignorant. And they don't care to be educated, or they don't feel the need for it either. And that makes it worse. If you hear people talking about what they think about Trump, uh, it's incredible how much support that Trump is getting because how ignorant that they are. And there was actually some kind of, uh, interview with some of the, you know, people in the streets and they were asking questions directly from Nazi's Hitler. And then they were supporting that, thinking that Trump is saying but literally the same identity or same verbiage that Nazi Hit... Hitler used is, is being used by Trump. And they are saying that they don't support Nazi Hitler, but they

do support Trump. So, because of that reason, not only Muslims, but overall, um, current diversity here in United States is under a big, big, you know, uh, threat.

Another example to perspective on stigma was conveyed by Participant #6 who mentioned believing the importance of education as a way to counter stigma towards Islam.

But, I mean, I don't even blame people who hates this religion, because they're not educated enough. We have to excuse them from that because they need to do research. They need to educate themselves about other religions. And I, I do that all the time, I like to read about Jewish people and Christian people, and I learned a lot. Like if you read the Bible, I don't know if never did. I read some of the Bible, and you know what, a lot of things in the Bible they're on the Qur'an, exactly the same. Like, it just, the only difference is like different beliefs, that's the only thing.

Both participants indicated ignorance, lack of awareness and knowledge as chief reasons for bias toward Muslims. They noted the importance of research and education to counter widespread prejudice targeting Muslims.

Values, assets, and qualities. The category of values, assets, and qualities (*variant*) included descriptions of the values participants uphold, as well as personal assets and qualities they perceive to be equipped with. This category was exemplified by Participant #6 who described how she prioritized relationships over financial assets.

If you make somebody smile, that's all matter for me. Like, money goes and come back. I, like I was telling my family, I lost so much money. But,

you know what? I didn't lose my family. For me, it mattered for me. My, my family, remember that, money can be replaced anytime. Like I told everybody, I say, "I make money, money don't make me."

Another example to the current category was conveyed by a brief researcher-participant exchange below, which prompted Participant #7 to offer a description of her values as a Muslim person.

Researcher: One more question I'm going to have. Why do you think holding onto the values is important?

Participant: Because our values are beautiful. They keep you grounded.

Researcher: Grounded?

Participant: What are the values of a Muslim person? Believe in god, pray, be a good person, be good to each other. Stay away from the vices that are out there, and why do you feel the need to stay away from them?

Participant #3 offered a description of her values in the context of marriage. Aversive to the idea of marrying someone from her home-culture as she would doubt their real intentions, she did not welcome marrying outgroup either so as not to override her family and values.

Researcher: Any opportunities about marriage?

Participant: It's hard because you don't find somebody that has the balance of it. It's a game. You don't find here. Who do you socialize most? It's a game. Socialize most with Americans. Mostly Hispanic, and I'm very busy. I work. My sister

sometime tell, “Just go to Palestine. I’m not going to repeat the same story again.” No, I’m not going to do it again. Prefer to be the way I am right now than going to find somebody to marry maybe for his citizenship or no. Or for money, who knows?

Researcher: You would never know the intention.

Participant: Exactly. You don’t know the intention. You don’t know, and some people, they can be Muslim and have bad intentions. You need to be careful. If you marry somebody from here it’s like you’re losing something. You’re giving up your religion. You’re giving up on your family and the values. All the things for nothing. All the teachings are gone. It’s just a struggle. It’s a struggle.

All three participants above described certain values, assets, and qualities that kept them grounded in life. For Participant #6 relationships mattered the most and for Participant #7 the key values were the values of Islam. Participant #3 was averse to marriage because of potential risk to family values, which were central for her.

Criticism toward in-group. Criticism toward in-group (*variant*) included participants’ critical stance toward other Muslims for various reasons. Participant #1 described how she viewed the comradery among Muslims in the American context.

Participant: That’s the only bad thing about Muslim people. They don’t help their fellow, when that person is sick. That’s what makes a lot of people go to different religions, because the

time you're weak, you don't see your brother, you don't see your sister. It's like they're running away from you. They can't stop, and come, and talk. That's the time you need God around you, or in your ear. That's the time you need those human beings to come to talk about God a lot, for you to learn to know what's going on. It's like they're running away from you. They don't come around you, they don't help you, they don't do nothing until you get better, and then you start seeing them.

Researcher: Is that the same with all Muslims, from all countries?

Participant: In America, yes. In Africa, it's different. Here, it's more different. They run away from you. They've got the money. They worship money more than God.

On a different account, Participant #9 expressed her dissent from those that viewed Islam compatible with violence and extremism.

...these terrorist groups, is just hijacking our religion really. They are just not killing those innocent people, but they're hijacking the religion. They are just putting a dirt in the face of a wonderful religion. This makes me really, really sad, but this also puts me a little bit more stress to prove that the people here...that not all Muslims are like that. In fact, only a, small, small, small part of Muslim I don't want to even call them Muslim.

Both participants described a sense of contempt and disapproval toward other Muslims for different reasons. While Participant #1 noted the lack of unity, solidarity,

and support among Muslims as a basis for criticism, Participant #9 addressed those attempting to represent Islam through violence and extremism.

Value of career and education. Value of career and education (*variant*) described participants' perceptions and perspectives regarding education. Several themes included importance of education, importance of providing access to education, and importance of women's involvement in workforce. Participant #10 described her perspective regarding value of education. She emphasized while having education is important, it may not necessarily equip the person with tolerance toward and acceptance of other people.

It's very important to have education. It doesn't make you the person who you are. I've met a lot of illiterate persons, educated persons, not all the people that are educated or know how to treat others, know how to deal with others, don't know how to accept others. Do you know what I mean? Some illiterate people know better than these educated people. Education is an important part for me to finish, but it doesn't make me what I'm, like in personality wise, I'm talking, basically my family and my religion.

In response to a question about how advocacy through facilitating access to education could help Muslims, Participant #12 provided the following response:

Help them in educating their further generations. If women don't have to work, she doesn't have to work, but at least if she's educated she can teach her kids. And this can grow and educate them. And it does makes a difference. It makes a difference. If you educate the, uh, women in the house, it does make the whole family.

Both participants described their worldview in regard to value of education and career. They both emphasized the role of education in raising better persons. Participant #10 described family and religion as of having equal importance to education in making the person she is now. Participant #12 pointed out to the transformative function of educating women.

Life Challenges

This domain included description of participants' past and current life issues, such as difficulties not linked to immigration, career, and home-country experiences, which were captured in other domains. Some of the life challenges participants recounted included failures, losses, divorces, and accomplishments. Based on common themes across participants, three categories emerged, including loss and its impact (*variant*), financial hardships (*variant*), and divorce (*variant*).

Loss and its impact. Loss and its impact (*variant*) included narratives regarding various forms of loss, such as death, bankruptcy and its impact on them. Participant #3 described how the loss of her father changed the direction of her life from what she dreamed to one that seized her autonomy.

Researcher: If it's not too personal, what was the rationale behind your decision to take your headscarf off?

Participant: I feel disappointed. I feel like after all I did... [sobs] You work hard, then your father is gone.

Researcher: You worked hard, you were religious and you turned your face to Allah, but then your father is gone. You felt like...

Participant: Upset.

Researcher: You felt upset. Is it like, maybe, part of a reaction?

Participant: If I might think, rebellious. I was upset. I think I was upset. Now my life changes. Because after my father died, my life changed. I had to travel to Palestine and marry with a man that I don't know, that I didn't have a decision. A woman has dreams. You have a dream to marry somebody who you care about. Somebody who knows what the person is. It's just disappointment I feel.

Following a brief exchange on the loss of her father, Participant #8 described how she needed to put a hold on her career after her father was diagnosed with cancer.

Participant: Pretty much I quit my life.

Researcher: College you mean?

Participant: Oh yeah. University. I was at [College] and I just dropped everything. My, my mom stopped everything. My brother was the only one who was taking care of us. So, so we kind of put a hold on everything. And then every Tuesday, he had to do chemotherapy so pretty much my mom and I were really the ones who were taking care of him.

In response to a question about lived experiences of disadvantage as an immigrant woman in a foreign country, Participant #6 revealed how losing their job and the subsequent heart attack of her husband prompted a decision to embark on her career.

Participant: Like the first thing. The only difficulty I think I had in my life when I came to this country, my husband, of course, he

owned his own business and everything and, um, I didn't have to think about working, and my husband, he would never force me to work. He always said, "If you want to work as fun, your money will be in your pocket. That's, that's yours. That's your money." So, I never had been forced to think about money or, "I need to pay this or pay that." But, when it comes time that we lost our business, we lost everything we owned...Um, my husband had a heart attack.

Researcher: Oh, wow.

Participant: Yes. Um, and I, Like I said, I stood up and I told my husband, "You know what? You helped me so much with my family. You helped me a lot, and I will never forget that. It's time for me, to help you." So, that's about time, it was 2004, that's when I started working.

The participants described various lived experiences of loss. Their narratives indicated that losses often changed the direction of their lives.

Financial Hardships. The category of financial hardships (*variant*) included descriptions of financial difficulties due to low family income experienced within the current and extended family.

Responding to a question about whether her husband's income was sufficient to support the family financially, Participant # 4 provided the following explanation:

I mean, it's just hand to mouth. I mean, like, no saving, nothing. You know, we have kids. So we have to think about other things too. We have

girls, they're gonna get married. You know, lot of things when you have kids.

