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A STUDY OF ARAB AND SOUTH ASIAN AMERICAN MEN  
WITH IMMIGRANT-FAMILY ORIGINS IN NEW-  
IMMIGRANT DESTINATIONS

By

Jack “Trey” Allen  
M.A., University of Louisville 2017  
B.A., Asbury University

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Faculty of the  
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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy  
In Applied Sociology

Department of Sociology  
University of Louisville  
Louisville, Kentucky

August 2021



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A Dissertation Approved on

July 29, 2021

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## ABSTRACT

### A STUDY OF ARAB AND SOUTH ASIAN AMERICAN MEN WITH IMMIGRANT-FAMILY ORIGINS IN NEW-IMMIGRANT DESTINATIONS

Jack “Trey” Allen

July 29, 2021

This dissertation is an examination of Arab and South Asian American men’s (1) experiences and perceptions of discrimination and belonging in two non-traditional immigrant destinations in the United States (U.S.) south, and (2) their performance of masculinities in response to Muslim women’s experiences with Islamophobia. I use intersectional theory, theories of race and racism, theories of gender, theories on belonging, and grounded theory to analyze 23 qualitative semi-structured interviews with Arab and South Asian men who live in one large city and one rural town in the U.S. south.

I find that upper-, middle-, and working-class Arab and South Asian men dismiss and downplay personal experiences with Islamophobia, despite reporting a wide-range of these experiences. Social-class position shaped how these men downplayed these experiences. I argue that these patterns have important implications for how scholars studying racism in America should address the position of intermediary racial categories—which include Arab and South Asian Americans.

I also find that Arab and South Asian men performed hegemonic masculinities when women were the subjects of Islamophobic encounters or when discussing their potential experiences with Islamophobia. Interviewees reported a desire to control women in their lives to protect them from potential Islamophobic perpetrators and celebrated times when they or people that they knew physically confronted Islamophobic perpetrators who were targeting their women family members. This flatly contrasts their dismissive responses to Islamophobia committed against themselves or other men and has implications for emerging scholarship on complicit masculinities and intersectional studies of Islamophobia.

Lastly, I find that upper class Arab and South Asian men reported a strong sense of belonging and connection to the community in the rural town when compared to men from the larger city and middle- and working-class men from the rural town. I found that these men had an easier time drawing on their relationships as mostly medical providers to the surrounding community as compared to other respondents without an occupational status representing privilege and status in the community.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Demographic data demonstrate that both Arab and South Asian American populations in the U.S. have grown substantially in overall size and in their share of the U.S. population during the late-20<sup>th</sup> and early-21<sup>st</sup> centuries (Arab American Institute 2018, López et al. 2017). By some measures one could argue that these groups may experience relative privilege (Bonilla-Silva 2004; Garner and Selod 2015). For instance, the Arab American Institute (2018) uses 2017 American Community Survey data to report the average education, income, and occupation of Arab Americans. They report that: “49% of Americans of Arab descent have a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 32% of Americans at large” (Arab American Institute 2018). Or, the “[m]edian income for Arab American households in 2017 was \$60,398, almost mirroring the national median income for all households which was \$60,422. [Though] [m]ean individual income is 26% higher than the national average” (Arab American Institute 2018). Some South Asian groups are similarly situated. For example, López et al. (2017) report that in 2015, 53% of Pakistani Americans had a bachelor’s degree or higher. And in 2015, the median annual household income for Pakistani households in the U.S. was \$66,000 (López et al. 2017). Despite these measurable advantages, Arabs and South Asians face barriers to enjoying the full benefits of this economic standing due to the threat of racial stereotypes and Islamophobia against Muslims.

Islamophobia is a term that is popularly used to refer to a fear or animosity towards religious Muslims or those presumed to be Muslim, e.g., Arab or Pakistani Americans. This concept has gained popular explanatory traction in the aftermath of international terror attributed to ‘radical Islamic groups’ such as al Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant [Syria] [ISIS]. Following such events, religious Muslims have been the targets of backlash, discrimination, and violence. Scholars and groups that study Muslim groups (Abu-Ras and Suarez 2009, Akram and Johnson 2002, Allen 2018, Cainkar 2002, Council on American-Islamic Relations 2009, Garner and Selod 2015, Kishi 2017, Meer 2008, Rana 2011; Selod 2016 and 2019, Southern Poverty Law Center 2019) have verified these experiences and their effects. For instance, the Council on American-Islamic Relations [CAIR] (2009) tracks a steady and increasing growth in the number of civil rights complaints reported to them annually, ranging from 80 in 1995 to 2,728 in 2008. After September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 [9/11]<sup>1</sup> many Western nations saw an uptick in the number of hate-crimes committed against people presumed to be Muslim. Singh (2002) writes: “[t]he hate crimes that followed the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks...were unique in their severity and extent” (3).

Though 9/11 is a pivotal point for understanding Islamophobia in contemporary history, scholars (Garner and Selod 2015, Lean 2012, Love 2017, Mastnak 2010, Said 1978, Selod 2016) generally agree that animosity from the West toward the “Middle-East,” the presumed ‘Muslim world’, or the “Orient” is not new. The social construction

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<sup>1</sup> 9/11 is popularly understood as the date of a series of international terrorist attacks attributed to al Qaeda. During which, four commercial airliners were hijacked by al-Qaeda operatives. Two of these airliners were flown into the World Trade Center in New York City and a third struck the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. The fourth plane crashed into a field outside of Pennsylvania.

of Islam as a threat to the West dates back at least to the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD and the Crusades. In recent history Muslim's ethnic and religious identities have come to take on nationalist meanings and stand in contradiction to dominant White-Christian imperial powers (Mastnak, 2010; Rana, 2011; Selod, 2015; Werbner, 2005; Zopf, 2018). Finally, some scholars (Lean 2012, Mastnak, 2010, Rana 2011) have linked Islamophobia in the West to the fall of the Soviet Union, arguing that Islam became the new conceptual opponent to democracy, around which financial and military resources and support could be mobilized. According to FBI reports, Anti-Muslim assaults in the U.S. increased from 12 in 2000 to 93 in 2001 (Kishi 2017). Per Kishi (2017) FBI reported anti-Muslim assaults would reach a high of 127 in 2016. Scholars have none-the-less argued that the academy must move past a post-9/11 terminology (Cainkar and Selod 2018, Love 2013, Rana 2011) that ties anti-Muslim discrimination, sentiment, and violence to temporary backlash, rather than to more broadly, historically constituted regimes.

In 2017 President Donald Trump issued The Executive Order Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States [EO 13769]. This order intended to temporarily restrict travel from Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen, with the stated purpose of combatting radical Islamic terror (Trump 2017). This order was implemented despite that from 1975 through 2015 only two Americans were killed by Nationals from those countries listed in the U.S. (Golash-Boza 2018). While EO 13769 was delayed by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in January 2017, it was reissued as EO 13780 and upheld by the Supreme Court of the U.S. with the redaction of Iraq and addition of North Korea and Venezuela as nations of reduced and

scrutinized admissions to the U.S. This act would also restrict the admittance of refugees without valid travel documents (Carter 2018; Trump 2017).

Emerging scholarship (Abu-Ras and Suarez 2009, Allen 2018, Selod 2015 and 2019) has demonstrated that gender impacts the ways that groups racialized as Muslim experience and perceive Islamophobic experiences and racism. However, little scholarship addresses the ways that class shapes these experiences and perceptions. And some studies (Selod 2015) have demonstrated that the citizenship of groups racialized as Muslims is routinely questioned by individuals and in institutions. The current study seeks to contribute to scholarship on Islamophobia by critically engaging with the ways that Arab and South Asian men from upper-, middle-, and working-class backgrounds interpret experiences with Islamophobia. Studies have demonstrated that men racialized as Muslims experience Islamophobia differently than women (Abu-Ras and Suarez 2009, and Selod 2015 and 2019), however little scholarship critically addresses the gendered ways that men interpret and respond to Islamophobia. The current study contributes to gender scholarship on Islamophobia by critically analyzing the ways that Arab and South Asian men performed hegemonic masculinities when Muslim women experienced Islamophobia, especially in comparison to the ways men discussed their own experiences with Islamophobia. Finally, although Selod (2015) has demonstrated that groups racialized as Muslims face “contested citizenship,” little scholarship has addressed the ways that Islamophobia along with racism, sexism, and classism impact sense of belonging for affected groups. The current study contributes to this by addressing the different ways that upper-, middle-, and working-class Arabs and South Asians perceive personal belonging in a non-traditional immigrant destination in the U.S. South. By

personal belonging, I mean the feeling that you are accepted as a valid member of a place and additionally that your belonging is accepted by others.

I address the following primary research questions: (1) how do Arab and South Asian American men experience and perceive discrimination in new immigrant destinations in the U.S. south? (2) How are experiences and perceptions of belonging among Arab and South Asian American men shaped by place and social class in new immigrant destinations in the U.S. south? By new immigrant destinations, I mean localities that immigrant-origin groups are settling in during the late-20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup>-centuries that do not match historic immigration trends. By belonging, I mean personal feelings of “being ‘at home’ in a place” (Antonsich 2010: 645) and the acceptance of claims to belonging by community members. To address these research questions, I conducted 23 qualitative, semi-structured interviews with upper-, middle-, and working-class Arab and South Asian men from a large city and a rural town in the U.S. south. In doing so, I answer calls from leading scholars (Garner and Selod 2015, and Cainkar and Selod 2018) who study Islamophobia using an intersectional paradigm and further analyze perceptions of discrimination, performances of masculinity, and belonging, among groups racialized as Muslims. Specifically, I answer calls from Garner and Selod (2015: 10): who urge scholars to conduct further “fieldwork-based studies (particularly those in which Muslims are the subject of interviews and/or ethnographies),” and Cainkar and Selod (2018): who call for researchers to use “intersectional approaches that incorporate *gender, communities of belonging, black Muslim experiences, class, and sexuality*” (10) [italics added] into the study of groups racialized as Muslims. Analysis of interviews reveals three central themes. First, I demonstrate that Arab and South Asian

men downplay Islamophobic experiences in classed ways. Second, I find that Arab and South Asian men perform protective hegemonic masculinities when they discuss women's Islamophobic experiences. Finally, I demonstrate that upper class Arab and South Asian men in non-traditional immigrant destinations are able to draw upon class resources to perceive a particularly strong sense of belonging that is not shared by middle- and working-class men.

In chapter two, I detail literature that is relevant to this study. I draw from literature on race, racism, Islamophobia, intersectionality, theories of belonging, and masculinity to examine my research question. I contribute to these bodies of literature by: (1) adding nuance to the ways that intermediary racial groups—such as those racialized as Muslims—experience and interpret the U.S. racial order (Bonilla-Silva 2004), (2) building on existing understandings of complicit masculinities and hegemonic performances (Chen 1999), and (3) expanding discussions of belonging in non-traditional immigrant destinations to include Arabs and South Asians and by addressing the ways that upper class immigrants experience belonging in comparison to middle- and working-class groups (Antonsich 2010). In chapter three, I outline my research methods and justifications. I also describe why the research setting that I chose presents a unique opportunity to analyze the themes highlighted above. I describe the ways that I used a grounded theoretical framework to analyze key themes from the data. In chapter four, I focus on findings related to experiences of Islamophobia and the practice of dismissing or downplaying these experiences. I find that upper class Arabs and South Asians felt closer to dominant group members and that this was reflected in their responses to Islamophobia. In chapter five, I highlight the ways that men discussed women's

experiences with Islamophobia, many times unprompted by interview questions. I find that interviewees performed masculinity in response to these altercations. In chapter six, I highlight the ways that men perceived themselves as belonging in Townsburg – a rural, predominantly White town. I find that upper class interviewees perceived a particularly strong sense of belonging that was rooted in their experiences, narratives, and professional connections to Townsburg. This was different than the ways that, for the most part, Arab and South Asian men described belonging in Metro-City – a more diverse metropolitan city. Middle- and working-class men also did not describe their belonging in Townsburg with similar strength. In chapter seven, I explore contributions to scholarship, and address the question of why this research is important in addition to existing scholarship. I also discuss limitations of this project and potential directions for future research.

As with any sociological study, this project has some limitations. As I outline in the methods section of this paper, this data collection and analysis was likely influenced by my identity as a white, non-Arab, non-South Asian, agnostic, highly educated, young, cis-gender, and straight male. This likely influenced what participants were willing to report to me and how they reported it. I also note that sampling was cut off due to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, so the sample is small for a place-based comparison of experiences and perceptions. The current research project is also limited in that it addresses the experiences of Arab and South Asian men from largely upper- and middle-class backgrounds. Greater research attention should be paid to the experiences and perceptions of working-class and poor groups who are radicalized as Muslims to address the ways that their experiences compare to the men in this study. Greater research



attention should also be paid to the experiences and perceptions of upper class Arab and South Asian women to see if they similarly downplay Islamophobia and perceive themselves as belonging in new immigrant destinations when they experience Islamophobia. My findings on gender will need to be verified with research that more directly explores questions related to masculine performances and Islamophobia. Masculine performances were a peripheral focus of the original research project and were pursued when they emerged as a strong theme. Future research should seek to verify the claim that Muslim women have more severe and frequent experiences with Islamophobia than Muslim men.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this literature review, I first introduce intersectionality as an overarching theoretical paradigm that guided this work. Second, I broadly discuss theories on race and racism(s) in the United States (U.S.) during the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. I highlight the shortcomings of these theories for understanding the experiences of intermediary racial groups and more recently racialized ethnic groups, such as Arabs and South Asians, especially in the context of a global society increasingly shaped by human migration. Third, I provide a demographic overview of Arab and South Asian Americans in the U.S. and discuss the ways that they experience systems of race and racism. I discuss the emerging literatures on Islamophobia and the racialization of Arabs and South Asians as Muslims, paying special attention to the calls of leading scholars for continuing research. I demonstrate that the current study answers these calls for qualitative and intersectional analyses of Arab and South Asian experiences and perceptions of Islamophobia. Fourth, I briefly discuss scholarship on “model minority” stereotyping because upper class interviewees in one locale discussed being the subject of this stereotype. Fifth, I outline literature on place and belonging. I provide a deeper discussion of scholarship on the ways that new immigrant groups experience belonging and barriers to belonging in non-traditional immigrant destinations—such as rural parts of the U.S. South. I provide a deidentified overview of the locales studied because place is central to my analysis. As I will demonstrate,

the current study presents a unique opportunity to add to our understanding of how social class impacts belonging and experiences in new immigrant destinations. Sixth, I outline literature on gender and masculinities. Finally, I briefly outline literature that guide my discussion of class and social stratification.

### *Intersectionality*

Intersectionality is a critical framework for this study because I analyze the ways that systems of race, gender, social class and place interact to impact the lived experiences and perceptions of Arab and South Asian men. Collins (2015) describes intersectionality as a multidimensional or multifaceted knowledge project that is historically rooted in the diametric oppressions and activisms of oppressed groups. Thus, intersectionality—in its purest sense—is not simply an academic theory. Intersectionality has also gained a growing acceptance in the academy and scholars have reached the consensus that:

“The term intersectionality references the critical insight that race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age [I add place] operate not as unitary, mutually exclusive entities, but as reciprocally constructing phenomena that in turn shape complex social inequalities” (Collins 2015: 2).