Participant #11 described financial difficulties encountered as a family in the context of immigration to a different country.

From India we came to Pakistan. We were very young and there were difficulties. My father, couldn't, my father was a judge in India. And he had a very highly educated and everything. From India we came to Pakistan. We were very young and there were difficulties. My father, couldn't, my father was a judge in India. And he had a very highly educated and everything. And then, once he moved to Pakistan, he couldn't find a good job. So we were a little, financially, we were in a very, like bad condition, situation.

Several participants pointed out to financial hardships as part of life challenges. Hardships were most often present in the context of immigration.

Divorce. Several participants described getting divorced after they relocated in the U.S., which led to the construction of the divorce category (*variant*). Participant #3 described how social pressures and stigma directed at divorced woman impacted her while making her decision to end her marriage.

Honestly, when I got divorced... in my family never nobody got divorced.

It's just something like, "Oh!" I never thought it that way in my life.

Divorcing of a woman like, oh. Something bad. I think my parents were the ones the most like that. The neighbor she's a divorced woman. They don't call her by the name but "the divorced woman." I remember that.

My parents in Puerto Rico. They have a neighbor. They say “the divorced woman.” “We’re talking about the divorced woman.” They never refer her by her first name. They were talking bad and having somebody in the family, in our family, divorced is a big thing. It’s like condemned. I think I was like, “Oh, it’s a decision that I have to make for the best.” It wasn’t an easy one. It’s a lot of pain. To initiate that divorce. A woman initiating a divorce. But what you can do? Then I think it’s better that way. You think about advantage and disadvantage all the time. If you stick with that person forever and it will not be something positive for you and for your children. It’s better to just do it like that.

Participant #2 commented on the difficulties of going through the aftermath of getting divorced by herself.

Because I actually got a divorce when my daughter was two and a half years old. I had to do everything myself, and did not even have a strong community to help me with that. I, I moved to [City], which I was very grateful to have friends when I moved to [City],. But still, it’s like, if you are going some place, you know you have a friend who lives there. But nothing more than that. It’s not like having a family, right?

Both of these participants described struggles related to divorce. While Participant #3 described social pressures surrounding the decision to divorce, Participant #9 noted the difficulties encountered afterwards.

Future Orientation

Participants' description of their orientation toward the future were coded within this domain. Two categories, namely goals and wishes (*typical*) and apprehension of past and future (*variant*) emerged based on common themes that arose across participants.

Goals and wishes. Goals and wishes (*typical*) included participant narratives regarding future plans, life goals, hopes, and desires regarding a number of areas in their lives. A question about her career goals elicited the following response from Participant #13:

Participant: Future goals. I wish I had money. Talking about money.

[laughs]

Researcher: You wish you had more money?

Participant: More money. I want to open adult day care, group home...If I have money, both those. I want to have my own private...But my goal, I wish I had somebody to send me to Mecca [City of pilgrimage]. I want to go to Mecca, go there before I die.

In response to a question about her vision of herself as a Muslim immigrant woman in the future Participant #7 recounted the following:

My vision, it hasn't changed in the past several years. It's just been I can be an immigrant. I can be a Muslim. I can be identified as a Muslim with my hijab on. I can be an ambassador for my faith. These are the goals at this point in life for me. It's what is out there these days? It just makes you more resolute to be identified as who you are and be confident of that. Let the world see the other side of your faith.

Participant #2 described her wishes within the context of career and indicated a desire to gain fair access to higher level managerial positions.

Because I am turning 50, I don't want to be oppressed as much in my field. And that I want to be able to, like, the people at my age in my field, they are already, at least, director if not division vice presidents or, you know, really high levels, if they are very successful all but they deliver.

Participant #9 portrayed her goals and wishes in relation to her career and family. The themes included a desire to support her students pass academic requirements and a longing for her children to be practicing Muslims who remain conscious of their ethnic heritage.

In the future in my career, math and statistics are the two very scary courses and topics in my university right now. I want to make those courses manageable for the students. I want as many students as possible to pass that course. Just because of that math requirement that they have to take and pass, a college level math course, some of them cannot graduate just because of that. It's frustrating for them. I can understand. So I want to make those courses manageable for them and help many people to pass and graduate in my career. As a mom, in the future I want to see my children be successful and showing their Muslim identity in the society also. I want to see them in good schools. I want to see them practicing Muslims. I want to see them contribute to the society as well. I also want to see them not forget about their Turkish heritage. This is a hard task [laughs] for me and for them also.

Most participants described diverse goals and wishes for life. These were mostly centered on career and included such themes as moving up to higher positions and making changes in others' lives through one's work. Others described more general life goals, such as representing Islam.

Apprehension of past and future. Apprehension of past and future (*variant*) was constructed in response to a number of feelings participants described regarding the future. Those included uncertainty, anticipated challenges, regrets, and worries as voiced by the participants. Participant #8 offered an account of her worries regarding future when asked a question about her vision of herself in the future.

Researcher: OK. How do you see yourself as a Muslim immigrant woman in the future in general? Yeah.

Participant: Hopefully better than what I am today. Stronger, maybe.
[laughs]

Researcher: So you think you need to become stronger in the future?

Participant: Oh, it doesn't necessarily mean to become stronger. Just sometimes life happens and then you have no choice but to be strong.

Researcher: You don't know what life brings to you?

Participant: No. I get worried about how life is going to be, where...it's like you said, you're 29, maybe having my own family, maybe I don't know. I know, that kind of worries me but not too extreme, to be depressed or like, "Oh, why it's all happening?"

In responding to the same question, Participant #11 mentioned a desire that her daughter does not have to encounter the types of difficulties she faced as well as a worry about having to go to nursing homes.

I don't worry that much about the future. The only things I worry about is my daughter's future now, especially, like I hope everything stays calm and she doesn't have to face all those difficulties I faced. So those are the things, and for the future I, I worry a little bit, not that much though, about like, when you grow old in this country. I mean, I see people how they, especially their older people there facilities I have attended...The nursing homes and things. So I just pray to Allah we don't have to go in those facilities. So inshallah [God willing].

Several participants described a sense of worry and vigilance regarding future while others spoke of regrets regarding past. Both of the participant above expressed apprehension regarding developmentally appropriate topics, including marriage and getting old.

Summary

Twelve domains or topic areas were developed for the current study. All the data within domains were summarized into core ideas which captured the core of participants' narratives in fewer statements (Ladany, Thompson, & Hill, 2015). Core ideas were placed into categories based on similarities across cases, which reflected the findings of this study (Hill et al., 1997). The results showed multiple, intersecting identities, as well as diverse self-definitions and categorizations endorsed by immigrant Muslim women. Self-esteem and confidence, cultural and relational aspects of the self and identity were

among general findings that applied to almost all of the participants. Participants also typically described identity salience, humility and spirituality, centrality of their identities, self-growth, behavioral involvement, and identity construction experiences. Participants' education and career experience included frequent descriptions of satisfaction and achievement. Education and career barriers, self-construction related to career, relational influences on career, and career changes were among typical findings. Immigration was characterized by acculturation, adjustment, and growth for all of the participants while adversity, pressure, and perseverance was a typical finding, indicating struggles as well as determination. Lived experience of perceived stereotypes and prejudice was a general finding, while exclusion and discrimination was typical across participants. Participants' emotional experience was characterized by difficult emotions due to stressful encounters in society as Muslim immigrant women, as well as resilience, internal strength, and agency displayed to cope with their feelings.

Participants frequently described their experience of family modeling, expectations, and transferring values. Support received from family as well as support and caregiving provided to family were among typical findings. Participants also frequently addressed quality of their social/relational interactions with in and outgroup individuals. Examples of providing and receiving social support as well as community service involvement with other individuals were among typical findings. Descriptions of culture-specific gender issues and characteristics of home country and home culture were typical across participants. Participants also often described their worldview, perspective, or perceptions in regard to a number of topics, such as gender and women's issues and Islamic experience. Among the life challenges, several of them described significant

losses and their impact on them. Finally, participants' future orientation frequently featured an expression of their goals and wishes and occasionally their apprehension of past and future.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to explore the identity and career experiences of Muslim immigrant women in the United States. The theoretical lenses that informed this study involved contextual and relational approaches to career development (e.g., Richardson, 2012, Savickas, 2002, Schultheiss, 2007; Blustein, 2011) and identity (e.g., Deaux, 2006; Gergen, 2009). Grounded on the constructivist paradigm (Guba, 1990), a qualitative analysis using consensual qualitative research (Hill et al., 1997) was conducted with interview data from 15 diverse Muslim immigrant women residing in two Midwestern cities. The analysis revealed categories within twelve domains: Descriptive features of the self/identity, dynamic features of the self/identity, education and career experience, immigration and cross-cultural experience, stigma and oppression experience, emotional experience, family relational experience, social relational experience, home-country and home-culture experience, worldview, life challenges, and future orientation.

Research Questions

The overarching aim of this study was to explore identity experiences among first generation immigrant Muslim women operating in various contexts and contact zones of

their societies, with a specific emphasis on career-related impact on identity. The following more specific research questions guided the study:

1. What identities and self-related experience do Muslim immigrant women endorse?
2. What do Muslim immigrant women experience in various life contexts (i.e., relational networks, society) in relation to their identities?
3. How do Muslim immigrant women construct and negotiate selves/identities as a result of their experiences in life contexts?
4. What psychological experience do Muslim immigrant women endorse?

Question #1: *What identities and self-related experience do Muslim immigrant women endorse?*

The findings of this study illustrated multiple, intersecting identities, as well as diverse self-definitions and categorizations Muslim women upheld. Many participants identified gender, religion, ethnicity, culture, personal traits, roles, career, and immigrant status as significant markers of their self-concept. Participants also often described an awareness of how their diverse identities intersected with the context of a host country which offered them new opportunities, as well as challenges. A number of participants also identified physical/racial features as a significant component of their self-concept.

For instance, one participant's self-definition included being a hard-working, black, African, Muslim, mother, business owner, with a brief mention of her family members. Another participant focused on personal traits and described the sense of autonomy she exerted under social pressure. Another participant described how her multiple identities of a mom, Muslim, and woman intersected, while two others described

their intersecting identities as “triple markers” and “having three negatives.” The results showed that all of the women displayed a keen awareness of their multiple selves and the intersections of their identities, manifested by an ability to express and define themselves in rich and diverse ways. Additionally, all of them mentioned being able to perform various roles and multitasking derived from overlapping identities, such as mom, spouse, friend, sibling, coworker, fellow Muslim, advocate, leader, and citizen.

All of the participants made frequent reference to the impact of cultural and relational factors on their multiple identities. Many of them described how their personal, gender, career, ethnic, and religious identities were formed in a web of relationships. For example, one participant described how her personal and career identity was closely linked with her family background. Another participant described how her Muslim identity was brought into her awareness after she became a mother. Others described values instilled in their self-concept through family and culture. Furthermore, some participants revealed engaging in modeling to transfer their values around education, work, ethical behavior, religious practice, culture, and social advocacy to their children, indicative of transferring self and/or identity across generations.

Other prevalent self-related experience were identity salience and centrality/importance of identity. In regard to identity salience, participants varied in their perspective of how intensely nuanced their diverse identities were. Some participants referred to hijab as indicative of their religious identity, making them more visible and susceptible to disadvantages in society. Some participants described how increased salience of their religious identity in the host culture afforded them more opportunity to reflect more frequently on being Muslim, leading to increased adherence to religious

teachings. Others mentioned skin color, such as being black or brown as important parameters of visibility. Still others denied the impact of being Muslim or a woman on their daily experiences, suggesting minimal salience/awareness afforded to these markers. In terms of centrality and importance, a significant number of participants described the sense of importance they attached to their multiple identities. A number of them described religion as an integral part of who they are and how they lived their lives, while others mentioned the prominence that ethnicity and nationality had in their self-concept.

Almost all of the participants described a sense of pride and esteem in relation to their multiple identities. For example, a number of participants described a clear sense of pride in regard to their ethnicity. All of the participants mentioned having self-esteem into their Muslim identity. A number of them described personal self-esteem and growth, such as feeling special, and being proud of their multiple identities, as Muslim immigrant women, indicative of a positive outlook on their sense of worth. Accounts of self-growth were also prevalent in the form of maturation, resolution of identity conflicts, having an expanded vision, becoming more tolerant, forgiving, confident, independent, learning, having more information, becoming more aware, trusting oneself, opening up, and feeling accomplished.

Additionally, many of the participants described being engaged in the “doing aspect” of their identities, manifested by behavioral involvement, practice, and abstinence. Those with a strong religious identification as Muslim mentioned performing their religious rituals and duties regularly and avoiding behaviors prohibited by their faith, whereas those inclined toward their ethnicity described continuing to practice cultural traditions and being involved in cultural activities.

Humility and spirituality emerged as another prevalent theme among participants. A number of participants described a sense of humbleness, rather than competence when describing their adherence to the lifestyle prescribed by their faith. Spirituality was another common theme that emerged from the study. Many participants referred to a sense of close connection and an effort to relate to a higher power through praying and displaying moral behaviors. For example, one of the participants described how being close to God included a sense of self-reflection on one's mistakes, as well as an effort to treat other people with compassion. Another participant referred to spirituality as a keen awareness of God as the sole helper in times of urgent need.

Question #2: *What do Muslim immigrant women experience in various life contexts (i.e., relational networks, society, and workplace) in relation to their identities?*

This research question addresses the encounters of Muslim immigrant women within various social settings, ranging from family as the most proximal social context to more distal societal contexts, such as school, workplace, and general society. Among the most striking findings of this study were the lived experiences of stigma and oppression narrated by Muslim immigrant women. Stigma and oppression included perceived stereotypes, labeling, racism, prejudice, discrimination, social exclusion, marginalization, and injustice on the basis on diverse social identities. Almost all participants shared instances of perceived stereotypes and prejudice encountered within different segments of the society. A significant number of them also described frequent experiences of discrimination and social exclusion. Among the intersecting identities, some women underscored being an immigrant as most relevant to stigma and oppression, while others mentioned being Muslim as the most salient element shaping their experiences. Still

others highlighted the impact of being a woman bearing a significant impact on their perceptions of stigma and oppression. Results overall suggested that Muslim immigrant women's experiences of stigma and oppression are tightly linked with their intersecting identities of gender, religion, and immigrant status, implying the inextricable connections among these identities in preparing the grounds for the types of adverse encounters.

Participants mentioned confronting stigma and oppression in different segments of the society, including public places, educational institutions, and work settings. A significant number of them described the workplace as a major setting for negative encounters. For example, one participant shared experiencing discrimination with regard to mobility to higher rank positions in her job and another participant shared feeling a sense of exclusion during professional gatherings and conferences on the basis of their intersecting identities as Muslim and women. Others described subtle and overt experiences of social exclusion from coworkers following September 11. Unfair treatment in the hiring process was another example shared by a participant, while another cited being condemned by a coworker due to performing a simple job task without a license. Discrimination and social exclusion on the basis of dress code, such as wearing a hijab, having an accent, and carrying a Muslim name were also among frequent encounters of stigma and oppression occurring in work and career settings.

Many of the participants described career trajectories characterized by barriers, struggle, and hard work. Many of them mentioned the difficulty of pursuing a career and finding a job as immigrant women due to limitations around language, financial resources, and transferability of credentials earned in their home country. More personal barriers included disliking school, lack of confidence, feeling tired and burned out,

language barrier, anticipated stress, perception of age, and time strain. Barriers were found to frequently lead to changes in career direction which involved choosing a career that is different than the initial career plan, entering the workforce for the first time following immigration, adjusting to change of job post-immigration, and changing area of study.

Participants frequently described achievement, accomplishment, and fulfillment related to work/education experience. Findings included expressed happiness and satisfaction gained from one's job, exams passed successfully, acceptance into further educational and career ranks, completion of academic credentials, sense of pride for accomplishments, awards received for years of service, perceived success in career, development of successful products, positive work history, lack of problems at work, and confidence, skills, and knowledge gained over time.

Desire to move up to higher occupational ranks was a prevalent finding of this study. Several participants revealed that immigration to the States was prompted by an intention to seek better education and career opportunities. Being successful, finding a job, and finishing degree requirements were common motivational factors cited by the participants.

Participants frequently expressed fit between personality traits and profession, described self-confidence linked to career, and mentioned personality traits and identities, such as being hardworking, dedicated, persistent, being a leader, being a woman, and being Muslim. They frequently engaged in descriptions of how these traits and identities shaped their career perspective. Participants also frequently described the impact on relational factors on their career development, including advice, support, encouragement,

guidance, influence, and role modeling received from family members (i.e., parents, siblings, spouse), mentors (i.e., teachers, professors, supervisors), colleagues and friends (i.e., fellow immigrants) while pursuing and sustaining a career.

Some of the participants described challenges associated with performing job duties. For example, while one participant emphasized stress associated with performing a managerial job as a Muslim woman, another underscored the physical strain related to learning how to perform her job duties. Another participant addressed the emotional strain associated with care-giving work for elderly people. Difficulties encountered integrating work and family spheres was another common theme cited by the participants.

Many of the participants described encountering struggles related to immigration in particular. Difficulties navigating different cultural frameworks simultaneously, homesickness and finding the motivation to continue to stay in the host country, difficulties posed by a lack of knowledge and resources about the host culture, and struggles faced in the course of arriving at the host country were among some of the themes mentioned by the participants. Additionally, some of them described the positive impact of relational factors in the course of adjustment. Meeting people from diverse cultures and being supported by the members of the host cultures were among the factors found supportive following relocation.

Muslim immigrant women's encounters also surround family and social experience. Within the family context, many of the participants described family support as an important factor in achieving their career goals and coping with struggles related to immigration. Types of support included emotional and financial support, as well as

support with work-family integration received from extended and current family members. In regard to social experience, a significant number of participants mentioned how they perceived others' impressions of - and attitudes towards - them. Additionally, many participants described out-group and in-group relational experiences. Experiences described with outgroup members often included an emphasis on participants' diverse identities. For example, one participant mentioned being asked questions about her religious identity by a random person in the mall, while two others described a sense of alienation they experienced within the career context on the basis of their gender, religious, and immigrant identities. Participants also described experiencing positive interpersonal relationships as well as struggles with in-group members. While some emphasized receiving support from other Muslims, there were accounts mentioning the negative impact of lack of supportive relationships.