Perhaps most famously, intersectional theories have been used to analyze the unique domination-based experiences and positions of Black women. In this example Black women are marginalized in complex ways, and their “Blackness” and “womanhood” are mutually constructing categories that cannot be separated. For example, in her seminal work on “Black Feminist Thought” Collins (2000) demonstrates the ways that black

women's lived realities and needs are overlooked by first- and second-wave feminist and anti-racist movements.

Intersectionality is a dynamic, relatively young and interdisciplinary theoretical framework. Thus, scholars are continuously revisiting and redeveloping the epistemological bases for conducting intersectional studies. Choo and Ferree (2010) outline three types of intersectional analyses as “group-centered”, “process-centered”, and “system-centered,” and encourage sociologists to vie for the latter. Group-centered analyses have the positive aim of providing a voice to historically oppressed and silenced groups, especially with respect to the academy. However, such analyses often prioritize description rather than providing an institutional-relational and sociological comparison. Thus, group-centered analyses run the risk of fetishizing difference and constructing content areas of expertise, e.g. Africana women's studies. The second, more advanced form of analysis focuses on intersectional forces via variables where scholars specify axes of difference to be theoretically isolated. However, these analyses—frequently characterized by comparative studies—“[run] the risk of focusing on abstracted structures in their intersectional configuration, thus turning the persons ... experiencing ... interactions into incidental figures, underplaying their agency in these complex constellations of forces” (Choo and Ferree 2010: 134). Instead, Choo and Ferree advocate for system-centered analyses, where: “the account of intersectionality as a complex system sees gender and race are fundamentally embedded in, working through and determining the organization of ownership, profit, and the commodification of labor...” (Choo and Ferree 2010: 135). For instance, rather than focusing on affected groups or on what axes of difference are significant in shaping the intersectional experiences of

groups, studies should focus on the systems themselves that produce inequalities. I use a system-centered analysis to address the complex ways that place-specific iterations of Islamophobic racism, sexism, and classism impact perceptions of Islamophobia and belonging for Arab and South Asian men. In doing so, I incorporate a discussion of the ways that men from different class backgrounds interact with surrounding geographic communities, perform masculinities, and describe personal belonging in relation to their social location and Arab and South Asian histories in a small rural town in the U.S. South.

Scholars writing to the field of Islamophobia and the racialization have addressed the ways that gender informs Muslim racialization as foreign or anti-democratic (Akram and Johnson 2002 and Selod 2015, 2016, and 2019). Scholars who study groups racialized as Muslims (Cainkar and Selod 2018) and other intermediary groups (Marrow 2009, Rockquemore et al. 2009, Saperstein and Penner 2012) have issued calls for additional intersectional research addressing the experiences of Muslims and how intermediary racial categories are formed and inhabited. These calls have been issued because the various systems of racism, Islamophobia, sexism, and classism interact in complex ways to maintain systemic inequalities and subordination. A more nuanced understanding of these systems is needed to combat these forces together. This study answers these calls by addressing the ways that upper-, middle-, and working-class Arab and South Asian men experience and interpret their experiences with Islamophobia, contribute to hegemonic gender orders, and experience and perceive belonging based on social class in the U.S. South.

### *Race and Racisms*

Races are historically constructed according to processes of racialization, whereby “racial meanings are assigned to previously unclassified relationships, social practices, or groups” (Omi and Winant 2015: 13). Thus, it makes sense to say that races are historically and socially constructed political categories of difference that are based on external markers deemed to be significant. Scholars of race agree that races are externally created and imposed on groups, primarily by dominant group members on subordinate group members (Bonilla-Silva 1997 and 2015, Kibria 2000, Morning 2001, Omi and Winant 2015). By contrast, ethnicity is typically defined in Weberian terms, whereby ethnic groups are formed around claims to kinship, common history, and connections to certain symbols that capture the core of the group’s identity (Kibria 2000, Morning 2001, Nagel 1994). Per the process of racialization (Omi and Winant 2015), ethnic groups can be given racial meaning.

During the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries, sociologists have issued calls to develop comprehensive theories of racism (Bonilla-Silva 1997, Golash-Boza 2016, Winant 2000). The most popular responses to these calls tend to explain racial phenomena via an interplay between macro-level: structure, institutions, organizations, and regimes; and micro-level: experiences, discrimination, groups, and identities. Furthermore, recent theories (Bonilla Silva 1997, 2004, 2015; Feagin and Elias 2013; Omi and Winant 2015) have tended to grant more power to structure than individual agency in describing what shapes racial matters in the U.S. For instance, Bonilla-Silva (1997, 2015) summarizes his “racialized social systems” here:

“First, racialized social systems are societies that allocate differential economic, political, social, and even psychological rewards to groups along racial lines .... After a society becomes racialized, a set of social relations and practices [the racial structure of society] based on racial distinctions develops at all societal levels .... Second, races historically are constituted according to the process of racialization.... Third, on the basis of this structure, there develops a racial ideology [popularly characterized as racism]. Fourth, most struggles in a racialized social system contain a racial component, but sometimes they acquire and/or exhibit a distinct racial character... Finally, the process of racial contestation reveals the different objective interests of the races in a racialized system.” (474)

For instance, in U.S. history groups of mostly Western-European ancestry came to define themselves as white and claim the rewards and privileges associated with whiteness. Dominant ideologies have developed and shifted that justify racial dominance and subordination, and a rich history of struggles and contestations that have a racial nature. All racial groups in the U.S. must consequently grapple with this system of white supremacy. And Whites, seeking to maintain their advantage, police and protect the boundaries of whiteness. Historical examples of this are: slave codes, anti-miscegenation laws, rules of hypo-descent, supreme court rulings on citizenship that appeal to race, physical segregation, etc.

More recently, however, these structurally based explanations of contemporary racial regimes have come under theoretical scrutiny for their apparent inability to address how intermediate racial groups come to be formed, inhabited, and experienced (Marrow

2009, Rockquemore et al. 2009, Saperstein and Penner 2012). By intermediate, I refer to groups that exist outside of a prototypical U.S. White/Black racial binary. Many scholars (Morning 2001, Rockquemore et al. 2009, Selod 2015, Zopf 2018) have argued that the major paradigms used to understand race in the U.S. are based in this problematic White/Black racial binary, shaped primarily by the legacies of chattel slavery, post-emancipation subordination and violence, Jim Crow segregation, residential apartheid, the black civil rights movement, white backlash, and colorblindness. Such paradigms do not adequately explain the complex and unique histories of Asian American, first-nations, multi-racial, or more recently racialized ethnic groupings—e.g, Arabs and South Asians, and Latinx groups. Morning (2001) argues in a paper on the racial self-identification of South Asians,

“Much of the literature on racial formation privileges the broad social and political forces, historical and contemporary, which shape the development and spread of racial schema. Students of racial formation writ large, however, often ignore the individual-level actions and encounters that shape racialization on the ground.” (63)

These shortcomings are amplified by the large-scale demographic shifts that have occurred in nation-states like the U.S., as historically restrictive immigration policies have been lifted and globalization has enabled more people to move internationally; and furthermore, as popular understandings of race itself changes (Marrow 2009, Meer 2008, Rockquemore et al. 2009, Saperstein and Penner 2012, Zopf 2018). Until recent history, virtually all national-U.S. immigration policy was explicitly informed by racialized nativism that favored European origin whites. For instance, The Chinese Exclusion Act



[CEA] [also the immigration act of 1882]<sup>2</sup> was the first federal legislation to suspend immigration for an entire group based on their nationality of origin [Chinese] (Wu 2017, Golash-Boza 2018, Zhou 2012). While the CEA marked a significant moment in U.S. history, it is not unique from the many federal policies that it set the precedent for. The Immigration act of 1917 expanded the Chinese Exclusion Act to include India, Burma, the Malay States, Arabia and Afghanistan (Golash-Boza 2018, Zhou 2012). The Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 “cut off almost all immigration from Asia and instituted national quotas restricting immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe, Africa, and the Middle East” (Munoz 2008: 41). These racial quotas on immigration would remain in effect until the Hart-Cellar Act of 1965 overturned them (Golash-Boza 2018; Hirschman and Massey 2008, Munoz 2008).

Perhaps unsurprisingly so, these racially restrictive histories have had a direct impact on the demographic composition of the U.S. (Hirschman and Massey 2008). The Migration Policy Institute (2017) tracks a dramatic growth in the portion of U.S. residents who are foreign born; from 1970 to 2017 this number increased from 9,619,300 to 44,525,900. During this time foreign-born people in America comprised 4.7, and later 13.7 percent of the total U.S. population (Migration Policy Institute 2017). U.S. immigrant populations also shifted from being overwhelmingly characterized by Western European nationalities [Whites] to most immigrants originating in the Americas and Asia [intermediate racial categories] (Migration Policy Institute 2017). Arab and Pakistani American populations have drastically increased in recent time. The Arab American

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<sup>2</sup> The CEA was passed in 1882, renewed in 1892, and made permanent in 1902. This act would ultimately be repealed to permit an annual quota of Chinese immigrants in 1943. (Wu 2017)

Institute [AAI] reports that, “[t]he number of Americans who claim Arab ancestry has more than doubled since the Census first measured ethnic origins in 1980 and is among the fastest growing Arab diaspora populations in the world.” According to U.S. Census estimations, AAI reports that there are 2,041,484 Arab Americans in the U.S. Similarly, López et al. (2017) estimate that the Pakistani American population grew from about 204,000 in 2000 to 519,000 by 2015 [a 154% increase].

In light of these demographic changes and critiques of theories of race and racism, this research project studies Arab and South Asian men—an intermediary racial group who are frequently racialized as Muslims. I discuss this process of racialization in the next section. In the findings sections, I demonstrate how experiences with racism and perceptions of belonging vary for men based on their social class positions.

#### *Islamophobia and the Racialization of Arabs and South Asians as Muslims*

Recall that racialization refers to the processes of assigning racial meanings “to previously unclassified relationships, social practices, or groups” (Omi and Winant 2015: 13). More specifically, racialization operates to categorize and place people in the existing racial hierarchy and is thus part of the ascription process. Racialization does not occur uniformly. In sociology, Islamophobia is increasingly being discussed as a form of racism, even though Islam is officially a religion and not a race (Akram and Johnson 2002, Allen 2018, Cainkar and Selod 2018, Garner and Selod 2015; Jaffe-Walter 2016, Rana 2011, Razack 2008, Selod 2015, Zopf 2018). In their seminal work on the racialization of Muslims, Garner and Selod (2015) outline the theoretical justifications for this position. Recall that the historical process of creating racial categories is called racialization (Omi and Winant 2015: 13). Since race is a social construction—not rooted

in biology, it “has historically been derived from both physical and cultural characteristics” (Garner and Selod, 2015: 12). This includes cultural attributes such as a group’s faith tradition. A clear example of this is diasporic Jews who, despite being racially classified as white, have historically been the victims of racism with pseudo-scientific justifications. According to Garner and Selod (2015): “[r]acialization provides the language needed to discuss newer forms of racism that are not only based on skin-tone, as well as other forms” (12). Per Gast et al. (2021) “[i]mmigrants face distinct forms of racialization depending on how their cultural, social, and physical traits are linked to the U.S. racial hierarchy” (p. 1214). In other words, racialization is group specific and context specific. The racialized category of Muslims—which includes Arabs and South Asians—has been ascribed meaning as culturally deficient, anti-American, potential terrorists, and men are deemed to be misogynist patriarchs who abuse Muslim women (Selod 2015).

New scholarship (Jaffe-Walter 2016, Love 2017; Rana 2011; Selod 2015, 2016, and 2019, Zopf 2018) using a racialization framework to address the experiences of Muslims in Western societies has yielded great theoretical insights during the twenty-first century. For instance, Love (2017) details a long history of Islamophobia and a racialization of Muslims that dates to 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Orientalist depictions of ‘the Muslim world.’ Selod (2015) finds that Arabs, South Asians, and Muslims are racialized as terrorists, patriarchs, misogynists, and anti-American pundits. Because of this, they experience surveillance and scrutiny related to their presumed nationalities of origin and allegiance. She further demonstrates that both government agencies and private citizens contest Muslim American’s citizenship during everyday social interactions. Despite not

directly using the term racialization, Lean (2012) traces the historical media development of Muslims as an oppositional other and reveals the material and financial resources that have been used to buoy Islamophobic discourse by popular right-wing news. This history parallels the claims that we are witnessing the construction of a Muslim racial-political category, which is used and acted against in contemporary racialized social systems.

Selod (2019) broadly argues, “Arabs and South Asians who are also Muslims are moving down the racial hierarchy because of the racialization of a Muslim identity” (566). Thus, they are frequently unable to claim all the benefits that whiteness affords. However, Arab and South Asian citizenship has long been contested. Morning (2001) writes of South Asians, “[i]n the early years of the twentieth century, when whiteness (or African ancestry) was a prerequisite for naturalization, American courts vacillated on the question of whether Asian Indians were white or not” (61). Take for example, the contradictory U.S. Supreme Court Cases of *Takao Ozawa v. U.S.* [1922] and *Bhagat Singh Thind* [1923] where the U.S. Supreme Court twice ruled on citizenship and contradicted itself in one instance, appealing to the popular racist sciences of the day and in the later, appealing to an eye test (Golash-Boza 2018). Scholars have demonstrated that these groups become more susceptible to discrimination and racialization related to presumed foreignness and antagonism towards Western democratic values (Allen 2018; Rana 2011; Selod 2015, 2016, and 2019, Zopf 2018). This susceptibility is popularly categorized as Islamophobia, though many scholars connect these trends to literature on racism (Garner and Selod 2015; Love 2017; Meer 2008; Rana 2011; Selod 2015, 2016 and 2019; Zopf 2018).

As discussed previously, recent scholarship has utilized an intersectional framework to address how a myriad of social designations and factors contribute to differential racialization and experiences of discrimination (Abu-Ras and Suarez 2009, Allen 2018, Selod 2015 and 2019). Selod (2019) finds that Arab and South Asian men and women both are subject to increased surveillance by the state and private citizens. Surveillance occurs in gendered patterns and has gendered and racial logics, e.g., men are constructed as truly violent threats to American democracy, and women are marked as passive victims of patriarchy and a backwards culture. Other scholarship has echoed these claims (Abu Ras and Suarez 2009, Razack 2008; Selod 2015 and 2016). Abu Ras and Suarez (2009) find that both Muslim men and women in New York experienced symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder [PTSD] as a result of 9/11, but in gendered ways. And still others (Allen 2018, Meer 2008) have suggested that visibility may contribute to an individual's susceptibility for discrimination. These factors include religious signifiers such as wearing the hijab, wearing a thobe, praying, or attending religious services; and physical characteristics such as phenotype.

Though a literature-base is emerging that situates contemporary Islamophobia in the context of a history of orientalism and racism against Muslims, leading scholars in the field have issued numerous calls for further research. For instance, Garner and Selod (2015: 10) urge scholars to conduct further “fieldwork-based studies (particularly those in which Muslims are the subject of interviews and/or ethnographies)” that engage with the process of racialization. In their “Review of Race Scholarship and the War on Terror”, Cainkar and Selod (2018) call for researchers “to embark on studies that fill major gaps in this emerging field of study—such as intersectional approaches that incorporate

*gender, communities of belonging, black Muslim experiences, class, and sexuality—and to remain conscious of the global dimensions of this racial project”* (10) [italics added]. I address these calls by qualitatively addressing how the interlocking forces of racialization, nativism, class hierarchy and regional isolation impact experience, perceptions, and belonging among Arab and Pakistani American men with immigrant-family origins.

### *The Myth of the Model Minority*

Though Arabs and South Asian groups have been casted as potential terrorists and patriarchs (Allen 2018; Rana 2011; Selod 2015, 2016, and 2019, Zopf 2018), interviewees from the rural town in my study described being casted as “model minorities.” Because of this, I describe the model minority myth and how and why this myth is relevant to racism in the U.S. context. Poon et al. (2016) define the model minority myth as a “racial stereotype [that] generally defines AAPIs, especially Asian Americans, as a monolithically hardworking racial group whose high achievement undercuts claims of systemic racism made by other racially minoritized populations, especially African Americans” (469). They further argue that this myth serves to maintain a racial structure of white supremacy by supporting racist ideologies and maintaining racial barriers. The pan-ethnic label, “Asian,” in U.S. racial categorization is inherently broad and limiting and is an example of how these groups are marginalized by the state (Poon et al. 2016). Collapsing such a diverse group obscures analyses of the diverse experiences of Asian Americans, particularly because some sub-groups are considerably disadvantaged by wealth, income, and education. Furthermore, the prioritization of some measures such as educational achievement and household income

obscure the ways that APIs experience racism and white supremacy. In this study, some upper class Arab and South Asian Americans indicated that they were the subjects of model minority stereotyping and thus they were racialized as high achieving “brown” kids or model minorities. However, as I will demonstrate, these same interviewees still experienced sometimes quite severe Islamophobia. My findings nuance contemporary understandings of the racialization of Arabs and South Asians because I demonstrate that social class and local context shape the specific iterations and negotiations of racial meaning. Ultimately though, all iterations still maintain white dominance in the existing racial order. In Townsburg the racialization of Arabs and South Asians has a model minority twist. In some instances upper class Arabs and South Asians were racialized as high achieving “brown” kids instead of as terrorists or patriarchs. This demonstrates the importance of considering place in analyses of racialization and stereotyping.

### *Belonging in Place*

In a review of sociological literature on place, Gieryn (2000) defines place in terms of geographic location, material form, and investment with meaning and value. He notes that place is not just a backdrop or context for something else; furthermore, it is not a proxy for demographic or racial variables (Gieryn 2000: 466). Rather, place seeks to address the question of: “[h]ow do geographic locations, material forms, and the cultural conjuring’s of them intersect with social practices and structures, norms and values, power and inequality, difference and distinction” (468)? Gieryn (2000) further argues that “place sustains difference and hierarchy... by routinizing daily rounds in ways that exclude and segregate categories of people, and by embodying in visible and tangible ways the cultural meanings variously ascribed to them[;]” (474) and that places can serve

as a source of engagement or estrangement (476). In this study I interrogate how Arab and South Asian American men experience and perceive discrimination in new immigrant destinations in the U.S. South, and how place via geographic localities and social class impact experiences and perceptions of belonging among Arab and Pakistani American men in these new immigrant destinations. I use towns and cities as geographic locations to frame my analysis of belonging. I characterize both of these localities as non-traditional immigrant destinations because of their demographic characteristics. As I demonstrate, the unique histories of Arabs and South Asians in these places and relationships to the surrounding communities led to important differences in how Arabs and South Asians from upper-, and middle- and working-class categories between these two localities experienced and perceived personal belonging.

I define new-immigrant destinations as localities that immigrant-origin groups are settling in during the late-20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup>-centuries that do not match historic trends. Historically, new immigrants to the U.S. have been concentrated in gateway cities, where immigrants have developed and advocated for formal and informal networks, immigrant-serving community-based organizations, and inclusive policies (Hirschman and Massey 2008, Marrow 2009a and b). And consequently, studies of immigrant origin populations have been concentrated in these spaces. More recently, immigrant groups have been settling in locations outside of gateway cities. Massey and Capoferro (2008) find that the percent of immigration to the five primary immigrant destination states [California, New York, Texas, Florida, and Illinois] dropped significantly between the five-year periods of 1985-1990 and 1995-2000. Specifically, Mexican immigration dropped from 86 to 61 percent to these states respectively. Other Latinx immigrant groups dropped from 72 to



42 percent to these states. Asian Immigration dropped from 60 to 52 percent to these states. Non-Asian, Non-Latino immigration dropped from 56 to 47 percent respectively. Hirschman and Massey (2008) attribute these demographic changes to a restructuring American industrial economy. Studying immigrant experiences in these new immigrant destinations provides a unique opportunity to analyze the process of racialization and how intermediate racial groups experience and perceive racism in the U.S. Because as I discussed in the prior section, racialization followed place-based logics. A growing body of scholarship is analyzing experiences in these new immigrant destinations, though most of it focuses on Latinx groups (Dreby and Schmalzbauer 2013, Brown et al. 2018, Marrow 2009a and b, Massey and Capoferro 2008, Mendez and Deeb-Sossa 2020). I argue that the changing place-locations of Arab and South Asian Americans and their subsequent experiences in these new immigrant destinations warrant further study because studying the experiences of these groups in new-immigrant destinations gives us a fuller picture of how Islamophobia, social class, and gender intersect in place-specific ways to effect perceptions of belonging.

Some scholarship (Chaudhary 2018, Hopkins 2007, Hopkins et al. 2007, Mir 2007) analyzes the effects of place on Muslim identities and experiences. However, much of this scholarship addresses Muslim experiences in Europe and seemingly little research attention has been paid to Arab, South Asian, and Muslim experiences in non-traditional immigrant U.S. destinations. In one study, Chaichian (2008) examines the process of community formation for first- and second-generation Iranians in Iowa City, Iowa. He finds that multi-generational Iranian communities are not sustainable because second-generation Iranians are migrating out of small urban communities such as Iowa City in

pursuit of economic and career opportunities. According to survey data Iranian Americans believe that social isolation and loneliness is a significant pressing problem facing Iranians in the U.S.

Scholars are beginning to address belonging and place-making in new immigrant destinations. These scholars (Antonsich 2010, Dreby and Schmalzbauer 2013, Mendez and Deeb-Sossa 2020, Yuval-Davis 2006) have demonstrated that belonging and place making are complex processes that vary based on populations in question, community characteristics, place, etc. In general, sociological definitions of belonging include personal feeling(s) of “being ‘at home’ in a place” (Antonsich 2010: 645), or an “identification and emotional attachments to various collectivities and groupings” (Yuval-Davis 2006: 199). Belonging can also refer to the systemic level “value systems” that people use to determine their own and others’ belonging (Yuval-Davis 2006: 199) or “discursive resources that constructs, claims, justifies, or resists forms of social-spatial inclusion/exclusion” (Antonsich 2010: 645).

In a review of social scientific literature on belonging, Antonsich (2010) argues that belonging is a term that is frequently used in a variety of social sciences, but that it is often ill defined. He further claims that scholars have used “identity,” “citizenship,” and “belonging” interchangeably, or without seeking to address their theoretical or analytical specifics. Belonging-ness may instead encompass identity and citizenship, but it is not synonymous with the two. Belonging is multidimensional. Antonsich (2010) outlines this complexity by incorporating both personal feelings of belongingness and discursive or systemic-level belongingness.

Antonsich (2010) outlines five factors highlighted in scholarship on belonging that contribute to personal feelings of belongingness (647). Autobiographical factors refer to “personal experiences, relations, and memories that attach a particular person to a given place” (Antonsich 2010: p 647). Relational factors refer to “the personal and social ties that enrich the life of an individual in a given place” (Antonsich 2010: p 647). Antonsich (2010) highlights language as an important cultural factor that contributes to personal feelings of belonging (648). Economic factors “contribute to create a safe and stable material condition for the individual and her/his family” (Antonsich 2010: p 647). Legal factors, for example citizenship and resident permits, produce security, which many regard as vital to belonging Antonsich 2010: p 647). As I demonstrate in chapter 6, the current project highlights autobiographical accounts of relationships that contribute to a sense of belonging for upper class Arabs and South Asian Americans in a non-traditional immigrant destination.

As Antonsich (2010) claims, “[t]o be able to feel at home in a place is not just a personal matter, but also a social one” (649). Belonging is also a resource in discourses and in practices of inclusion or exclusion. Antonsich mostly explains this via membership (to a group) and ownership (of a place) and claiming belonging and being accepted by others as belonging. Though the current project does not observe whether and how participants are actually accepted or rejected as belonging in certain geographic locations, I do observe claims of upper class interviewees in Townsburg who feel that they belong and examples of times when they felt their belonging was recognized by non-Arab and South Asian community members.

Antonsich (2010) argues that scholars have inadequately addressed place in their analyses of belonging, “as if feelings, discourses, and practices of belonging exist in a geographical vacuum” (647). Some emerging scholarship has addressed this critique by more intentionally incorporating place specific themes into their analyses and addressing the varied and place-specific pathways to belonging for Latinx immigrants in the U.S. (Dreby and Schmalzbauer 2013, Mendez and Deeb-Sossa 2020). For example, Mendez and Deeb-Sossa (2020) compare the experiences of Latinx women in traditional and new immigrant destinations. They find that in new immigrant destinations women had to overcome social isolation, a lack of public transportation, and the relative absence of co-ethnics. However, these women developed a sense of belonging by overcoming a variety of barriers to meeting their families’ needs. It is through their agency that they find personal belonging. I contribute to these literatures on belonging by analyzing the ways that social class shapes personal feelings of belonging in a non-traditional immigrant destination for Arab and South Asian American men. I define personal belonging as the feeling that you are accepted as a valid member of a place and additionally that your belonging is accepted by others.

I argue that Metro-City and Townsburg present a unique opportunity to analyze how the meanings and values assigned to place shape how Arab and South Asian men experience and perceive Islamophobia and belonging in these locales. This supposition was based on underlying characteristics, such as: regional isolation in terms of racial and ethnic populations, percentage of foreign-born population, and religious communities, which I discuss in the methods section. Analysis of my data demonstrates an urban/rural

divide in the perceived proclivity toward Islamophobia and consequently the safety of places.

### *Doing Masculinity and Hegemonic Bargains*

Gender has been conceptualized in many ways, including performances (West and Zimmerman 1987), boundary-work (Gerson and Piess 1985), elements of cultures (Ridgeway and Correll 2004), and as an institution that shapes peoples' lived experiences and access to power (Martin 2004). At their base, most contemporary theories of gender (Connell 1987; Gerson and Piess 1985; Ridgeway and Correll 2004; West and Zimmerman 1987) contend that gender is socially constructed and operates at both macro- and micro-levels of society. Furthermore, these scholars argue that what we recognize as gender is actually a complex interplay between ideals and expectations about gender and individual behaviors that adhere to or resist these gendered ideals and expectations. For instance in their seminal work on "doing gender," West and Zimmerman (1987) claim that "[g]ender [...] is the activity of managing situated conduct in light of normative conceptions of attitudes and activities appropriate for one's sex category" (West and Zimmerman 1987: 127). According to West and Zimmerman (1987), gender-based institutional arrangements are 'sustained, reproduced, and rendered legitimate' (147) through the subsequent 'doing' of gender. That is, when individuals either act in accordance with gender norms or when they are sanctioned for failing to adhere to those standards, gender is consequentially reproduced.

Whether operationalized as institutions (Martin 2004), elements of culture (Ridgeway and Correll 2004), or "regimes" (Connell 1987), scholars generally agree that the accepted patterns of doing gender maintain the dominance of men over women,

certain groups of men over others, and certain groups of women over others. Historically, wealthy, white, straight men have positioned themselves at the top of the gender order and have dominated other groups. Scholars have called this wealthy white dominated gender order “patriarchy” (Connell 1987) and patriarchy has been maintained in different ways at different points in time in different places (Kandiyoti 1988; Herzog and Yahia-Younis 2007). Patriarchy also refers to the institutionalized power of men over women. In Western societies, e.g. the U.S., scholars generally argue that patriarchy is currently most frequently maintained through institutions and hegemony (Connell 1987).

Although I interview Arab and South Asian men, and not women, the ways that these men discuss and “do” masculinity is of interest to this study. I outline three types of masculinity described by Connell (2005) that are useful as a basis for understanding the masculinities of men in my sample. First, “[h]egemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or at least is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (Connell 2005, 77). Tenets of hegemonic masculinity in U.S. society include but are not limited to: the defense of women from threats, heterosexuality, economic success, “whiteness,” and physical dominance. Notably, relatively few men are actually able to embody hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2005) because this performance is predicated on the dominance of others. Second, “[m]en who received the benefits of patriarchy without enacting a strong version of masculine dominance could be regarded as showing a *complicit masculinity* [italics added]” (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 832). In other words, complicit masculinities are characterized by the failure to recognize, name, and work against male

dominance, even if these men do not intentionally support hegemonic masculinity. Finally, marginalized masculinities are differentiated from hegemonic masculinities, in that marginalized masculinities are devalued or subjugated in a social order, often against the will of its holder. In particular, Connell (2005) claims that lower-income men and men of color perform marginalized masculinities, because they often lack the social status available to higher-income and/or white men. Hegemonic variations of masculinity are frequently constructed against marginalized masculinities. Connell (2005: 80-81) highlights that racial minorities—in particular Black men—have served important symbolic roles against which hegemonic white masculinities were constructed, namely via white men protecting white women against would-be Black rapist tropes.