Additionally, race and physical appearance emerged as significant factors shaping participants' perceptions of stigma and oppression, even among in-group Muslims. For example, one participant described the sense of isolation she experienced as a Black African Muslim among Muslims of other races. Another participant mentioned feeling less self-conscious among Black as opposed to White individuals regardless of their religious background. Still another participant shared feeling that she is not beautiful due to her skin color.

Question #3: *How do Muslim immigrant women construct and negotiate selves/identities as a result of their experiences in different life contexts?*

This research question addressed how participants constructed and negotiated their selves as a result of their lived experiences out of encounters discussed in the second

research question. More specifically, how participants' meaning making of lived experiences is manifested in their identities and self-related processes is the topic of this research question. Participants have been found to respond to their encounters in various social settings in a number of ways, including acculturation, adjustment, growth, proving self. Many participants described appreciation of the American culture as well as opening themselves up to American way of life by learning from a different culture. Incorporating American values while retaining one's own, improved cultural adjustment, increased awareness into one's identities, and behavioral changes were indicative of acculturation and identity construction. Personal change, cultural adaptation, maturation, growth, bicultural competence, perspective change, curiosity, open-mindedness, increased tolerance toward diversity, learning and modeling different ways of expressing emotions, and an ability to navigate different cultural situations upon gaining a deeper understanding of the host culture were common themes of acculturation following immigration.

A number of participants described becoming Americanized indicated by adoption of certain American values and lifestyles. For example, one participant stated that she had almost become an American as she had forgotten the language and food of her home country. Another described feeling attached to American people due to their ethical way of life, dedication to family, and respect for other people. However, some participants also mentioned difficulties of cultural integration due to divergent cultural values in some areas. For example, one participant described the tension between a need to stay within the boundaries drawn by her faith and a pressure to join the activities of the

mainstream culture. Another one mentioned picking up values she deemed good from American culture while making clear that she had her own values.

Acculturation was also considered a common theme surrounding identity experience. Because it is a form of identity construction, acculturation was also included as a category within the dynamic features of the self-domain. Adjustment and change in regard to other identity categories, such as religious and gender identity was a common finding of identity construction. For example, one of the participants described how motherhood increased awareness into her religious identity and introduced behavioral change. Another participant described how she was able to resolve a phenomenon she referred to as “identity conflict”, indicative of identity construction.

Proving oneself was another finding emerged in this study. A number of participants described efforts to represent the identities they endorsed. Some expressed engaging in efforts to show their potential as immigrant women, while others emphasized striving to represent Islam positively in response to prevailing stigma toward Muslims. For example, one participant described the excellence she strives to bring into her work as a way to avoid negative stereotypes ascribed to immigrants. Another participant stressed the importance of holding a job for many years as a way to change others’ negative perceptions of Muslims.

Question #4: *What psychological experience do Muslim immigrant women endorse?*

All of the participants described experiencing a diverse range of difficult emotions in response to life events linked to their diverse identities. Examples of emotional states included depression, anxiety, insecurity, worthlessness, powerlessness,

fear, anger, feeling hurt, and sadness. A number of participants also described psychosomatic symptoms, such as neck pain and insomnia. A significant number of them mentioned experiencing these emotions linked to their experience of stigma in general society and the workplace as women of diverse identities. With regard to the workplace, a number of participants mentioned emotional distress related to the following: fulfilling training credentials to launch a career, finding a job, performing tasks required by their job duties, and coping with stigma and exclusion regarding their religious background.

Participants' intensified awareness into diverse identity markers, increased self-monitoring, sense of surveillance, self-consciousness, and increased sense of vigilance in reaction to stigma experience are linked with emotional experience. For example, one participant described that her level of self-consciousness into her diverse identities is modified by the racial composition of social contexts she enters, with increased comfort around black people versus amplified self-monitoring around white people. Another participant described an increased sense of awareness and vigilance in response to potential dangers directed at her diverse identities.

A diverse range of coping skills used in relation to intense emotions or stigma reaction were cited by the participants, including seeking social support, perspective taking, turning to a higher power through increased reflection and praying, advocacy and taking action, educating others, taking care of oneself, and rationalizing. For example, a few participants described seeking refuge and relief by relying on a higher power only and engaging in particular forms of religious practice. Some mentioned taking care of themselves in the form of eating a balanced diet, exercising, and seeking healthcare.

The participants also described using individual resilience, internal strength, and agency by displaying emotional strength, positive meaning making out of adverse encounters, and relying on social support available to them within their communities and the larger society. For example, one participant described an ability to avoid the potential impact of negative treatment on her self-concept by keeping herself unaffected and intact from bias directed at her.

A number of participants mentioned engaging in activism in the form of educating others or taking formal affirmative action as a way to cope with difficult emotions that arise due to stigma and oppression experience within society. These instances were mostly described to be occurring within the context of career and the workplace. For example, one participant discussed her emotional reaction to oppression and described a formal and structured method of intervening in the face of perceived maltreatment in the workplace. Another participant described how she used education to address the Islamophobic reaction expressed by one of her patients being treated at the hospital.

Although variant, an interesting finding was participants' use of rationalizing as a way to make meaning of negative bias in the host culture. For example, after describing social exclusion by her peers, one participant offered an understanding and justification of their attitude which she rested on her peers' inexperience with diverse individuals. Another participant justified micro insults faced from coworkers with their multicultural incompetence. Two participants found negative bias directed at them understandable due to the perception that they were occupying others' land.

Contributions to the Literature

Robust evidence (e.g., e.g., American Psychological Association, 2016; Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, & Waters, 2002; Sirin et al., 2008) shows that individuals with contested identities are significantly more prone to societal stigma and oppression. For more than a decade, Muslim immigrant women have become an overly disadvantaged social group due to bias and unfairness they have faced within various segments of the societies in which they live. While studies (e.g., Sirin & Fine, 2008; Zaal, Salah, & Fine, 2007; Ali, 2005; Badr, 2004; Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; Droogsma, 2007; Hu et al., 2009; Mishra & Shirazi, 2010; Read & Bartkowski, 2000) concerning the lived experiences of Muslims in a Western context exist, they mostly focused on such topics as the experiences of second-generation Muslim individuals, experience of hijab, or experience of discrimination in society. Research (e.g., Foroutan, 2011; Syed & Pio, 2010) addressing issues of identity and career among Muslims in general, and Muslim immigrant women in particular, is scant. This study contributes to the literature by expanding the scope of previous research through additional focus on identity and career related experiences among a group of Muslim women of migrant background.

Research indicates that Muslim women are significantly more likely to experience misperceptions, exclusionary practices, discrimination, and harassment in various contexts of Western societies due to distinctive identifiers, such as dress (e.g., Badr, 2004; Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; Council on American-Islamic Relations, 2008; Foroutan, 2011; Seggie & Sanford, 2010; Syed & Pio, 2010). The current study substantiates these results as it explored experiences of stigma and oppression among Muslim immigrant women. Many participants mentioned confronting bias and unfair treatment in different

segments of the society, including public places, educational institutions, and work settings.

Workplace and career emerged as major contexts that introduced many challenges for Muslim immigrant women. Difficulties with regard to promotion to managerial positions, sense of exclusion experienced during professional conventions, subtle and overt expressions of prejudice, micro insults from coworkers, difficulties practicing religious commitments (such as hijab), unfair treatment in the hiring process, and difficulties transferring credentials earned in one's home country were among the salient findings. Discrimination and social exclusion on the basis of outward impressions, such as dress, wearing a hijab, having an accent, and carrying a Muslim name were frequently encountered by the participants. Stigma and oppression experiences often intersected with participants' interwoven identities of women, Muslim, and immigrant. A number of participants referred to their multiple identities as "triple markers" or "three negatives" introducing various challenges in the workplace and career realm, which is reminiscent of the occupational "double jeopardy" ethnic minority women were exposed to due racism and sexism in the workplace (Beal, 1970; Bond & Perry, 1970, as cited in Syed & Pio, 2010). Muslim immigrant women were argued to face "triple jeopardy" in employment on the basis of gender, religion, immigration, and ethnicity, which was supported by the findings of current study (Syed & Pio, 2010).

Many participants in this research described encountering struggles related to immigration. Difficulties navigating different cultural frameworks simultaneously, homesickness, difficulties posed by a lack of knowledge and resources about the host culture, financial hardships, challenges of education and work, and struggles faced in the

course of arriving at the host country were prevalent themes across participants. These findings were similar to those elaborated in the literature on immigration which indicates challenges related to employment, socioeconomic progress, education, cultural adaptation, discrimination, and oppression (Berry, 2001; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Raijman & Tienda, 1999; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001; Yakushko, 2009).

The findings of this study substantiated the findings of Jasperse, Ward, and Jose (2012) who found endorsement of strong Muslim identities in psychological (e.g., pride, belonging, and centrality) and behavioral (e.g., religious practice) domains among their research participants. For the current study, behavioral involvement was a prevalent theme among participants as most of them described engaging in religious and cultural activities while abstaining from deeds assessed contrary to their values. Participants also offered frequent examples of the centrality or importance attached to their identities. For some, religion emerged as an integral aspect of their self-definition, while others emphasized the chief role of ethnicity and nationality in their self-concept.

Research suggests that as a result of experiencing multiple cultural frameworks, Muslims of diverse backgrounds endorse a number of identity and self-related experiences, including identity negotiation, hybrid identities, conflict, increased self-confidence, self-comparison, navigating dual identities, shifting from one identity to another, integrated identities, holding multiple selves, and challenges unifying many selves (Alhazmi & Nyland, 2013; Hu, Pazaki, Al-Qubbaj, & Cutler, 2009; Mishra & Shirazi, 2010; Peek, 2005; Sirin & Fine, 2008; Tummala-Narra & Claudius, 2013; Zaal et al., 2007). The findings of the current study substantiated the results of previous research. Participants described a number of self-related experiences ensuing from their

social encounters, including change, adjustment, growth, self-esteem, proving self, and acculturation. Almost all of the participants described a sense of pride and esteem in relation to their multiple identities. Some of them described a clear sense of pride in regard to their ethnicity which became salient in the host culture. All of the participants mentioned having self-esteem related to their Muslim identity, regardless of “social mirrors” that frequently reflected powerful images connecting Muslims with violence and extremism (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001, p. 99). A number of participants described personal self-esteem and growth, such as feeling special, being proud of themselves, and becoming more confident and independent following immigration, indicative of their strengths and positive outlook on their sense of worth (Dalla, Defrain, Johnson, & Abbott, 2009).

Changes and growth in identity and self-following immigration also included an increased acceptance of and openness to diverse cultures, increasing identification with American culture, bicultural navigation, changes in viewpoints, learning and modeling different ways of expressing emotions, and adopting host culture behaviors deemed ethical, indicative of identity construction and negotiation. However, several participants also spoke to the difficulties of blending American values with their own -rooted in family, religion, and culture. This is a finding replicated in other studies (e.g., Mishra & Shirazi, 2010; Hu, Pazaki, Al-Qubbaj, & Cutler, 2009), and is reflective of a process called “selective integration” (Mishra & Shirazi, 2010; p. 202) that includes the filtering of mainstream cultural practices deemed contradictory to the participants’ values.

Many participants also often emphasized the significance of retaining their own values derived from family, religion, and culture. They often describe their own modeling

and involvement in religious and cultural activities to transmit their values to younger generations as a way of keeping ethnic and religious identities linked to new systems of support, substantiating findings of previous research on identity negotiation (e.g., Ethier & Deaux, 1990, 1994).

Another self-related process explored in this study is self-representation through proving oneself. An increased effort to represent one's social group through displaying high ethical behavior and engaging in activism are forms of representation cited in the literature (Badr, 2004; Seggie & Sanford, 2010; Peek, 2005; Zaal et al., 2007). A number of the participants described efforts to best represent the identities they endorsed, in such ways as performing job duties effectively and keeping their jobs for many years.

The findings of the current research also substantiated the findings of Haddad and Lummis (1987), who explored the values, personal backgrounds, religious attitudes, life styles, values, and perceptions of a large group of Muslims. Their findings included endorsement of strong communal and societal connection, successful cultural integration, preservation of religious and family values, openness to exploring alternative interpretations of Islamic law, openness to celebrate American holidays, adherence to Islamic principles, and endorsement of liberal viewpoints in regard to women's employment. Many of these themes were also addressed by Muslim immigrant women participating in this research. For example, all of the women in this study pursued further education and career following migration to the United States, which provided opportunities for cultural integration through social gatherings with coworkers. All of the participants mentioned the importance of preserving religious and cultural values while participating in activities of the mainstream culture. Additionally, all of the participants

underscored the significance of social and relational connection in the form of family and social support, community service, and positive interactions with outgroup members.

Research on Muslim Americans found several psychological difficulties, such as significant levels of anxiety, depression, psychological distress, psychological withdrawal, somatic complaints, and low self-esteem stemming from their experiences of exclusion and discrimination (Amer & Hovey, 2011; Every & Perry, 2014; Ghaffari & Ciftci, 2010; Hassouneh & Kulwicki, 2007; Jasperse, Ward, & Jose, 2012; Moradi & Hasan, 2004; Sirin & Fine, 2008). Even though the majority of the participants in this study denied experiencing clinically significant psychological symptoms, they described a range of emotions in reaction to stigma and oppression they experienced in general society and the workplace in direct or indirect ways. Depression, anxiety, insecurity, worthlessness, powerlessness, fear, anger, feeling hurt, and sadness were among the feelings cited by the participants. A number of participants also described psychosomatic symptoms, such as neck pain and insomnia.

The findings of this study parallel research findings regarding heightened awareness of one's marginalized identities (Peek, 2005; Steele & Aronson, 1995; Sirin & Fine, 2008; Zaal et al., 2007). Many of the participants in the current study described experiencing increased self-monitoring, self-consciousness, stereotype threat, a sense of surveillance, and increased sense of vigilance in response to perceived and potential bias. A heightened sense of visibility due to wearing hijab, having an accent, skin color, and carrying an Arabic name was mentioned by some participants, illustrative of their increased attention to diversity markers.

Research shows that Muslim individuals employ a number of coping skills and strengths in reaction to stigma, oppression, and subsequent psychological distress (Ghaffari & Ciftci, 2010; Jasperse, Ward, & Jose, 2012; Sirin & Fine, 2008; Tummala-Narra & Claudius, 2013; Zaal et al., 2007). The coping skills cited in the literature include engaging in religious practice, turning to religion, remaining committed to religious practice, educating others about Islam, speaking up for oneself in situations of bias or misperceptions. These findings have been supported by the findings of current study, which indicated that the participants engaged in a diverse range of coping skills to cope with stigma experience as well as subsequent emotional distress. Most participants described religious/spiritual coping that included turning to a higher power through increased reflection and praying. Some of them described advocacy in the form of educating and/or informing others about Islam and taking formal action, some of which occurred in response to stigma experienced at workplace.

A number of participants described an ability to understand and empathize with outgroup members for their negative outlook on Muslims, a finding that echoes Stubbs and Sallee (2013) who found in their qualitative study that Muslim participants often excused and rationalized negative stereotypes and prejudice they confronted regarding their Muslim identity, which led them to downplay the impact of discrimination and intolerance on their lives. The participants often mentioned the influence of media, parenting, and the needs of the majority as bases for why intolerance should be excused. The authors attributed this attitude to “the internalization of the majority culture” (p. 464). Several of the participants in this study also engaged in excusing prejudice and bias

by host culture citizens. These negative outgroup attitudes were justified by potential inexperience and incompetence with diverse cultures by outgroup members.

Implications for Theory

Despite diverse multidisciplinary approaches exploring the self and identity, scholarly consensus contends that these terms represent multifaceted and composite phenomena rather than unitary entities (Reid & Deaux, 1996). Deaux (1992, 1993) viewed the self as having a hierarchical structure that includes the clustering of identities and attributes at different levels. General identity categories, such as roles and social memberships are conceptualized at the higher level, while more specific attributes, such as reliability and understanding are represented at the lower level (Deaux, 1993). From this hierarchical viewpoint, it appears that more specific traits and higher level identities are inevitably linked because they derive meaning and context from one another. Contrary to the approaches that emphasize distinction (e.g., Hogg & Abrams, 1988; as cited in Deaux, 1993), personal and social identities are integrated as they mutually contribute to the definition of the other. The findings of this study speak to an integrated view of identity, as most participants engaged in narrating themselves in diverse ways with reference to attributes, roles, and more general identity categories. More specifically, gender, religion, ethnicity, culture, personal traits, roles, career, and immigrant status were often cited as significant markers of self-concept by the participants.

A significant line of divergence among different scholarly approaches to the self and identity has to do with its formation, structure, and development. For example, social-cognitive theory (SCT) (Higgins & Bargh, 1987) and neuroscientific approaches

(LeDoux, 2003) treat the self as a cognitive and intrapsychic structure that is represented in the brain. Accordingly, these theories put great emphasis on causality and agency, while affording minimal consideration to the role of interpersonal, social, and cultural context in understanding the self (Foddy & Kashima, 2003; Gergen, 1991, 2009; Hogg, 2008; Onorato & Turner, 2003). Additionally, the individualist tradition of SCT and neuroscientific perspective views the self as a fully unified, coherent, and essential phenomenon abstracted from its social context (Hall, 1992). In contrast, the rise of postmodernity cast doubt on a fixed and culturally-isolated view of the self while bringing fore the idea of a self that is culturally-formed, relationally-bound, and ever-changing (Gergen, 2009; Hall, 1992; Onorato & Turner, 2003).

Drawing from these divergent approaches, this study upheld a constructivist view of the self and identity which acknowledges the impact of relational and contextual factors on the self while recognizing the cognitive processes and the mind as the source of identity construction. Additionally, the self is viewed as a relatively fluid and shifting phenomena across different social contexts. Findings of this study substantiate the constructivist view of the self. All of the participants frequently referenced the interpersonal, cultural, and relational factors when discussing their identities and elaborated on how their multiple identities were formed in a web of relationships. Emphasis on cultural and family values were incorporated into their self-concept, and an effort to transmit values to the next generation were prevalent across the participants. Furthermore, indicative of relative fluidity, many participants described change and growth following immigration as revealed by narratives indicating an increased acceptance of and openness to diverse cultures, increasing identification with American

culture, changes in viewpoints, learning and modeling different ways of expressing emotions and modeling of behaviors considered moral and ethical in the host culture, similar to found in other studies (e.g., Alhazmi & Nyland, 2013; Mishra & Shirazi, 2010; Tummala-Narra & Claudius, 2013). Additionally, becoming more religiously committed and an increased effort to be involved in activities of ethnic culture were frequent themes, indicative of both a change in as well as an effort to retain and remorse identity (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). Accordingly, many of the participants spoke to the significance of maintaining their ethnic and religious selves, which shows the aspects of self that is relatively fixed and enduring (Swann, 1987).