Scholars (Barry 2018, Bridges and Pascoe 2014, Chen 1999, Wingfield 2013) have expanded on these typologies of masculinities. For instance, Chen (1999) finds that Chinese American men engage in “hegemonic bargains”, whereby one “trades or unconsciously benefits from the ‘privileges’ of race, gender, class, generation, and/or sexuality for the purpose of ‘achieving’ his masculinity” (604). He outlines three strategies for engaging in “hegemonic bargains:” “compensation,” “deflection,” and “denial.” He suggests that Chinese men might engage in “compensation,” whereby men make a concerted effort to break stereotypes against them, e.g. Chinese American men emphasizing athleticism against model “minority stereotypes.” “Deflection” refers to emphasizing certain other attributes to detract from negative stereotypes or perceived shortcomings, e.g. emphasizing wealth or social class despite well-documented discrimination in occupational advancement to management. And “denial” refers to strategies that involve a denial of negative stereotypes or a claim to some form of

exceptionalism, e.g. a Chinese man indicating that stereotypes about Chinese American men just not being true about him. I apply concepts developed by Chen (1999)—particularly the concepts of “hegemonic bargains” and “deflection”—to my analysis of the ways that Arab and South Asian men discussed the experiences of Arab and South Asian women with Islamophobia. I find that Arab and South Asian men engage in “hegemonic bargains” when they take responsibility for protecting significant women in their lives from Islamophobic perpetrators. In particular, interviewees engaged in deflection because when asked about experiences with Islamophobia, many of these men pointed out that Muslim women faced more Islamophobia than them and sought to emphasize their ability to protect significant women from said Islamophobia. Some Arab and South Asian men further emphasized their own masculinities by voicing support for the control of women and for violence against Islamophobic perpetrators. By doing so, they were able to perform hegemony and gain status as protectors of women.

### *Social Class*

Social class emerged as an important theme in this study because I found classed differences in the ways that Arab and South Asian men discussed experiences with Islamophobia and in the ways that these men discussed and perceived personal belonging in Townsburg. Whereas early studies of social class tended to focus on the ways that class and classism are structured in contemporary societies, more recent post-structural scholarship (Bourdieu 1989, Gast 2018, Wingfield 2013, Lareau 2002, Lareau 2015) addresses the ways that social class operates and is reproduced in daily practice. For example, Lareau (2015) uses longitudinal data to demonstrate that social class matters with respect to understanding how to successfully navigate institutions. She finds that



young adults from middle-class backgrounds better understand the “rules of the game” and feel more entitled to ask for help than their working-class and poor counterparts when they faced a problem related to an institution. These findings suggest that institutional knowledge and resources are an important requisite for upward mobility, and thus, help to explain how class is reproduced and maintained. I took an approach similar to that taken by Lareau (2002) to measure social class. I extrapolated social class position primarily from occupational history and educational attainment of participants or their families.

Some research suggests that social class impacts the ways that individuals and groups experience and perceive racial discrimination. In a study of anti-Black discrimination, Feagin (1991) finds that middle-class Black Americans reported situational discriminatory experiences. Middle-class Black Americans reported more and worse discrimination in public places, such as grocery stores, where their middle-class status is unclear. Conversely when they were at their places of employment, e.g. a professor on a college campus, they reported fewer and less severe moments of discrimination. I find that though both upper- and middle-class Arab and South Asian men experienced a wide range of Islamophobic encounters, upper class interviewees were particularly dismissive of Islamophobia. In exploring why interviewees from upper class backgrounds dismiss Islamophobia and perceive some personal Islamophobic encounters as non-threatening, I found that many instances of downplaying Islamophobia were connected to conversations about “Americanization”, social class, and proximity to other racial groups—e.g. whites. In particular, I argue that the privileges associated with high occupational and educational statuses lead the men in my study to downplay their

personal experiences of Islamophobia. In chapter 6, I discuss my findings that upper class Arab and South Asian Americans perceived and articulated a particularly strong sense of belonging whereas middle- and working-class interviewees did not describe belonging in similar ways.

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

The current project involves in-depth semi-structured interviews with 23 Muslim Arab and South Asian men who live in a southeastern state. In what immediately follows, I first discuss why the selected methods are appropriate for addressing my research questions. Second, I outline the data collection process and interview schedule. Third, I provide an overview of my study sample. Fourth, I detail the approach I took to analyzing and preparing data. Fifth, I outline the measures taken to protect research study participants. And lastly, I outline my social location as a researcher and the ways my social location likely influenced collection and analysis of data.

### *Why interviews*

As previously indicated, I draw on in-depth, semi-structured interviews with Arab and South Asian Muslim men living in a mid-sized, southern state. This research answers calls from leading scholars to study racism against Muslims (Cainkar and Selod 2018 and Garner and Selod 2015). For instance, Garner and Selod (2015) urge scholars to conduct further “fieldwork-based studies (particularly those in which Muslims are the subject of interviews and/or ethnographies)” (10). Cainkar and Selod (2018) call for researchers “to embark on studies that fill major gaps in this [racism against Muslims] emerging field of study—such as intersectional approaches that incorporate *gender, communities of belonging*

black Muslim experiences, *class*, and sexuality—and to remain conscious of the global dimensions of this racial project” (10) [emphasis added]. I address these calls by interviewing Arab and South Asian men about their experiences and perceptions of Islamophobia and community membership and expanding on conversations related to social class and masculinity. Focusing on men in the locale selected allows me to address: (1) how social class informs experiences and perceptions of Islamophobia and racism in new immigrant destinations; (2) the ways that Arab and South Asians uniquely perform masculinity in response to Islamophobia against significant women in their lives; and (3), how men intersectionally experience belonging in these locales.

At the beginning of this project I attempted to conduct ethnographic observations at religious meetings, one potluck, and one cookout with two religious groups, one in Metro-City and one in Townsburg. My aim when I was in the field was twofold: (1) I hoped to meet potential participants and solicit research interviews; (2) I hoped to observe and record data relevant to my study. After several observations at these two sites I determined that I was not meeting either of these goals. Potential interviewees were not particularly receptive to inquiries in these spaces<sup>3</sup>. Additionally, I was not able to observe anything that was of interest to this study. I was, however, able to have an informal sit-down with an Imam<sup>4</sup> and a “community pioneer” to discuss the history of the Muslim community in Townsburg. I also believe that my early presence in these communities allowed me to build rapport with research subjects, which improved the quality of interviews.

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<sup>3</sup> I had more success in recruiting participants through snowball sampling through [insert first people who helped connect you with participants, such as the Imam] ....

<sup>4</sup> An Imam is a formal spiritual leader at mosques or prayer centers.

Interviews yielded rich data, and the data discussed in subsequent chapters draws from these interviews. Qualitative semi-structured interviewing (Gillham 2000: 6) generally refers to interviewing strategies that follow a series or a schedule of questions<sup>5</sup>, but are flexible in that the researcher is free to ask, probe or follow-up questions when deemed appropriate or when expanding on a conversation that is particularly relevant to the study. According to Gilham (2004) interviewing is an appropriate methodology if:

“[1] [s]mall numbers of people are involved[;] [2] [p]eople are accessible[;] [3] [m]ost of the questions are ‘open’ and require an extended response with prompts and probes[;] [4] [e]very one is ‘key’ and you can’t afford to lose any [interviews][;] [5] [t]he material is sensitive in character so trust is involved[;] [6] [a]nonymity is not an issue, though confidentiality may be[;] [7] [d]epth of meaning is central, with only some approximation to typicality[;] [8] [r]esearch aims mainly to acquire insight and understanding[.]” (11)

The current research project meets all of these qualifications. Using interviews allowed me to collect detailed and rich data about participants’ experiences and perceptions of Islamophobia, community membership, and masculinity in the U.S. South. Such data could not be gathered from observation, surveying, or other more large-scale quantitative measures.

Such methods also have a precedent in the research literature. Other scholars studying similar populations, problems, and engaging with the same theoretical bodies have used qualitative interviews as their primary units of analysis (Garner and Selod 2015, Massey and Sanchez 2010, Selod 2015, Zopf 2018). For instance, Zopf (2018) uses

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<sup>5</sup> A copy of the interview schedule is provided in *Appendix A* at the end of this document.

qualitative interviews with 53 Egyptian and Egyptian Americans to demonstrate that respondents are racialized into a broad “Brown” ethnoracial category. Similarly, Selod (2015) uses qualitative interviews with 48 Muslim Americans to reveal the ways that racialized Muslims’ citizenship is routinely contested in everyday interactions with other Americans. Interviews allow me to examine both perceptions and responses to experiences with Islamophobic racism within the context of local communities.

### *Interview logistics*

Interviews were conducted over a six-month period from Fall 2019 to Spring 2020 and were cut short when the university placed a halt on non-essential research in response to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. Interviews were an average of about one hour and 10 minutes in length. The briefest interview was 32 minutes long and the longest interview lasted nearly one hour and 45 minutes. Seven interviews were conducted in-person, in a small conference room space that I had access to at the university. Seven interviews were conducted in-person, in various coffee shops in Metro-City and Townsburg. Six interviews were conducted over the phone. Two interviews were conducted in-person, in mosques or religious centers in office spaces graciously provided by the Imams at those respective locations. And one interview was conducted in-person, in the respondent’s home, because coffee shops were closed on New Year’s Eve when we met. Each interview began with an overview of research subject rights, the signing of an informed consent document<sup>6</sup>, and the completion of a brief demographic survey<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> A copy of the consent form detailing research subject rights is provided in *Appendix C* at the end of this document.

<sup>7</sup> A copy of the brief demographic survey is provided in *Appendix B* at the end of this document.

Interviews followed a semi-structured schedule<sup>8</sup> that was broken up into sections that focus on perceptions of place, identity and community membership, and Islamophobia. All interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of research participants.

I used a combination of availability, purposive, and snowball sampling to recruit interview participants. I began with availability sampling because I have done previous research on adjacent populations (Allen 2018 and 2019). I remained engaged with the Muslim community in the area and had key informants and contacts in the field prior to the study. I also sampled from participants attending religious services and group meetings in Metro-City and Townsburg. Availability sampling generally refers to recruiting study participants already immediately available to the researcher. Eleven interviewees were recruited using some form of availability sampling previously discussed. However, soliciting interviews as an outsider at religious services proved to be slow. I saw much more success through snowball sampling. Snowball sampling generally refers to strategies to recruit study participants that draw from existing social networks. For instance, I asked interviewees if they knew anyone that might be able to make significant contributions to my research study at the conclusion of interviews. If they could think of anyone or were willing to think about it for me, I asked them to discuss the study with potential interviewees prior to giving me their information. If their contacts were interested, I then pursued interviews with these study participants. Twelve interviews were solicited using snowball-sampling techniques.

Purposive sampling refers to sampling based on theoretical justifications. I applied principles of purposive sampling to both my availability and snowball sampling

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<sup>8</sup> A copy of the interview schedule is provided in *Appendix A* at the end of this document.

strategies. First, I restricted my analysis to Arab and South Asian men in the state of interest in order to address gaps in the research literature on gender and place. Second, I began to ask study participants if they knew anyone from a working-class background when my study became increasingly saturated with men from high social class groups. This was also, in part, because social class began to emerge as a theme in early interviews. Unfortunately, some interviewees indicated that they knew middle- and working-class men who would offer insight into my study, but were unable or unwilling to make these connections for my research. I was also unable to find many working-class respondents on my own from availability or snowball sampling; therefore, my sample is disproportionately comprised of men from higher social class backgrounds, as discussed below.

### *Study Location*

Arab and South Asian groups are not evenly distributed throughout the U.S. The Arab American Institute [AAI] suggests that the Arab American population is likely closer to 3.7 million<sup>9</sup>. Two-thirds of that population is concentrated in 10 states—with one-third living in California, New York, and Michigan—and about 94 percent living in metropolitan areas. The state for my study presents a unique opportunity to study these groups precisely because it is not one of the more populated states for these groups. In terms of national rank, the state is close to the middle of the pack in terms of its share of

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<sup>9</sup> Per the Arab American Institute (2018): “[t]he American Community Survey identifies only a portion of the Arab population through a question on ‘ancestry’ on the census long form. Reasons for the undercount include the placement of and limit of the ancestry question (as distinct from race and ethnicity); the effect of the sample methodology on small, unevenly distributed ethnic groups; high levels of out-marriage among the third and fourth generations; and a distrust/misunderstanding of government surveys among recent immigrants.”



Arab population, with less than 10,000 people claiming Arab ancestry. Finally, according to 2010 census data, Arab Americans only reside in 18 of the state's counties. Metro-City is the most Arab-populated of those 18. Townsburg did not register in the top 5 (Arab American Institute 2018). Data on South Asian groups, particularly those most directly impacted by Islamophobia is more difficult to find<sup>10</sup>. Here, I present data on Pakistani Americans to provide a snapshot of regional isolation and the distribution of South Asian groups in the U.S. López et al (2017) estimates that the Pakistani American population grew from about 204,000 in 2000 to 519,000 by 2015 [a 154 percent increase]. They further estimate that nearly 288,000 [55 percent] of that [2015] population live in 10 metropolitan areas. Similarly, the Center for American Progress (2015) uses 2013 American Community Survey Data to estimate the total Pakistani American population at 474,784. 283,671 [60 percent] of this population reside in 5 states: New York, Texas, California, Virginia, and New Jersey.

Per Pew Research Center (2012) the number Arab Americans living in the U.S. increased by nearly 47 percent from 2000 to 2011. Less than five percent of the state's population is foreign born according to 2013-2017 population estimates. This is significantly lower than the percentage of the foreign-born population of the U.S. [which is 13.4 percent]. The percentage of the foreign-population in Metro-City is higher, at over 7 percent. The percent of foreign-born in Townsburg was below 5 percent (US Census Bureau 2019). Metro-City's population was approximately under 600,000. Townsburg's

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<sup>10</sup> Difficulties finding data on South Asian populations—particularly those most directly impacted by Islamophobia—are similar to those outlined by the Arab American Institute (2018) for Arab American underrepresentation, e.g., 'the placement and limit of the ancestry question [used to measure ethnicity]; the effect of sample methodology on small, unevenly distributed ethnic groups; [etc]."

population was below 30,000 (US Census Bureau 2019). Thus, my discussion of Metro-City, Townsburg, and the state in general is characterized—not only by regional isolation—but also by an urban/rural divide. By this I mean that Metro-City is by far the most densely populated city in a state characterized by smaller towns and localities. Consequently Metro-City’s demographic characteristics and the racial meaning assigned to them contrasts starkly with the characteristics and meanings afforded to the rest of the state. Notably, Metro-City—as a large metropolitan area—offers a wider range of opportunities for employment and services that might be valued to new immigrant groups and communities than the rest of the state. Townsburg is a smaller locality that more closely mirrors the rest of the state. Participants described life in Townsburg as slow, and described the population as well meaning but lacking diversity and education. So, I anticipated that the men in my study would interpret Metro-city as relatively hospitable as compared to other places in the state. However, I demonstrate that perceived belonging and hospitality were based on class position. In particular, in Townsburg, upper class men articulated a stronger sense of belonging than middle- and working-class men, possibly because of how their occupational position marked them as privileged relative to the majority of people in Townsburg.

The state is also largely comprised of people who religiously identify as Christians. According to Pew Research Center’s Religious Landscape Study (2016), approximately 75 percent of adults in the state are Christian affiliated. Almost 50 percent of adults in the state are Evangelical-Protestant and 10 percent are Catholic. Only 2 percent of adults in the state are religiously affiliated with faiths that are not Christian,

and less than 1 percent are Muslim <sup>11</sup>(2016). According to the USA Mosque Directory (2015), the state has less than 30 mosques. This is a relatively low number especially when compared to more populous states such as New York (258), California (246), and Texas (168). According to a directory of mosques and religious centers in the U.S., Metro-City contains the most mosques/prayer spaces in the state at just over 10. Townsburg only has 1 mosque/prayer center. While this is an indirect measure of the number of people identifying with the Muslim-faith in these cities, I argue that more can be extrapolated from differences in the material existence of mosques/prayer spaces. Namely, Metro-City has a greater number of religious Muslims—or at the very least, has more formal religious networks or organizations than other places in the state.