Without dismissing the fluidity and variability surrounding ethnic and cultural identities, they could be taken apart for a moment for a structural analysis of their components (Deaux, 2006; Phinney, 1990). Self-categorization, importance, evaluation, attachment and sense of interdependence, social embeddedness, behavioral involvement, and content and meaning, sense of belonging, attitudes toward in-group, centrality, and involvement were identified among key components of ethnic and cultural identities (Ashmore et al., 2004; Cameron, 2004). The findings of the current study substantiate these theoretical views. First, all of the participants offered accounts of self-categorization or self-identification as they described themselves in terms of diverse social identities (e.g., gender, ethnicity, religion), roles (e.g., mother, wife), and personal traits (e.g., fighter, leader). Second, almost all of them described an evaluation or attitude toward in-group as revealed by their accounts of self-esteem and pride into their multiple identities (e.g., woman, Muslim, Pakistani). Third, behavioral involvement was another prevalent theme among participants as most of them described engaging in religious and

cultural activities while abstaining from deeds assessed contrary to their values. Fourth, participants also offered frequent examples regarding centrality or importance attached to their identities. For some of them religion emerged as an integral aspect of their self-definition while others pointed out to the chief role of ethnicity and nationality in their self-concept. Fifth, most participants described the importance of being embedded within social networks that sustain the identity and efforts associated with maintaining ties with people of similar ethnic, national, and religious origin. Attendance to the mosque and cultural organizations were prevalent examples to social embeddedness. Some participants also described the practical benefits of being involved in a cultural and religious community, such as receiving emotional and social support. Additionally, a number of them described difficulties of social networking due to lack of time and sense of isolation or distinctiveness from their ethnic or religious group.

With regard to career, this study substantiates theories of vocational psychology informed by contextual and relational perspectives (e.g., Blustein, 2011; Blustein, Schultheiss, & Flum, 2004; Richardson, 2012; Schultheiss, 2003, 2007). The 21st century world of work includes significant uncertainty due to shifting trends and job instability (Blustein, 2006). Furthermore, workplaces may introduce unequal access to education, training, promotions, financial assets, and occupational mobility as well as lack of supportive relationships, racism, and discrimination for individuals with diverse identities (Blustein, 2008). These situations could lead to feelings of insecurity, anxiety, and other psychological and physical health issues. A significant number of the participants described workplace as a major context for encounters with racism and discrimination revealed by such examples as difficulties with regard to mobility to higher rank

occupational positions, sense of exclusion during professional gatherings, subtle and overt experiences of social exclusion from coworkers following September 11, unfair treatment in hiring process, being unfairly condemned by coworkers related to performing job duties, being discriminated on the basis of dress code, having an accent, and carrying a Muslim name.

Additionally, struggle and hard work characterized the contextual of the career experience of many Muslim women in this study. Difficulty of pursuing a career and finding a job as immigrant women due to limitations around language, financial resources, transferability of credentials earned in home country, emotional and physical strain associated with performing job duties, difficulties of balancing work and family, and difficulties posed by financial issues when pursuing a career were among salient findings.

The findings of this study corroborate extant research on relational influences on career development (e.g., Byars-Winston & Fouad, 2008; Fouad et al., 2008; Kenny et al., 2007; Schultheiss, Palma, Predragovich, & Glasscock, 2002; Whiston & Keller, 2004) as it showed that the participants cited frequent examples of family support, family impact, peer support, ethnic and religious fellow support, coworker support, and mentor support surrounding their career experience. Most of the participants described the support of their current and extended family in reaching their career goals, while a few mentioned how extended family members impeded their effort toward engaging in career activities. A number of them described the supportive role of mentors in career achievement and coping with unfair treatment from coworkers. A few others described being discriminated by mentors in regard to mobility to higher occupational positions.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study focused on identity and career experiences of Muslim women who identified as immigrants. The participants of this study represented diverse ethnic and immigration backgrounds. They varied in terms of their reasons for migrating and the process unfolding to their final destination in the United States. Additionally, all the women in this study had careers representing a diverse range of occupations, such as dentist, physician, librarian, medical billing specialist, shop owner, administrative assistant, and etc. Thus, the participants were relatively well-educated, well-trained, and proficient in English. Research has shown that higher education is associated with less cultural conflict and increased self-esteem among immigrant populations (Werkuyten & Nekuee, 1999). Additionally, refugee status was associated with more negative emotions due to the possibility of forced repatriation and a lack of full citizenship rights (Werkuyten & Nekuee, 1999). Thus, future research could focus on identity and career experiences of Muslim women who represent more disadvantaged backgrounds, such as refugees, undocumented immigrants, those with limited English proficiency, who are unemployed or perform low-skill jobs due to foreign educational credentials.

Race and skin color arose as significant factors shaping participants' experiences of stigma and oppression. Anecdotal evidence shows that Black Muslims, including African-Americans and immigrants from African countries are often excluded by their co-religionists and they experience a double-jeopardy in the general society due to intersecting identities as Muslim and Black (Khan, 2015; Ochieng, 2017). Accordingly, studies exploring identity and career experiences of Black Muslims would expand the

scope of current research and help identify struggles of a highly marginalized Muslim community.

The current study involved participant living in two different cities of one Midwestern state. Studies (e.g., Read & Bartkowski, 2000; Stubbs & Sallee, 2013) have shown that region can have significant impact on one's sense of self and lived experience (Deaux, 1993). Similar studies focusing on Muslim women residing in different geographical regions of the United States as well as other Western countries would help more fully understand the scope of their issues, make useful comparisons across different contexts, and identify as well as learn from helpful strategies developed in different contexts to cope with their issues. Additionally, despite a number of studies examining experiences of Muslim women in educational institutions (e.g., Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; Seggie & Sanford, 2010), those included limited focus on identity and career. The context of higher education is becoming increasingly more pluralistic and diverse. Additionally, college is characterized by more complex academic requirements, calls for effective time-management skills, and is the most significant pathway to one's desired career. Thus, higher education introduces many challenges for self-concepts of emerging adults (Cerbo, 2010). Accordingly, studies focusing on experience of Muslim women attending higher education institutions would offer a more complete picture of the developmental dynamics involved in identity and career phenomena.

This study identified important variables in regard to the identity and career experience of Muslim immigrant women. Some of these include components of an identity, relational factors influencing identity and career, negative stereotypes, discrimination experience, emotional experience, coping skills, career trajectory, and

struggles related to immigration. This exploratory study could be followed up by a number of quantitative studies examining relationships among these variables or others identified in the literature. For example, self-esteem in regard to personal, ethnic, and religious identity emerged as a prevalent theme in this research. A study investigating the links among social identity self-esteem (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) or personal self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965) and career self-efficacy (Betz & Hackett, 1981) among Muslim immigrant women or Muslim women of other backgrounds could offer important insights into their career and identity correlates. In addition, moderating effect of perceived discrimination (Brondolo et al., 2005) on the link between self-esteem and career-efficacy could be explored as perceived discrimination has been shown to be an important moderating variable (Ghaffari & Ciftci, 2010).

Hijab has been identified as an important identity marker influencing experience of Muslim women (Jasperse, Ward, & Jose, 2012; Foroutan, 2011; Seggie & Sanford, 2010). Quantitative studies examining the impact of visibility through hijab and other religious markers on career-related variables, such as career-self efficacy (Betz & Hackett, 1981), outcome expectations (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2005), occupational mobility, and workplace discrimination could offer important insights into issues surrounding career experience of Muslim women. Among immigrant women, how these career constructs relate to cultural adaptation and psychological well-being would be another important line of research. Again, how some variables, such as perceived discrimination moderate these correlations would be important to investigate to compose a more complete picture of associations among phenomena.

Implications for Practice

As with any other non-Western client, what needs to precede and accompany therapeutic work with Muslim clients is to increase multicultural competence, which includes becoming aware of one's own assumptions and biases and gaining relevant knowledge and skills needed to work with this population (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). Clinicians could read published work about mental health treatment with Muslim populations as an easily accessible and practical resource (e.g., Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000; Moradi & Hasan, 2004). This work has suggested numerous general characteristics of Muslim populations which have important implications for clinical work. The literature indicated that mental health stigma, patriarchal family structure, strong family and community orientation, restrained communication patterns, traditional conceptualization of mental health issues, somatization of mental health problems, role of religion and traditional healers in interventions are significant distinguishing aspects of clinical work with Muslim clients (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000). Many of these have been observed with the participants of this study.

The current study suggests that Muslim immigrant women frequently encounter negative stereotypes, prejudice, social exclusion, and oppression in the society on the basis of their diverse intersecting identities. Given the overly negative sentiment directed at Muslims in the West in recent years, the clinicians should be tuned to issues of social justice and be willing to incorporate advocacy role and work into counseling (Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2015). An important angle of this role is to clarify if the presenting issues are primarily environmental or internal (Hays, 2009). Before focusing on internal cognitive explanations of a problem, the oppressive

characteristics of current social context should be recognized to identify strategies to minimize the impact of environmental stressors on the clients as well as to help clients gain a sense of validation (Hays, 2009). Individual counseling should be balanced with social justice advocacy to address problems brought to counseling by individuals with marginalized identities, such as Muslim immigrant women (Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2015). Interventions that overemphasize clients' self-control over confronting discrimination may be ineffective and even harmful (Moradi & Hasan, 2004). However, clients could be encouraged to engage in social activism through joining several advocacy organizations to develop a sense of mastery over prejudice and discrimination events (Moradi & Hasan, 2004). Additionally, mental health clinicians should develop knowledge about antidiscrimination policies and advocate on behalf of their clients to ensure implementation of these in cases of discrimination (Moradi & Hasan, 2004).

An important aspect of culturally competent counseling is to carefully attend to within-group differences when working with highly marginalized populations. Muslim women, particularly those donning hijab, have frequently been stereotyped as powerless, subservient, submissive, and oppressed (Afshar, 2008; Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000; Haddad, Smith, & Moore, 2006). While Muslim women in certain geographies may be subject to experiences that warrant these labels, it is important to recognize that many Muslim women in contemporary society resist these reductionistic images. Although culture and family are primary contexts for the formation and instillation of gender-role expectations, many of the participants in this study mentioned being raised in families structured on egalitarian terms, where women's independence through education and

career was strongly encouraged. In addition, many of the participants indicated a certain degree of acculturation following immigration to the United States. A number of them mentioned an openness to, acceptance, and adoption of American values that they deemed highly ethical and moral. They described experiencing self-growth in the form of increased independence and a modification of gender-role expectations. Thus, it is important for mental health clinicians to not impose culturally-stereotyped images to Muslim clients before they gain a sense of familiarity with each specific Muslim person. Thus, a sound assessment of a person's cultural and family background, educational status, and level of acculturation is of particular importance when working with Muslim immigrant women in clinical settings.

Even though this study found that the majority of the participants had high self-esteem in regard to personal and social identities, such as gender, ethnicity, religion, and nationality, previous research on Muslims (e.g., Every & Perry, 2014; Ghaffari & Ciftci, 2010; Moradi & Hasan, 2004) indicated a negative correlation between personal self-esteem and reported experience of discrimination. Because no standardized instruments were used to measure self-esteem in this study, the degree of participants' self-esteem could only be estimated based on their self-report. Given the link shown between self-esteem and experience of discrimination among Muslims and other minorities (e.g., Twenge & Crocker, 2002), it is important for mental health clinicians to be aware that Muslim clients could suppress the damaging impact of discrimination or exclusion on their self-esteem and appear hesitant to self-disclose due to fear of being seen weak or a sense of mistrust toward the clinician (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000). These should not be simply be interpreted as client resistance and clinicians should identify culturally-

appropriate interventions to facilitate client self-expression. Subsequently, clinicians should devise culturally-appropriate interventions that help clients identify ways to resist internalizing discrimination experiences (Every & Perry, 2014).

Muslim immigrant women participating in this study described numerous examples of personal strength, agency, resilience, adjustment, and adaptation. Clinicians should take into consideration these personal assets while acknowledging the impact of institutional barriers and oppression that may exceed one's sense of self-control and mastery. For example, Moradi and Hasan (2004) found that discrimination had a negative influence on people's sense of control over their lives, which in turn decreased their self-esteem. Thus, a sensitive balance should be established when assessing the impact of environmental stressors on Muslim clients. While Muslim clients should not be viewed as non-autonomous, non-agentic individuals that are unable to recognize and resist bias and injustice, the role of external stressors on clients' presenting issues should not be overlooked.

Participants of this study reported having relatively good mental health. Only a few participants described clinically significant psychological distress and use of mental health services. Participants mostly relied on social support, religious activity, and use of personal strengths such as perspective taking and keeping self-esteem unaffected from negative experiences as ways to cope with challenges. It is important for clinicians to understand that stigma surrounding use of mental health services for Muslim populations is similar to that of other minority groups (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000). Making mental health services easily accessible by integrating them into other settings, such as general

medical clinics could be a way to show it as an integral part of general physical health and decrease the stigma (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000).

This study has found that humility is an important aspect that identities of Muslim immigrant women incorporated. For example, when responding to questions involving the word “pride” or “proud”, some of the participants mentioned that they do not feel comfortable describing themselves with these words. One participant reported using the word “thankful” instead of “proud” to self-express. Others frequently mentioned expressions such as “I am a bad Muslim”, “trying to be good Muslims”, or trying one’s best, indicative of humility and modesty in their self-conceptualizations. From a Western point of view that is mostly based on assertiveness, extraversion, keen awareness of one’s strengths, self-confidence, and clear self-expression, modesty-oriented self-expressions could be taken as a sign of low self-esteem. It is important for clinicians to understand that these expressions do not necessarily suggest uncertainty or difficulty with one’s self-esteem because humility, modesty, and forbearance are considered essential virtues in the Islamic scripture. Rather, humility and modesty evident in a client’s self-expression is mostly reflective of an effort to avoid praising oneself and potential arrogance (Elias, 2013).

Consistent with a cultural-relational perspective (Gergen, 2009; Schultheiss, 2007), most participants described themselves and their identities embedded within family and culture. Many of them described their achievements and issues as products of a collective rather than individual effort. The family is attributed utmost importance and regarded as the most important source of support among Muslims (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000). Thus, frequent reference to current and extended family members in

counseling should not be interpreted as signs of overdependence by clinicians. Rather, mental health workers should be able to incorporate client's family and cultural context both in case conceptualization and treatment planning.

Muslim individuals may frequently refer to supernatural concepts in explaining their issues, seek guidance from traditional and/or religious healers, and attribute significant emphasis on religion in conceiving and resolving their problems (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000). Most participants of this study indicated that religion has a central place in how they live their lives and view themselves. They identified reliance on a higher power through religious practice as an important coping skill. Research (e.g., Ghaffari & Ciftci, 2010; Jasperse, Ward, & Jose, 2012) has shown that involvement in religious activities buffer the negative impact of discrimination. Thus, mental health clinicians should not view these inclinations as indicative of lack of self-control, self-confidence, and even presence of psychopathology. They should be able to incorporate religious concepts into clinical and treatment formulation.

Limitations

A number of factors may have posed limitations to the rigor of this study. One limitation may be related to the researcher's own subjective experience on the subject matter. This researcher may have had occasional difficulties bracketing herself from the process, which may have resulted in some intrusion of her experiences into the interpretation of findings. Below is a section from the journal this researcher kept throughout the data analysis process:

“I was not just an interviewer distancing herself from the participants. At times, I did self-disclosure, telling them about the sense of pride I had about my ethnicity and

religion as well as my own struggles introduced by these identities. Sometimes I briefly shared my life stories. While listening to them, I was impressed by their struggles and resilience. At times, I had my own reactions come up when participants described challenges because our experiences appeared alike. I felt overwhelmed by some of their issues and managed these emotions by letting them know how much I appreciated their resilience and determination in overcoming struggles. I often emphasized the hardships and challenges they had as Muslim immigrant women. I acknowledged those and affirmed that it was hard but they dealt with it very well. I engaged in feeling reflection and reflection of meaning while potentially switching to the role of a counselor during brief time periods. Because they shared very deep, painful stories, I couldn't just remain a blank state. The nature of conversation pulled me that way. Some of them were reliving their experiences and I could see them re-experience those feelings. Thus, I chose to be an empathic listener rather than just an aloof data collector. I was not just collecting demographic info, but I was co-facilitating construction of meaning from a constructivist framework as the basic underlying paradigm of this study. Thus, I used my counseling skills frequently to facilitate the meaning making of my participants.”

From one standpoint, the factors mentioned above could be thought of as posing limitations to the trustworthiness of this study. However, the current researcher's timely negotiation of roles from that of a researcher to a counselor appeared to help them feel heard, validated, and grounded, letting them open up more. These strategies appeared to help the participants feel related to the researcher as a human being when she self-disclosed and answered their questions about her own self.

Another area of limitation could be related to the researcher and team members' tendency to infer meaning from the data which could lead to a misrepresentation of participants' experiences (Burkard et al., 2012). During data analysis with team members, one of the team members recognized at one point that the primary researcher was referring to her knowledge of the literature in making meaning of one of the participants' experience. The team member reminded this researcher of the importance of bracketing personal experience, including knowledge of the subject matter and staying close to the participants' words rather than interpreting the meaning of their experience when depicting participant experiences (Burkard et al., 2012). Bracketing personal experience was also explained in the Research Team section of the Method chapter.

The quality of data analysis and developing findings out of raw data is limited with the team members' and auditor's knowledge and experience with the subject matter and CQR. These limitations have been discussed in the Research Team section included in Chapter 3. Another limitation to the study could be introduced by the lack of participant checks of the transcribed interviews and findings of the study. Even though this researcher reached out to all but one participant, only one participant responded to provide feedback on the accuracy of the transcribed interviews.

The small sample size in this study may pose a challenge to generalizability of the findings. However, the tendency to overemphasize generalizability has been criticized by qualitative researchers due to its positivistic underpinnings that afford limited relevance for qualitative inquiry (Chenail, 2010). It has been argued that a prediction of general can only be obtained from the particular and that generalizations are made from particulars, suggesting a view of generalizability that is more consistent with a qualitative research

worldview (Chenail, 2010). Accordingly, the small sample size in this study helped attend to individual cases in more detail through in-depth interviews resulting in rich and thick descriptions of participants' experiences.