Taken together, these demographic statistics led me to believe that interviewees would articulate distinct, place-based understandings of Islamophobia. I anticipated that there might be some differences in perceived discrimination in Townsburg where Muslims have a more limited presence. Since Metro-City is a rather large urban area located in the context of a broadly rural state, I anticipated that individuals would find Metro-City to be a more friendly and inclusive place for them, and consequently Metro-City and Townsburg were deemed theoretically significant settings for study. However, as I will discuss, perceptions about discrimination and place were more idiosyncratic than simply a distinction between urban and rural localities. Participants' discussion of these themes were nuanced, and varied based on place-specific stereotypes and relative privilege via social class standing.

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<sup>11</sup> This mirrors the national average. But, similarly to percent foreign born and racial and ethnic group statistics, I anticipate that there is a significant urban/rural divide in this distribution.

### *Study sample*

Here, I provide a general outline of my study sample. A basic overview of interviewees is provided in Table 3.1<sup>12</sup>. I assigned each interviewee a pseudonym to protect them from being identifiable to readers. These names were generated from an online database of popular religious Muslim names. Since I am studying the racialization of Muslim men and not one specific racial category—per se—my sample cuts across racial and ethnic lines. According to data from the brief demographic survey given prior to interviews 13, participants indicated that they racially categorized themselves as Asian, five categorized themselves as white, and five categorized themselves as Other/Middle Eastern. There was more variability in ethnic categorization. Some participants discussed “sub-ethnicities” that held meaning in their family’s country of origin. Still others claimed no particular ethnicity or categorized themselves as “American.” Seven participants claimed Pakistani ethnic identities. Three participants claimed general Arab ethnic identities. One participant claimed Iraqi ethnicity. One participant claimed Palestinian ethnicity. One participant claimed Syrian ethnicity. One participant claimed Yemeni ethnicity. One participant claimed Middle Eastern Ethnicity. Two participants claimed mixed ethnic origins e.g. Pakistani/Afghani and Arab/Pakistani. One participant claimed “American” ethnicity. And three participants said that they didn’t claim any particular ethnicity for themselves. Participants are also almost exclusively first- and second-generation Americans, which is for the most part reflective of Arab and South Asian populations in the U.S. generally, and in the state specifically. In addition to these demographic characteristics, I note that my sample is particularly young, with a median

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<sup>12</sup> Interview participants are listed in order of approximated socioeconomic status.

age of 23 [ranging from 19 to 73], which is probably due to my social identity as a relatively young man with relatively young social contacts.<sup>13</sup>

As noted, upper class respondents are overrepresented in my sample. It was difficult to gain contacts with middle- and working-class men. When I did interview middle- and working-class men, they were reluctant to provide further contacts that might be willing to interview. For instance, Faizaan—whose family owns a small ethnic restaurant, moved to the U.S. as refugees, and once lived in government subsidized housing—indicated that relatives and friends would not be as comfortable discussing interview items as he was. This made snowball sampling almost impossible for these groups<sup>14</sup>.

When measuring social class, I took an approach similar to that taken by Lareau (2002) in her analysis of social class and parenting in a midwestern elementary school. I extrapolated social class position primarily from occupational history and educational attainment. In her work, Lareau (2002) conceptually assigned families to working-class and middle-class categories based on information provided about “the work that” adults did, “the nature of the organization that employed them, and their educational credentials” (752). I similarly developed general class-categories based on occupational history and educational credentials. First, I considered the educational credentials of individuals or the families that they came from. Participants who had themselves or came from families where one parent had a master’s degree or higher were considered to be

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<sup>13</sup> My primary connection to the Muslim community is through close personal friendships and contact over the past five years.

<sup>14</sup> I began to gain traction with middle and lower socioeconomic status groups by the end of this project. But, the University of Louisville shut down nonessential research in response to the global SARS-CoV-2 pandemic and effectively ended this sampling.

upper class. Participants who had themselves or came from families where parents had a bachelor's degree or lower were considered to be middle- or working-class. Second I considered occupational status, which largely mirrored educational credentials. Individuals who were themselves or came from families where at one time one parent worked in high status categories, for example medical doctors or engineers were categorized as upper class. Individuals who were themselves or came from families where at one time one parent worked in a middle- or working-class category—e.g. teachers, mechanics, food service, and retail workers were categorized as middle- or working-class. I discuss this in greater detail in chapters 4 and 6 that address social class position. I created one upper class category composed almost exclusively of medical doctors and engineers—all of who had or came from families where the primary earner held at least a master's degree. The middle- and working-class group was comprised of mostly individuals who worked in food service, retail, or factories and whose parents were educators. Only a few participants in the middle- and working-class category came from families where parents held post-secondary degrees.

*Table 3.1: Participants by Location and Social Class Categories*

Location	Social Class Category	Interviewees
Metro-City	Upper Class	(4) Bassam Imad Omair Qais
	Middle- and Working-Class	(6) Abid Anzar Faizaan Nur Shayan Zain
Townsburg	Upper Class	(9) Abbas Hamza Muhammad Musa Mustafa Omar Rafi Samir Talha
	Middle- and Working-Class	(4) Ammar Saeed Rahim Yahya

Where participants were unemployed or unable to work, I used work history this background arguably influenced the classed ways that they interpreted Islamophobia and belonging. For instance, one participant (Abid) indicated that his parents had been

unemployed in the years leading up to the study. Because both parents previously worked in factories, I analyze this interviewee in the middle- and working-social class category. A second participant (Rafi) indicated that he was unable to work and had been unable to work for some time; however, he also held a PhD and had previously worked in Information Technologies as a director. I categorize him as upper class but make note of the ways that his responses were not patterned like that of other highly educated respondents. Other interviewees that were difficult to categorize came from international families. One participant (Qais) iterated that his family was relatively well to do, had high levels of education (U.S. graduate degrees), and full funding to pursue his graduate education from the national government of his home country. I categorized this interviewee as upper class. Another (Nur) was an international student who currently lived with his American grandparents, and whose parents were educators. I categorized this interviewee as middle- or working-social class. Finally, Shayan was a student worker with a sales job who had refugee status. I categorize this interviewee as middle- or working-class. Though these categories are imperfect, they are useful for addressing the classed patterns of responses that interviewees had to moments of Islamophobia and classed perceptions about belonging in the rural U.S. South because they reflect family occupational and educational statuses within the U.S. class hierarchy. This gives me analytical leverage for examining how class status might shape responses to Islamophobia.

#### *Data analysis*

I personally transcribed fifteen interview recordings using Express Scribe. The other eight were transcribed by Rev.com, which was funded by the Endowed Rieger



Research Fund housed in the Department of Sociology at the University of Louisville. Transcribed interviews were then analyzed using Dedoose—“a cross-platform app for analyzing qualitative and mixed method research with text, photos, audio, videos, spreadsheet data and more” (Dedoose website 2020).

I use a grounded theory approach to my analysis of data. According to Charmaz (2012):

“Grounded theory methods consist of systemic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories ‘grounded’ in the data themselves. The guidelines offer a set of general principles and heuristic devices rather than formulaic rules. Thus, data from the foundation of our theory and our analysis of these data generate the concepts we construct” (2).

As Charmaz (2012) outlines, grounded theory approaches to research are inductive. Rather than building a hypothesis and testing that hypothesis using evidence, I kept a relatively open mind both in the field and during analysis. The themes that I analyze emerged from interview data. I used three waves of coding in my analysis. The initial wave involved “line-by-line coding” (50) where I used Dedoose to develop and connect codes to each line of interview data<sup>15</sup>. During this stage of coding Charmaz (2012) suggests that researchers:

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<sup>15</sup> One of the unique functions that Dedoose has is its memoing. According to Charmaz (2012): “[m]emos catch your thoughts, capture comparisons, and connections you make, and crystallize questions and directions for you to pursue” (72). I was able to write and connect “memos” to early codes to help connect early codes to existing theories, concepts, and literatures, and develop more advanced codes for the next stages of analysis.

“[1] Remain open; [2] stay close to the data; [3] keep ... codes simple and precise; [4] construct short codes; [5] preserve actions; [6] compare data with data; [7] move quickly through the data” (49).

Since I conducted all of the interviews and transcribed many of the interviews by hand, this was really a second review of the interview data. I was able to use thematic memos written during the interview process to piece together many of these initial codes. The second wave of coding involved “focused coding.” Charmaz (2012) categorizes such coding as “using the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes to sift through large amounts of data<sup>16</sup>” (57). For example, as I demonstrate in chapter 7, I found that upper class Arab and South Asian men in Townsburg used strong inclusive language to describe their relationship to the rest of Townsburg. This was not the case for middle and working-class men or men from Metro-City. During this stage of coding, I transformed line-by-line codes and memos about that specified when interviewees discussed Townsburg and others where participants using language like, “family,” into more focused codes and subcodes about strong perceptions of personal belonging to the broader community. When I cross-referenced these codes about belonging with the social class categories that I developed, I began to see that upper class interviewees in Townsburg articulated a stronger sense of belonging to the broader community than their middle- and working-class counterparts.

Finally, I engaged in “theoretical coding.” Charmaz (2012) says of theoretical coding:

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<sup>16</sup> During this stage of coding I also engaged in what Charmaz (2012: 60) calls “axial coding” whereby more focused codes are broken up into subcategories that conceptually brings the data “back together”—after it has been broken up by initial and focused coding.

“[t]heoretical codes are integrative; they lend form to the focused codes you have collected. These codes may help you tell an analytic story that has coherence. Hence, these codes not only conceptualize how your substantive codes are related, but also move your analytic story in a theoretical direction” (63).

For example, I transformed focused codes and sub-codes about class and belonging in Townsburg into more robust theoretical codes about the ways that upper class interviewees described belonging in Townsburg. For instance, in chapter 6 I analyze the ways that interviewees performed hegemonic masculinities in defense of significant women in their lives who faced Islamophobic treatment. Though I only asked about gender as a probing question, interviewees repeatedly iterated that Muslim women experienced more and more severe Islamophobia than men and men’s responses to this treatment were patterned. Thus, I built an analysis of masculinities into my analysis where I did not previously anticipate it. Doing this allowed me to build and contribute to theories based in my data rather than exclusively from preexisting frameworks.

#### *Ethical considerations*

In order to protect the participants in this study I assigned pseudonyms to all study participants and study sites. Pseudonyms for study participants were selected from websites listing the most popular ethnic and religiously Muslim names. I renamed Metro-City and Townsburg to prevent the identification of religious centers, businesses, and to further protect the participants that I interviewed. I kept interview data on Card Box—a password-protected and secure server provided by the University of Louisville. This research project was approved by the IRB at the University of Louisville.

### *Researcher social location*

My social position arguably influenced my ability to collect data and my interpretation of research data. Here, I outline that social position. I am a white non-Muslim man, born and raised in the rural south. I am educated, and young. These factors probably influenced interviews. For instance these participants may have provided different responses when asked about discrimination and Islamophobia if I shared their ethnic or religious background. For example, several interviewees specified that they “loved white people.” I doubt they would have said this if I was not white. My being male probably led participants to be upfront about their views on gender; they may have shared different views with a woman. My education and association with the university made it easier to gain interviews with highly educated men, and probably affected the language that they used to describe their experiences. For instance, one participant used the term “micro-aggressions” to describe his experiences with Islamophobia. However, my university status probably limited conversations on Islamophobia with middle- and working-class respondents.

Though I am an outsider by multiple measures, I have remained connected to Muslim communities for the past five years after initial research and close friendships. This has included maintaining close friendships with young Muslim men, playing pickup basketball and tournaments at mosques and schools, attending religious services, and attending and even hosting special events in the community e.g., Ramadan meals and graduation parties. I believe that I am recognized as an ally in the community. On several occasions community members have joked that I may as well be “Muslim” or “brown.” I believe that my connection as a close friend to many Arab and South Asian men in the

community helped me to collect rich data because in some instances I interviewed friends and in others, friends vouched for me as a trusted contact.

## CHAPTER 4: SOCIAL CLASS AND DISMISSING OR DOWNPLAYING ISLAMOPHOBIA

The Arab and South Asian Muslim men in this sample regularly experience a wide range of Islamophobic encounters. They also understand and interpret these experiences based on their class and gender positions. In this chapter, I demonstrate the class-mitigated ways that Arab and South Asian Muslim men experience, understand, and interpret experiences with Islamophobia. In particular, I demonstrate that Arab and South Asian men with upper class positions—those who come from relatively high levels of education and occupational prestige—downplayed personal experiences with Islamophobia in ways that maintained their social position and communicated a low degree of threat as compared to men with middle and working social class positions. To do this I first outline and address the range of Islamophobic incidents that Arab and South Asian Muslim men in Metro-City and Townsburg reported. Second, I highlight upper-, middle-, and working-class interviewees' general tendencies to dismiss and downplay Islamophobic experiences. Finally, I critically address the classed ways that Arab and South Asian men responded to Islamophobia. I argue that scholars and activists studying and combatting Islamophobia must engage in intersectional analyses because Muslim men with varying class positions experience, perceive, and thus report experiences of Islamophobia differently.

### *Experiencing Islamophobia*

Interviewees described a wide range of Islamophobia that they or people that they knew personally experienced or were familiar with. In this section, I outline and address this range of Islamophobic experiences. As discussed previously, Islamophobia can be described as racism against Muslims. Racism and Islamophobia are multifaceted (Garner and Selod 2015 and Golash-Boza 2016) and can generally be defined as: (1) “A set of ideas [ideology] in which the human race is divisible into distinct ‘races’, each with specific natural characteristics derived from culture, physical appearance or both”; (2) “a historical power relationship in which, over time, groups are racialized, that is, treated as if specific characteristics were natural and innate to each member of the group”; (3) forms of discrimination flowing from this [practices] ranging on spectrums from denial of access to material resources at one end to genocide at the other” (Garner and Selod 2015, p. 11). I find that the men in my sample similarly experience Islamophobia in dynamic ways at various levels of society. These experiences ranged from subtle Islamophobia in the form of various “micro-aggressions,” to more overt “individual acts of bigotry”, and to broader or institutional Islamophobia in a variety of contexts. I outline the most commonly discussed experiences of Islamophobia in table 4.1.

*Table 4.1: Levels and categorization of discussing Islamophobic experiences*

Individual Level(s)	
Micro-Aggressions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “daily, commonplace insults and racial slights that cumulatively affect the psychological well-being of people of color” (Golash-Boza 2016, 132)</li> <li>▪ includes: “school-yard” jokes, lighter off-hand remarks, “disconcerting stares”</li> </ul>	17 of 23
Individual Acts of Bigotry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a range of racist actions that individuals may commit, including using racial slurs and committing hate-crimes</li> <li>▪ includes: “public epithets”, “acts of violence”, property crimes/defacement or targeting of organizations</li> </ul>	15 of 23
Broader or Institutional Level(s)	
Islamophobia in Organizations or Institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ includes: air-travel, education, employment, immigration, news media, police, and the U.S. military</li> </ul>	13 of 23

*Micro-Aggressions*

The most frequently discussed experiences with Islamophobia could be categorized as racial micro-aggressions. Recall that micro-aggressions are “daily, commonplace insults and racial slights that cumulatively affect the psychological well-being of people of color” (Golash-Boza 2016, 132). Some men were familiar with the term, “micro-aggressions” and even used it to describe their experiences. For example—



Rahim a middle-class Pakistani American—described a majority of his experiences as such:

When I think of [...] negative things that happened, there's not one or even a handful that can stand out to me, like wow, that was really [changes direction]. I think I was in a lecture or [inaudible] call them micro-aggressions. [...] Where they're not necessarily burning a flag, or doing something extreme, but kind of how they look at you. You can, I hate to use the word vibe, it's so outdated.

While Rahim uses the term, “micro-aggressions,” to describe his experiences, many of the men did not. Rather, I—the researcher—categorized narrated experiences as such during analysis. Interviewees discussed micro-aggressions that I have organized into three categories most frequently: “school-yard” jokes, “off-hand remarks”, and “disconcerting stares”. I use the term, “school-yard” jokes to refer to jokes that classmates made that linked Arab, South Asian, and Muslim men to radical Islamic terror or sexism. In this study, “off-hand remarks” generally refer to off-putting questions, comments, or statements muttered or made under someone’s breath that did not rise to the threat-level of “individual acts of bigotry,” and that did not occur in a school-setting. By “disconcerting stares”, potentially threatening and prolonged staring that participants felt they were the subject of because of their ethnic, racial, or religious identities. I provide examples of these categorized micro-aggressions in table 4.2. Micro-aggressions were reported to be common and most frequently were discussed as first-hand accounts. Seventeen of the 23 respondents reported personally experiencing racial micro-aggressions. Most of these men had cited numerous examples of each type.

*Table 4.2: Examples of micro-aggressions*

<p>“School-yard” Jokes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Samir, an upper class Pakistani American student:          “The only real mistreatment that I had direct contact with, as far as people my age, they all took form in jokes. [Imitates joke] ‘What are you going to do? Blow me up?’ Or very, back-sided attempts at humor to elicit shock value laughs, I would laugh along with it because I was the only one. I didn’t really have a backing for me to hold on to, and I would feel threatened.”</li> </ul>
<p>“Off-hand” Remarks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Musa, an upper class Pakistani American medical doctor:          “Uh, you do go into the grocery store and somebody has made a comment. And basically, you have two choices, you can ignore and walk away or you can confront the person.”</li> </ul>
<p>“Disconcerting Staring”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Samir, an upper class Pakistani American above:          “The context of a look, I would say is, places are definitely, parking lots are a big one. And the context of a look usually falls between prolonged staring for more than a minute. [...] More than you’re dazed off, yeah. Prolonged staring, like focusing on the eyes and a kind of slackness of the face. <i>So, just like the overall look of contempt that somebody would have. [Italics added.]</i>”</li> </ul>

Scholars have demonstrated that racial micro-aggressions can have a significant psychological impact on persons of color. Several men who reported personal experiences with micro-aggressions indicated that such experiences were frightening or upsetting, despite the fact that a number of men downplayed these experiences, as discussed below. For instance, Samir connects the Islamophobic micro-aggressions that he describes to feelings of isolation as he laughed off jokes; and “contempt” for Arabs, South Asians, or Muslims and a feeling of “threat” when he is the subject of disconcerting stares. While Musa indicates that at least a number of off-handed comments can be brushed off, he indicates elsewhere that other Islamophobic encounters were more jarring.

### *Individual Acts of Bigotry*

Golash-Boza (2016) uses the phrase, “individual acts of bigotry” to describe a range of racist actions that individuals may commit, including using racial slurs and committing hate-crimes. I differentiate “individual acts of bigotry” from racial micro-aggressions because of their explicitness, level of threat, and physicality. The men that I interviewed described a number of experiences that they were familiar with that could be described as more explicitly Islamophobic than the micro-aggressions discussed previously. Such acts were apparently intended to make racial and ethnic minorities feel uncomfortable. I organize these experiences into three primary categories: public epithets, racial violence, and property defacement. I define “public epithets” as overtly racist speech or rhetoric designed to unnerve Arabs, South Asians, and Muslims. Participants indicated that they or people that they knew were sometimes the subject of slurs in public spaces or that they had had things shouted at them in stores or from moving vehicles.

Racially motivated violence involved physical confrontations related to Islamophobia. Participants reported fights, having things spilled or thrown at them or others, and other physical threats—e.g. having a knife pulled “on them.” I use “property crimes/defacement or targeting organizations” to capture instances where property was defaced or destroyed. Notably, interviewees indicated that both personal property and community religious spaces had been defaced in Metro-city and Townsburg. Mosques in each location had been threatened with violence [guns or bombs] or defaced [using graffiti]. I provide examples of individual acts of bigotry in table 4.3. Most interviewees had experienced or knew someone who had experienced Islamophobia in these forms.

Fifteen of the 23 interviewees reported that they had or knew someone personally who had experienced “individual acts of bigotry” related to Islamophobia.

Table 4.3: Examples of individual acts of bigotry

<p>“Public Epithets”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Samir, an upper class Pakistani American:  “Mostly, I get looks. That’s what it is. I get a lot of looks. There was one time that I was called a sand nigger [sic.] That was shocking to me because I was 18. I was in [a small town in state]. I went to Walmart to get some groceries and a man is standing outside on his pickup truck and just staring at me as I’m trying to load my groceries, and he was close enough for me to hear him say it under his breath, but loud enough. Just, [imitating epithet] ‘blah, blah, blah, sand nigger [sic.]’”</li> </ul>
<p>“Acts of Violence”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Imad, an upper class Syrian American medical school student:  “I think one that sticks out to me, is one of my friends, he was conducting one of the daily five prayers that we do, in a parking lot, in a corner, very conspicuous, just by himself. [...] in an empty parking lot as well. And somebody went out of their way to dump hot coffee onto him while he was in prayer. And so, that particular instance stuck out to me.”</li> </ul>
<p>“Property crimes or defacement”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Muhammad, an upper class Pakistani American medical doctor:  “<i>But one time, in our old mosque where we had, that was [in the] late nineties, somebody had thrown a bomb, a small bomb inside and there was damage. We had to change the carpet. It was all smoke and stuff.</i>”</li> <li>▪ Musa, an upper class Pakistani American:  “<i>So, this is a patient who was wanting a certain medication that was not appropriate for him. And I explained to him and I declined. Uh, the patient had a psychiatric illness. [...] So, this patient used all kinds of racial slurs and blasted out of my office. And then at night when we were closed he brought a spray paint can and sprayed on our doors some racial slurs there. [Italics added.] So that was a really upsetting event. And I remember [...] then I view the patient also as the patient’s illness also. So I don’t know if he did it in right mind or not there. But yeah, it was upsetting for me. [Italics added.]</i>”</li> </ul>

As indicated previously, “individual acts of bigotry” were more overt and generally unnerved interviewees more than “micro-aggressions” discussed previously. In the examples provided Samir differentiates between “disconcerting stares” and “racial

epithets”, indicating that he is the subject of staring with a higher frequency. Imad indicates that moments of violence, such as friends having coffee poured on them “stand out” from other Islamophobic experiences. And while Musa is fairly dismissive of Islamophobia in other parts of the interview, he reveals that the defacement of his medical practice with Islamophobic slurs was personally upsetting.

*Islamophobia in Organizations and Institutions*

Participants also discussed Islamophobia that I characterize as structural and institutional in nature, albeit less frequently than the individual forms of Islamophobia outlined previously. Thirteen of 23 interviewees discussed such encounters. Again, this may have been partially the result of interview questions using language of: “being treated differently”, “mistreated”, and “experiencing discrimination” related to their religious or ethnic and racial identities. Such language likely elicits individualized responses. Interviewees indicated that they experienced or were aware of racism in institutions such as: air-travel, education, employment, immigration, news media, police, and the U.S. military. I provide few examples of the most cited institutions in table 4.4, but note that they were not discussed uniformly across participants. I highlight institutional Islamophobia because it adds a dimension to the range of Islamophobia that interviewees experienced.

*Table 4.4: Examples of Islamophobia Experienced in Institutions*

<p>“Air Travel”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rahim, a middle-class Pakistani American:            “I am very cautious when I go to the airport because I’m aware of what they’re looking for. [...] For the last few times we just got through, no trouble or anything like that. But it used to be pretty bad. Every single time they were like, full searches, full bag searches.</li> </ul>
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<p>“Education”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Raffi, an upper class Jordanian American: [Discussing the local school administration’s apparent inability to deal appropriately with his daughter being called a lesbian and having her hijab pulled off:] “I was surprised from the school principal, the assistant principal, the counselor, they were all ignorant about how important [it is] for a girl to not be touched by a boy, not to be harassed, not to pull the hair scarf, and things like that. Yeah [imitating complicit educators] ‘oh, what’s the big deal? It’s a piece of fabric. She can put it back on.’ That’s what the assistant school principal said.”</li> </ul>
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Overall, the regularity of Islamophobic encounters that I found in my sample is consistent with that reported by other scholars studying Islamophobia (Selod 2015 and 2019). In what follows, I address the classed ways that men interpreted and responded to these normal Islamophobic encounters.

*Dismissing and Downplaying Islamophobia*

As previously indicated many Arab and South Asian men dismissed and downplayed Islamophobic experiences by directly or indirectly indicating that Islamophobia was not a significant problem to them or that particular experiences with Islamophobia were not that severe. Twenty of 23 interviewees dismissed and downplayed Islamophobia in some form. Generally speaking this involved (1) beliefs that Islamophobia was not widespread in the communities that they lived in; (2) a comparison of their known experiences to other people’s more severe Islamophobic encounters; and (3) a focus on offenders’ assumed mental health and ill-fated attributes. They relegated offenders to be “crazy” or extreme and on the margins of society. Thus, they interpreted Islamophobia to be isolated events reflecting extreme or otherwise not “normal” incidents. What’s particularly noteworthy is that in many incidents, men dismissed or downplayed Islamophobia in immediate conjunction with describing personal

Islamophobic encounters, or encounters someone that they knew had. Notably, most of these experiences occurred in the communities that they lived in.

Most interviewees who dismissed or downplayed Islamophobia generally believed that Islamophobic encounters were “few and far between” and that people holding Islamophobic beliefs were representative of a significant minority. As I will discuss in a later chapter, interviewees frequently believed the local communities that they lived in were exceptional—that Metro-City and Townsburg had fewer Islamophobic people than other parts of the state. For example, Abbas—an upper class Pakistani American—indicates that he believes that “less than one percent of people” in Townsburg hold Islamophobic beliefs.

So, I feel like in Townsburg, it was very like, maybe the one percent of people who were like, I wouldn't want to say racist, but racist. Or um, fearful of what they don't know said that kind of stuff. And um, they have that Islamophobic mindset. But Townsburg, for the most part was very, it strayed away from Islamophobia. It wasn't too bad. When it comes to Metro-City, I have experienced nothing.

Abbas offers this commentary after describing an Islamophobic encounter where a brick with hate-speech was thrown through his window. This pattern of dismissing or minimizing Islamophobic incidents was repeated in interviews. In this case, Abbas described a severe Islamophobic encounter, and then he dismissed or downplayed the effects and breadth of Islamophobia. In addition to estimating that such a small portion of Townsburg's population held Islamophobic beliefs, Abbas hesitates to call those that do hold such beliefs racist. Instead, he opts for people who are “fearful of what they do not



know.” Again, the prevalence of Islamophobic experiences—detailed earlier in this chapter—seemingly contradicts this narrative.

A majority of the interviewees counted themselves fortunate. By their estimation, their experiences with Islamophobia were minor. Men generally attributed this to their gender, race, and social class position. For example, Faizaan, a working-class Yemeni American student laughed while he recounted the Islamophobic joking that he encountered in school:

Like I remember, [school] wasn’t too far from the airport. So planes would go over the building all the time [chuckling] and people would be like, “Oh, Faizaan, your ride’s here. They came early.” You know, crap like that [chuckles].

By comparison, his tone is more serious when he discusses the purportedly more severe Islamophobia his women relatives experience, and he says: “[B]ut I never get that type of treatment, probably because I am a guy.” I explore gender in more detail in the next chapter on masculinities. However, here I note that participants believed that they were fortunate in comparison to women that they knew. Musa, an upper class Pakistani American, similarly indicates that his social class and occupational position privilege him.

The other thing you need to look at is the majority of the people you’re talking about—the South Asian group there—[...] *they come almost near the poverty line or the lower-middle class, if you look at the whole population.* So their exposure is different than my perspective. My perspective is a minority. [...] And those people have a much higher level of people looking negatively at them. [...] *They face more discrimination than I would.* [Italics added.]

What's noteworthy is that a significant contingent of men dismissed or otherwise downplayed Islamophobia by counting themselves fortunate in comparison to people with lower social class positions, e.g. lower socio-economic status groups, racial minorities, or women. They indicated that if I—the researcher—“really wanted to understand Islamophobia,” that I should be interviewing these groups.

Several men, when dismissing or downplaying Islamophobia, made or emphasized claims about the people who were committing Islamophobic acts against them. In particular, these interviewees indicated that perpetrators of Islamophobia were “crazy”, “probably just “drunk”, or otherwise not mentally stable. For example, Talha—an upper class Pakistani American medical doctor—describes a scenario where a drunk stranger questioned his [Talha's] wife's allegiance to the U.S. in a bowling alley, while he was out with some of the non-Muslim staff from one of his medical practices—presumably in Townsburg. When discussing this encounter, Talha repeatedly downplays this questioning by emphasizing the fact that the perpetrator was drunk or not in his right mind.

And you know, he was drunk. [...]

I said, “He's drunk. I mean you have to understand.” [...]

So, when somebody's not in their senses, what the hell are you going to say?

Similarly, Mustafa—an upper class Pakistani American student describes the general ignorance that he encounters with some regularity in rural spaces and at college. He backtracks though to say that generally, people are accepting.

I would say in [small rural town in state], again, [...]. *So a lot of people, I felt like, were kind of ignorant, not even in a bad way per se, just ignorant as to what Islam is.* [...] Because even the people that I met in college from [small rural town in state], and you know they were pretty much [...] very accepting and everything like that.