Another limitation for this study relates to how the interview questions were phrased. Some participants found several questions repetitive. Thus, the researcher provided clarifications to participants after these questions were asked. In addition, the researcher regularly checked in with participants to determine whether questions covering similar topics had already been discussed. That way, those questions already addressed were skipped to ensure brevity of the interview protocol.

The frequent use of closed-ended questions, examples to clarify interview questions, paraphrasing, feeling and meaning reflection by this researcher are additional limitations. These expressions may have led the participants' accounts to certain directions limiting the types of examples participants may have otherwise revealed had the researcher restricted the use of closed-ended questions and additional verbal expressions other than just those in the interview protocol.

A final limitation of the study is limited face-to-face or over-the-phone interactions with team members during cross-analysis process. As explained in detail in Chapter five, limitations posed by restricted on-one-on consensus were resolved by maintaining open communication with team members. This researcher avoided imposing her perspective and distributed equal power to each member, by carefully considering their disagreements and incorporating all of their suggestions on how to best categorize data. Team members' recommendations on renaming, discarding, collapsing, merging, or adding new categories were carefully considered and incorporated. Team members were

notified with each change made to the categories. The primary researcher had Skype and phone meetings with team members following email exchanges to finalize consensus, which also helped resolve limitations.

Conclusions

This study explored immigrant Muslim women's experiences of selfhood and identity in general society, with particular emphasis on career and workplace. Consistent with theory and research, the current study suggests that Muslim immigrant women dynamically crafted their selves and constructed their experience in contexts defined by instability, pressure, and antagonism. The findings suggest Muslim immigrant women endorsed multiple intersecting identities, as well as diverse self-definitions along with a keen awareness into how their diverse identities intersect in the context of immigration. The findings also suggest a number of self-related experience, such as identity salience, self-esteem, behavioral involvement, acculturation and identity construction, centrality and importance, self-growth, spirituality, and humility, which were prevalent across participants. In addition to the difficulties navigating different cultural frameworks simultaneously, findings of acculturation, adjustment, and identity construction suggested that Muslim immigrant women displayed an ability to dynamically link their identities to the sources of support in the new context following immigration.

Consistent with research, the current sociopolitical climate of the American society has been found to involve various forms of stigma and oppression toward Muslim immigrant women. Workplace emerged as a primary setting of adverse encounters, indicated by barriers of occupational mobility, social exclusion from coworkers, unfair hiring outcomes, and discrimination on the basis of identity markers, such as dress code,

accent, and Muslim name. Immigration introduced additional difficulties due to limitations around language, financial resources, and transferability of credentials earned home country. The findings indicate that Muslim immigrant women faced “triple jeopardy” in the workplace as well as other social contexts as a result of their multiple interwoven identities, such as ethnicity, religion, gender, and nationality that subject them to “multiple and multilevel processes of discrimination and disadvantage” (Syed & Pio, 2010; p. 117).

Muslim immigrant women experienced a diverse range of difficult emotions in response to life events linked to their diverse identities. They displayed intensified awareness of diverse identity markers, increased self-monitoring, sense of surveillance, self-consciousness, and increased sense of vigilance in reaction to stigma experience. In response, they used a diverse range of coping skills, such as seeking social support, perspective taking, turning to a higher power, advocacy, educating others, and taking action. Among the personal qualities that helped handle difficult experiences and emotions were individual resilience, internal strength, and active use of agency.

In sum, this study suggests that identity and career experiences of Muslim immigrant women are tightly linked with their diverse intersecting identities. Each of these identities as well as their intersections should be considered when discussing how their encounters in the society impact their sense of self and career development. Having this knowledge will help guide future research and clinical work with this highly marginalized population.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Participant ID:

Please tell me about yourself by answering the following questions:

How old are you?

What is your race/ethnicity?

What is your birthplace (country)?

How long have you been in the United States?

What is the name of your home country?

Relationship status:

Parental status: Yes () Number of children:

 No ()

Did you live in any other country before you came to the US ?

Country	Length of time in years		Reason for living there
	FROM	TO	

Describe your educational history below.

Level of education	Country	Year
Post - Doctorate		
Doctorate		
Master's		
Bachelor's (4 years of higher education program)		
Associate's (2 years of higher education program)		
High School Type of school (i.e., technical, professional, industrial, private, etc.)		
Middle School		
Elementary School		

Please answer the following questions about your work activities:

The title of the job:

Please check one _____ Current Job _____ Past Job

How long have you worked, or did you work, at this job? _____

Is this job related to your area of study in college? Yes () No ()

Number of hours worked per week: _____

Does your work involve a salary? Yes () No ()

If you are or have worked more than one job, please complete the following:

The title of the job:

Please check one _____ Current Job _____ Past Job

How long have you worked, or did you work, at this job? _____

Is this job related to your area of study in college? Yes () No ()

Number of hours worked per week: _____

Does your work involve a salary? Yes () No ()

The title of the job:

Please check one _____ Current Job _____ Past Job

How long have you worked, or did you work, at this job? _____

Is this job related to your area of study? Yes () No ()

Number of hours worked per week: _____

Does your work involve a salary? Yes () No ()

Please choose the option/options that best describe your reason for working. You can choose more than one option:

- (a) I am working as a way to support my finances.
- (b) I am working because it is required by my educational program.
- (c) I am working to socialize in the American culture and strengthen my skills with the English language.
- (d) I am working as a way to enrich my career experiences.

If different from the options above, please describe below your reason/reasons for working:

I am working because

APPENDIX B

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. We all have some knowledge about ourselves, such as who we are, where we come from, what we believe, what we want to do, and so on. All these things make us the person we currently are. As such, I am curious to learn about you. Tell me about some of the things that make you the person you are now. (If not clear ask: Tell me about what makes you (participant name)?)

Probes:

- a. Tell me about how being a woman is related to who you are as a person.
 - i. Tell me a story about when you felt proud to be a woman?
 - ii. Tell me a story of difficulty, when you felt disadvantaged as a woman?
 - b. Tell me about how being Muslim is related to who you are as a person?
 - i. Tell me a story about when you felt proud to be Muslim?
 - ii. Tell me a story of difficulty, when you felt disadvantaged as Muslim?
 - c. Tell me about your ethnicity and how that makes you feel and think about yourself? Do you have any stories about this to share?
 - d. You also have a job/profession. Tell me how that is related to who you are as a person?
 - i. Tell me about your career goals/plans and why they are important to the person you currently are or you aspire to be?
 - e. Is there anything else that makes you the person you are now, other than what we talked about before?
2. What are some of the things you hear about Muslims in the media or elsewhere?

- a. How do you feel about these things?
 - b. Tell me about the stress you experience in daily life, at work/internship/assistantship and school.
 - c. What do these messages make you feel about yourself?
3. You are a Muslim immigrant woman in the United States. I am very curious to learn about your stories related to different identities (e.g., Muslim, immigrant, woman) you have.
- a. Tell me a story of difficulty, a time when you felt uncomfortable about being a Muslim immigrant woman.
 - b. Tell me about how you coped with (i.e., handle) these difficulties?
 - c. Now tell me a story of pride, when you felt comfortable being a Muslim immigrant woman.
 - d. How is it like to be in school/work as a Muslim immigrant woman?
 - i. Challenges?
 - ii. Rewards?
4. In your relationships with others, how do other students, faculty, co-workers or Americans in general act toward you and how does that make you feel about them and yourself?
- a. Tell me about a time when you felt negatively about yourself as a Muslim immigrant woman because of others' negative attitude towards you?
 - b. Tell me about a time when you felt good about yourself as a Muslim immigrant woman because of others' positive attitude towards you?

- c. How do you think others' attitudes towards you influence your academic and career goals?
- 5. Tell me about the role of your family, friends, and other Muslims around you in making you the person you are now.
 - a. What is the role of your family, friends, and other Muslims in your career goals?
- 6. Being a woman, Muslim, and immigrant (e.g., ethnicity) are the three things that make you a unique person. I am wondering if any of these three identities has become more emphasized, stronger, or visible/salient for you in the U.S. Do you have any stories that you want to share with me?
 - a. What identities were stronger in your home country?
 - b. What identities are more visible/salient at school?
 - c. What identities are more visible/salient at work/assistantship/internship?
 - d. How have these changes influenced your academic and career thoughts and goals?
- 7. Now, let's talk about changes. Tell me about some of the things that changed in you or your life after you came here to the U.S.
 - a. Tell me a story that compares what it was like for you with your peers, faculty, and mentors when you first arrived and later.
 - b. Tell me a story that compares what it felt like being Muslim when you first arrived and now.
 - c. Tell me a story that compares what it felt like being woman when you first arrived and now.

- d. Tell me a story that compares what it felt like culturally when you first arrived and now.
 - e. Tell me a story that compares your academic and career thoughts and goals when you first arrived and now.
8. May I ask you some specific questions about your psychological or emotional functioning? We have talked about discrimination experiences, stories that included stress and difficulties, and the changes you have experienced. Can you tell me how all of these have affected your psychological well-being?
- a. Can you list some of the feelings you have had?
 - b. Have you had any physical problems?
 - c. Have you experienced any changes in your eating and sleeping patterns?
 - d. How have these affected your school/work performance and/or satisfaction, and your academic/career goals?
 - e. How have you handled/resolved these difficulties?
9. How do you see yourself as a Muslim immigrant woman in the future?
- a. Tell me about your work/career goals as a Muslim immigrant woman.
10. Is there anything else that you want to tell me?