Interviewees repeatedly downplayed the effect or impact of Islamophobia by pointing to, highlighting, or emphasizing the extreme, not “normal,” or pathological nature of characteristics of offenders of Islamophobia. In other words, if it was just drunk or ignorant people, Islamophobia wasn’t that significant of an issue. This trend seems unique to Arabs and South Asians, particularly those with upper class positions. Scholarship that details other racial minority groups’ experiences with discrimination has seldom found these groups to similarly dismiss those experiences.

#### *Social Class and Dismissing or Downplaying Islamophobia*

So why then, after interviewees reported such a range of—some quite severe—Islamophobic encounters, would they continue to dismiss or downplay those experiences? Part of this trend can be explained by examining how the responses of men to Islamophobia differ across social class categories. Interviewees were not uniform in their dismissal of Islamophobia and Islamophobic encounters. In this section I argue that interviewees in upper class categories generally downplayed or were dismissive of Islamophobia because they perceived themselves as having a relatively close social proximity to powerful groups—in particular, upper class white Americans.

Recall that my sample is disproportionately comprised of upper class men. In this study, “upper class” includes individuals or individuals from families where one parent

works or have worked in occupations that offer relatively high social status, generally high earnings, a high degree of autonomy at work, and require at least a master's degree or higher, e.g. medical doctors, engineers, and/or directors of departments or medical practices. Over half (13) of the men in this sample had or grew up in upper class positions. I differentiate upper class men from "middle-" and "working-class men" who work or come from families where one or both parents have worked in occupations that offer relatively modest social status, generally median earnings, and require less than a master's degree, e.g. school teachers, mechanics, retail and food service, manufacturing. Ten participants were categorized in this broad middle- and working-class category. Most of them came from families that worked in retail or food service in some capacity and several owned stores. All of this is highlighted in table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Participants by Social Class Categories

Social Class Category	Definition	(Number of Interviewees)
Upper Class	<p>Characterized by individuals who meet the following characteristics or whose parent(s) do so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Have worked in high status occupational categories—mostly medical doctors and engineers</li> <li>(2) Have obtained high levels of education; all had a masters or doctorate-level degree</li> </ul>	<p>(13)</p> <p>Abbas</p> <p>Bassam</p> <p>Hamza</p> <p>Imad</p> <p>Muhammad</p> <p>Musa</p> <p>Mustafa</p> <p>Omair</p> <p>Omar</p> <p>Qais</p> <p>Rafi</p> <p>Samir</p> <p>Talha</p>
Middle- and Working-Class	<p>Characterized by individuals who meet the following characteristics or whose parents do so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Have worked in middle- or working-class occupational prestige—ranging from parent(s) who were a public school teacher and a mechanic at the high end, and retail store and food service workers at the low end</li> <li>(2) Have obtained middle-levels of education, typically less</li> </ul>	<p>(10)</p> <p>Abid</p> <p>Ammar</p> <p>Anzar</p> <p>Faizaan</p> <p>Nur</p> <p>Rahim</p> <p>Saeed</p> <p>Shayan</p>

	than a master's degree e.g. a bachelor's degree, associates degree, some college, or no college education.	Yahya Zain
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As I indicated previously, some of this dismissal of Islamophobia can be explained via relative class-position and proximity to powerful groups. Nearly all of the men [12 of 13] that I categorize as upper class downplayed Islamophobia in some capacity. Eight of the remaining ten men from the middle- and working-class category similarly downplayed Islamophobic experiences.

*Men with Upper Class Positions*

First, I address the trends of dismissing and downplaying Islamophobia among men who were categorized as coming from upper class positions. It is unclear whether or not upper class Arabs and South Asians actually experienced less severe Islamophobia than those with middle- and working-class positions. As noted above, men from each group described a range of Islamophobic encounters that occurred with some regularity. However, interviewees in the upper class category were more frequently forgiving of Islamophobic encounters or describe such confrontations as misunderstandings or benign. As indicated previously, almost all of the men who belonged to the upper class category dismissed or downplayed Islamophobia. Upper class interviewees were the only participants to report that Islamophobia was muted in Metro-City or Townsburg, they did not personally experience it “all that much”, or that they didn’t get it as bad as others.

Interviewees who came from upper class positions seemed able to draw on their social status and occupational prestige at work when responding to Islamophobia. This

apparently impacted their interpretation of Islamophobic encounters and led them to downplay these negative experiences. For example, the line between off-handed comments and public epithets was sometimes unclear. Musa is an upper class medical doctor in Townsburg. Here he describes multiple encounters that I categorize as racial micro-aggressions.

So you know, sometimes people, as I said, have *misconceptions*. And I'm open to discuss *misconceptions* with my patients, when they bring up some concern. And some of them are very innocent questions, which is a lack of knowledge or of understanding. [Italics added.]

Uh, you do go into the grocery store and somebody has made a comment. And basically, you have two choices, you can ignore and walk away or you can confront the person.

Both of these verbal altercations are described in ways that seems to indicate that these experiences occur with some regularity. In the first excerpt, I draw attention to Musa's use of the term "misconceptions." Musa describes the Islamophobic questions that he is asked by patients generously. However, outside of his office—e.g. the second excerpt—he is less forgiving of Islamophobic comments or actions. In a study of Anti-Black discrimination, Feagin (1991) finds that middle-class Black Americans reported situational discriminatory experiences. Middle-class Black Americans reported more and worse discrimination in public places, such as grocery stores, where their middle-class status is unclear. Conversely when they were at their places of employment, e.g. a professor on a college campus, they reported fewer and less severe moments of discrimination. Similarly, I find that Arab and South Asian men were less likely to report

Islamophobic discrimination as severe when they were in positions of power. In the second excerpt, Musa takes a more matter-of-fact tone. He indicates that off-handed remarks do occur, and follows up by saying that Arabs and South Asians in these scenarios have two options when responding to these incidents. Notably, men with upper class positions were protected from the brunt of Islamophobia in professional settings, but outside of those settings those protections waned (I discuss this trend more in chapter 7). In some cases, men took more stern positions against the Islamophobia that they experienced outside of professional settings. In others, they similarly downplayed these experiences.

Men from upper class positions also seemed to downplay Islamophobia in ways that were connected to their perceived proximity to others in privileged positions. In particular, upper class men peripherally described themselves as close to whites, other high-status immigrant-origin groups, and “Americans”, while mostly distancing themselves from poor and rural whites, recent immigrants, or people who “failed to assimilate.” In some instances, peripheral discussions of groups coincided directly with downplaying Islamophobic experiences.

Six upper class men described themselves as Americanized or otherwise made a point to express very pro-American meritocratic ideals. I differentiate this from discussing actual citizenship status, since almost all of the men that I interviewed were citizens of the U.S. Previous scholarship (Glenn 2011; Selod 2015) on citizenship finds that the term, “American,” does not always refer to legal citizenship status. These scholars (Glenn 2011; Selod 2015) argue that there are important distinctions between the concepts of legal and “substantive citizenship,” whereby the latter refers to a group’s



ability to lay claim to the social rights and privileges and sense of belonging popularly associated with citizenship which generally requires acceptance by community members. For example, Black Americans have had legal naturalized citizenship for much of America's history, but have not historically and contemporarily enjoyed all the rights and privileges associated with that citizenship. Other scholarship (Selod 2015) has demonstrated that Muslims in America routinely have their citizenship denied because when they identified as Muslim, they are questioned about their allegiance to the U.S. The Arab and South Asian men that I interviewed similarly had their substantive citizenship challenged through Islamophobic encounters.

Interviewees drew upon their "American" identity in ways that could be read as claims to "substantive citizenship" (Glenn 2011). I argue that upper class Arab and South Asian men downplay Islamophobia in order to support such claims and to shore up for themselves the benefits of substantive citizenship. For example, Bassam is an upper class and recent college graduate comes from a family of engineers. When questioned about community membership, he offers: "I've grown up here since I was a kid, I've been around more Americans than I have Arabs. [...] I think I could fit in either community", and later: "I feel like I am Americanized. [...] I am more American than anything." Notably, Bassam's discussion of "Americanness" is situated in the broader context of conversations about getting along with others in his majority white, private high school and in conversations about why he prefers life in America to life in Jordan. He differentiates between Arab—an ethnicity, and Americans—a nationality. Other participants described their generally upper class extracurricular activities as part of what makes them "American" e.g., participating on travel soccer teams and going boating.

Some upper class participants indicated that relatives were “more American than most Americans” or described spouses as “soccer moms.” And, several of the men who described themselves as American additionally indicated that other Arab and South Asian immigrants “didn’t assimilate well” or just wanted to go home, and thus were responsible for some of the discrimination that they faced. In dismissing their own encounters with Islamophobia, emphasizing their “Americanness”, and distancing themselves from immigrants who routinely experience Islamophobia, upper class Arabs and South Asians aligned themselves with those perceived as high-status groups in the U.S. These responses differ from the responses of middle- and working-class participants who emphasized differences between themselves and “Americans” or whites. I assert that positioning oneself as a “red blooded American”, is an attempt—by Arab and South Asian men with upper class positions—to trade on their social class position so they can continue to enjoy the benefits of that social class position and their perceived closeness to whites.

The term “American” has also notably been used by Whites to discuss race in thinly veiled ways (Bonilla-Silva 2014). This use of “American” most typically functionally means Whites, at the exclusion of other groups, in particular intermediary racial categories such as Asian and non-White Latinx groups. Because of this, it is useful to consider Bonilla-Silva’s (2004) tri-racial theory and “honorary whites” racial category with respect to the ways that Arab and South Asian men in this sample described themselves as Americans and positioned themselves in proximity to whites. Bonilla-Silva’s (2004) “honorary whites” racial category indicates changes in the racial structure of America that serve to maintain a system of advantage based on race amidst large-scale

demographic shifts in the US population. During this shift several groups in America like many Asians and Middle Easterners have benefitted from the “wages of whiteness,” e.g. through the ways that they are able to participate in relationships with whites and institutions such as education and the labor economy.

Several upper class men described closeness with whites, and a few of these interviewees explicitly downplayed Islamophobia from the whites that they were in close proximity with. Upper class men in both Metro-City and Townsburg reported that most of their neighbors were either white or were other racial groups in high-status occupations such as medicine. These men also generally reported that their closest relationships were with other people in their occupation, e.g., other Muslim doctors. Omar—an upper class Pakistani man from Townsburg—downplays the Islamophobia that he experienced in school when it was white people making jokes, but did not do so when other people of color were committing similar infractions:

I think socioeconomic status has a lot to do with the immigrants’ experience of [...] the western world. Mine have been great. Um, I mean, we can say that I dealt with, I can’t even, in the moment I thought it was racism, but like, it was just idiots. *I mean, actually they were just joking. Actually, I don’t even think they were malicious. They were, ‘cause actually some of them were best friends with some of my other brown, Muslim friends. And I think they were just kind of like, poking fun in a light-hearted way. More or less, we all do that. It was high school.* Um, so other than making, you know, general terrorist jokes, like, it was just up from a few guys who ended up actually being friends with us down the road. It’s been great. [Italics added.]

What is particularly interesting about Omar's conversations about Islamophobia is that he was frequently dismissive of Islamophobic encounters with white people—whom he apparently viewed as his peers—while he took a harder stance towards Islamophobia committed by other people of color.

Omar: I never have a friend come to me saying, 'this racist person came up to me.' And they all have lots of white friends, and non-, I'm sorry, I keep saying 'white,' dude, non-brown friends.

Interviewer: I'm interested in race, so you know, yeah.

Omar: Cause I'm insinuating that only racist tendencies come from white people. That's eff-ed [messed] up. That's not the case. ... I will tell you this. And this is from my own cousins and me, and people that I know in this community in Metro-City. *If there are racist behaviors being shown, like if someone is being racist to a person of the Islamic faith, it's been coming from Black people and Mexican people, always.*

By many markers, Omar has upper class standing. He comes from a family of medical doctors and has a masters-level degree. He indicated that he and his Arab and South Asian classmates had close social proximity to white people making Islamophobic jokes in school. Other interviewees indicated that the people making jokes were "their friends." This perceived close proximity to whites appears to be so strong that Omar did not consider experiences with white perpetrators to be Islamophobic in nature. However, Omar was not as dismissive of Islamophobia where "Black people" and "Mexicans" were implicated. I argue that Omar's social class position leads him to downplay Islamophobic experiences at the hands of young white men, which he views as his peers. On the other

hand, he highlights experiences with Islamophobia from “Black people” and “Mexicans” – people that he does not consider his peers. Omar was the only participant to discuss race this explicitly. However, four men noted experiences where they felt that they emphasized that they faced racial discrimination involving Black or Latinx groups. Most upper class men were not as overt in their expressed proximity and dismissal of Islamophobia committed by whites. This understanding of social proximity and positioning is telling, upper class Arab and South Asian men appeared to feel close to high status whites and elevated in status above other minority racial groups. For these men, perhaps, being associated with other high-status groups was part of claiming substantive citizenship for themselves.

While upper class interviewees tended to describe a relative proximity to upper class whites, they drew significant differences between themselves and rural whites, which they perceived to be poor and ignorant. Because of this, social positioning was understood in relation to perceptions of rural America. Some upper class interviewees positioned themselves socially above many of the residents of rural towns in the state. Relative to the seemingly impoverished and uneducated surrounding populations, many of these men’s upper class positions were amplified. In many ways, upper class interviewees seemed to position themselves as having more education, prestige, and power than would-be-racists in rural parts of the state. For example, Tahla—an upper class Pakistani doctor with a number of medical practices in rural parts of the state—describes a conversation that he purportedly had with a resident of a rural town in the state:

So I actually tell them at that time, “So, let’s say my children, let’s say the minimum education they’re going to have [is a] college education. They’re going to have some master’s [degree] probably also. And they will have some skill education. Tomorrow, if your [presumably white person from rural town in the state] grandson or your child who is barely high school [educated], when they are in the market, how [are] they going to compete? You can call me [an] immigrant as you want, but it’s not going to matter. [An] employer is not going to look at that.”

Tahla positions himself and the educational opportunities that he pushes his children to pursue as economically superior to the general attitude of the rural part of the state that he is in. Though he is offering advice on economic opportunity, Tahla is peripherally positioning himself “in-the-know,” and above many of the residents of the town in question. And again, this reflection was situational, because many of the upper class men who spent extensive time in rural parts of the state had or worked in medical practices in these locales. These men had a high degree of prestige that they could leverage in most of their interactions in these places. And importantly, though they appreciated their neighbors, they were significantly different from low status and rural whites.

Upper class interviewees in particular downplayed Islamophobia that they experienced by characterizing perpetrators as ignorant, uneducated, or somehow not in their right mind. In this way, Arabs and South Asians with upper class positions further distanced themselves from low-status whites. These interviewees asserted that the ignorance of rural residents was understandable since, in their minds, rural residents lacked critical exposure to Muslims and education. Six interviewees directly discussed

education-levels while they dismissed incidents of Islamophobia. All except one of these men belonged to the upper class category. And the one remaining participant was from the middle- or working-class category, but his mother was a public educator and he was enrolled in medical school. Mustafa, an upper class Pakistani man, attributes the Islamophobia that he has encountered to “small-town” ignorance.

Because I mean, for example, on a college campus, as a freshman starting out, there’s people that come from very small towns where they might’ve never seen anyone not really white. You know, they probably, even if they don’t mean to, even if they don’t mean any ill-will or harm or what have you, they may sometimes have those mentalities, and they may say things in a way that kind of makes you look twice or anything like that. So Metro-City [...] it’s been very different, in that a lot of people I met may have never met a Muslim, or really don’t know what Islam is about, or even what Pakistani... or what Pakistan is or anything like that.

Notably, Mustafa downplays Islamophobic beliefs, which he calls “some of those mentalities.” He believes that these “mentalities” are not malicious. He thus reports that much of the Islamophobia that he does experience is described as relatively benign. In his estimation, whites from rural America lack critical exposure to racial minorities and Muslims, and thus it is understandable that they would hold these views. In contrast, many of the upper class men that I interviewed understood themselves to be cultured and aware of the world around them.

As indicated previously, only one interviewee that I categorize as upper class did not downplay Islamophobia. Raffi previously worked as a director in information

technologies, but has been unable to work for some time due to a disability. After his partner died, he raised two children on his own. Raffi's responses to Islamophobic encounters more closely mirrored participants in the middle- and working-class category—which I discuss in the next section. In comparison to other upper class interviewees, Raffi seemed to feel more powerless during Islamophobic encounters. He took a more hardened stance towards Islamophobia than his other upper class peers. Here he critiques the generally dismissive stance that many young men in Townsburg took towards Islamophobia:

Absolutely. Absolutely. It [has] happened to most of the kids that I know here [in Townsburg]. Um, but I'm not going to mention any names, because their reaction to most of the incidents, they shook it off and just kept on moving as if nothing happened.

During the interview, Raffi seemed irritated that young Muslims would be so dismissive of what he felt were severe offenses. Based on this study, I understand that many of the young men that Raffi is referring to come from upper class families. Raffi's family's experiences with Islamophobia in the local school system are serious. Classmates beat his son "unconscious". And his daughter had her hijab ripped off and was called a lesbian for not dating. Thus Raffi has no desire to excuse or dismiss such behavior. His responses to Islamophobia are more similar to those of middle- and working-class men.

#### *Middle- and Working-Class Men*

In this section, I address the trends of dismissing and downplaying Islamophobia among middle- or working-class men. Though they still downplayed Islamophobia to some extent, men with middle- and working-class positions and backgrounds tended to



take a more stern tone in discussing Islamophobic experiences than their upper class counterparts. When these men did downplay experiences with Islamophobia, they tended to do so in ways that did not draw on their social class position or proximity to other high status groups.

Again, it is unclear whether or not middle- and- working-class Arabs and South Asians actually experienced more severe Islamophobia than those with upper class positions. Men from each group described a range of Islamophobic encounters that occurred with some regularity. However, middle-class interviewees more frequently described such confrontations as aggressive. Earlier, I provided an example of how an upper class interviewee discussed off-putting comments or questions and public epithets. Here I provide a parallel interaction described by Zain—a working-class Pakistani Arab American student whose parents worked in the non-profit sector and retail at a local mall:

I feel like my mom gets it more than me. [...] She wears a hijab. And she doesn't mind people asking her questions. But some people come up to her really rudely. Even when I was growing up people would ask, like in [another southeastern state], some of the white people there. I'm not trying to call out white people. On record, I love white people. *But they're just really rude about the questions and the way they would go about things.* [Italics added.]

And:

Oh no, my dad's a jeweler and he works in the malls and all that. *And some people just come at him sideways [with a bad attitude]. They'll be like, 'the stupid little Arabs just selling me fucking' blah, blah, blah.* [Italics added.]

Notably, Zain's discussion of his parent's experiences is decidedly different than that paralleled by men with upper class positions such as Musa, discussed previously. It is unclear where Zain's mother was asked the questions the purportedly "rude" questions that she was asked. But Zain makes his point clear, that the questions were rude. He was not forgiving of the way the questions were asked, whereas Musa and other upper class men generally did not provide such commentary. The latter excerpt also demonstrates that men from lower status occupations and who worked in drastically different places that were open to the public described their experiences with off-handed comments differently. This narrative arguably rises to the level of "public epithet," but I include it here because the comparison is important. Interviewees who were differentially positioned in social class hierarchies interpreted similar instances of Islamophobia differently. Unlike upper class men, middle- and working-class interviewees did not have the occupational resources to dismiss or downplay Islamophobia in the same ways when they were at work. This bore out in their less-than-forgiving interpretation of these encounters.

Middle- and working-class men also expressed that social class impacted experiences and interpretations of Islamophobia. And some of this commentary mirrored my earlier claim that upper class Arabs and South Asians felt a social proximity to whites. When asked if he thought that there were any racial or ethnic divides outside of religious distinction between sects in the Muslim community, Zain—who is from a working-class family—offered the following:

They're [some Arab and South Asian groups] usually of a higher economic status. They live in the East end. They have nice cars and everything. [...] And

it's just like, I wouldn't say they were 'whiter,' but I would say they were wealthier than us. [...] They're more Americanized than us. [...] But you can tell, we say they act 'whiter'. And I guess they do because they're more assimilated into the upper class and the upper class is mostly white. [...] So they abide by those upper class society norms. So I guess they're more 'whiter' in that sense. But at the end of the day, they still look like me. They still look like another brown guy. [...] There are some things [susceptibility to Islamophobia] you can't change no matter how much money you have.

To Zain, there is a clear divide in the perceptions between wealthy and middle- and working-class Arabs and South Asians with Islamophobia. Zain did not feel close to whites and indicated such on numerous occasions throughout the interview. He reported that upper class Arabs and South Asians had a high degree social proximity to whites, but ultimately indicates that this proximity doesn't afford any substantive protections: "They still look like another brown guy."

In addition to providing commentary about wealthy Arab and South Asian's relationships to whites, middle- and working-class interviewees also discussed their relationships to other racial groups. Men of generally middle- and working-class positions—though not exclusively—were more likely to describe themselves as having closer racial proximity to subordinated minority groups, e.g. Black Americans and Latinx groups. In contrast to the upper class interviewees, men from middle- and working-class positions generally lived closer to other racial and ethnic minorities and went to majority-minority schools, and generally reported more close friendships with racial minorities that were not other Arab or South Asian Muslims. For instance, Yahya—a middle-class

Palestinian medical student from Townsburg, whose parents were a public school teacher and a mechanic—indicated that he had closer friendships with African Americans in high school.

And to be specific, it's like the African American community, because, I don't know if you've noticed, but when I was in high school, [...] I was friends better with the African American community than the white group. And I don't know why, they were just friendlier, I guess, and they weren't as ignorant. Maybe that's just a Townsburg thing. But yeah, that's the fear [of facing Islamophobic encounters or anti-Black discrimination—when pulled over by police]. I think we get grouped with the African Americans or the, just the foreigners in general and we have that fear.

Yahya indicates that he was always closer to African Americans than whites in high school. He iterates that African Americans weren't "as ignorant," by which Yahya means Islamophobic or xenophobic. Another working social class interviewee indicated that white children "didn't want to be friends" with him and his Pakistani cousins growing up. Unlike some of the upper class young men, other participants from middle- and working-class group took critical stances and specified that people making Islamophobic jokes were not their friends, but instead were "acquaintances." Soon after this excerpt, Yahya indicates that he has a heightened fear when he is pulled over by police—an experience that he links to his perceived closeness to African Americans. Upper class interviewees did not express reciprocal sentiments. I note that perceived proximity to subordinated groups is intersectional and shapes how interviewees perceived Islamophobic joking, "off-handed comments," and the like. Men who perceived themselves as close to

powerful groups were able to dismiss Islamophobic encounters as benign, whereas less powerful groups read these experiences as threatening because they were less able to engage with a “honorary white” status.

Finally, when middle- and working-class Arab and South Asian men discussed low-income and rural Whites, they were more likely to describe these groups as potentially threatening, rather than simply misguided or ignorant like their upper class counterparts. For example, Faizaan—a working-class Yemeni American man—participated in a Muslim service group that traveled, sometimes through rural parts of the state. He feels that tensions were frequently high when he and other Muslim men were dressed in traditional garb on these trips.

Sometimes it would get serious to me personally. Because we’d be praying, right, we pray outside. [If it’s] time to pray, we pray. So like, we’d be praying outside of a rest stop and people would be surrounding us, watching us, taking pictures, looking, whatever. And I’ve heard stories where like, people throw things at somebody that’s praying [...]. So in the back of my head, I’d be like, “Oh, I really hope that one of these truck driver dudes from Alabama doesn’t decide to have a fun Tuesday or whatever.” [...]

Notably, Faizaan draws on popular stereotypes about people from rural America. However, this quote highlights a significant break from the ways that men from upper class positions described their relationship with rural whites. Faizaan notices surveillance from rural whites. They surrounded his group. They watched his group and took pictures of them. And further, Faizaan is fearful that a rural white racist would physically harm them. Whereas upper class interviewees understood rural America largely through

professional relationships—e.g. as medical providers—Faizaan had no such situational prestige to draw on. He was simply a Muslim. And as such, he felt that he was subject to Islamophobia. For middle- and working-class men, rural whites were to be potentially feared.

When middle- and working-class Arab and South Asian men did dismiss and downplay Islamophobia, they had a tendency to do so in unique ways. Three middle- and working-class interviewees reported that they probably did experience Islamophobia, but that they “just didn’t really pay attention to that kind of stuff.” For example, Ammar—a middle-class Pakistani American student whose single mother runs a small catering company—offers this:

Maybe it’s just me, but I don’t really catch an eye to it. So like, if anyone actually did say something to me, I probably just don’t care. I mean, people probably do get discrimination, but I just don’t catch an eye to it. I don’t really care.

This response to Islamophobia is categorically different than those of upper class men. Rather than indicating that Islamophobia isn’t a problem, Ammar acknowledges that it probably does occur. And rather than dismissing or downplaying Islamophobia as benign, Ammar indicates that he just ignores such encounters. Responses like this did not involve an elevated sense of occupational and educated status, like many of the upper class men’s responses did.

### *Discussion*

In this chapter, I highlighted the wide range of Islamophobia that Arab and South Asian men experienced in two cities in a largely rural southern state. Consistent with other scholarship (Selod 2015 and 2019), I found that Arabs and South Asians routinely

encounter Islamophobia in a variety of forms, and that these encounters have an impact on the psychological well being of these men. I further highlighted and critically addressed a trend that many interviewees tended to dismiss or downplay Islamophobia in ways that seemingly contradicted the normal and often quite severe encounters that they outlined. I demonstrated that this tendency to dismiss and downplay Islamophobic experiences is classed, because upper class men—e.g., men with high levels of education and occupational prestige drew on their positionality when they dismissed and downplayed Islamophobia. I use interview data to demonstrate that class positions and dismissing Islamophobia were related to perceived proximity to powerful groups, namely Americanized groups and high-status whites. Upper class Arab and South Asian men described a close proximity to wealthy whites while they distanced themselves and dismissed discrimination from rural, poor, and whites with low levels of education. In contrast, middle- and working-class men were not able to similarly draw on class resources in their dismissal of Islamophobia. And even though they dismissed Islamophobia, they did not interpret Islamophobia as benign. Middle- and working-class men did not describe close social proximity to whites and instead distanced themselves from whites. Middle- and working-class men also tended to read poor and rural whites as more threatening, since they were unable to draw on situational resources such as occupational prestige and relationships, and additionally because these groups did not perceive themselves as close to whites and other powerful groups.

I have demonstrated some significant dimensions of how social class intersects with racialized status to shape interpretations of Islamophobia. This adds nuance to theories of substantive citizenship (Glenn 2011) and of the U.S. tri-racial order (Bonilla-

Silva 2004), because this study demonstrates that perceptions about social and racial position are truncated by class, particularly by groups that may be considered to be intermediary or honorary whites. Future research should address the way social class position impacts perceptions and experiences for other racialized groups. These findings also have implications for the future of research on Arabs, South Asians, and other intermediary racialized groups that routinely experience discrimination. Future research should continue to explore the relationship between social class and perceptions of discrimination, as well as the relationship between social class and actual experiences of discrimination.



## CHAPTER 5: GENDER, MASCULINITY, PATRIARCHY, AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

Interviewees' gender informed their experiences of Islamophobia and their interpretations and responses to said experiences. In this chapter, I address the gendered ways that Arab and South Asian Muslim men perceived and responded to Islamophobia that they and significant women in their lives experienced. Men reported that women faced more instances and more severe forms of Islamophobia than they did themselves—a theme that is consistent with my past research on similar groups (Allen 2019). Their responses also seemed indicative of performed hegemonic masculinity when they discussed experiences of Islamophobia that involved Muslim women. This is particularly noteworthy because hegemonic masculinity is usually analyzed through the lens of white men. I use the work of Connell (2005) and others (Barry 2018, Bridges and Pascoe 2014, Chen 1999, Wingfield 2013) to interpret these trends. In this chapter, I address these themes and analyze the ways that masculinity shapes how men discuss and downplay experiences with Islamophobia.

Connell (2005) develops a theoretical framework that can be used to analyze and critically address masculinities. In it, she asserts that gender is a way of organizing social practice (Connell 2005). Gendered social practices shape and adhere to structures of power relations. And in western societies, social structures and power relations subordinate women. For example, in the U.S. economy many

occupations are gendered. Work that is done by women often pays less and takes a greater emotional toll than the work done by men, e.g. doctors versus nurses. This can in turn justify a gendered division of labor in the home, because men generally have a higher earning potential than women. And consequently, women do more than their fair share of “reproductive labor” (Duffy 2007) in the home. Virtually all structures in America are gendered, e.g. education, families, and the economy. Scholars and activists call the gender order, in which men typically have power over women, patriarchy (Connell 2005). Within this patriarchal system, however, not all men and women are benefited or subordinated in the same ways, or in the same contexts. Thus, Connell (2005) differentiates the ways groups of men experience the benefits of masculinity.

I outline three types of masculinity described by Connell (2005) that are relevant to themes from my interviews. First, “[h]egemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or at least is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (Connell 2005, 77). In other words, if masculinity exists on a continuum, hegemonic masculinity represents the starkest contrast from idealized femininity. Tenets of hegemonic masculinity in U.S. society include but are not limited to: the defense of women from threats, heterosexuality, economic success, “whiteness,” and physical dominance. Second, relatively few men are actually able to embody hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2005). Per Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), “[m]en who received the benefits of patriarchy without enacting a strong version of masculine dominance could be regarded as showing a *complicit masculinity* [italics added]” (832). Nearly all men benefit from

American patriarchy, and thus masculine hegemony, even men who are proponents of gender equality. Complicit masculinities maintain the patriarchy through their subscription to hegemonic masculinities. Finally, marginalized masculinities are differentiated from hegemonic masculinities, in that marginalized masculinities are devalued or subjugated in a social order, often against the will of its holder. In particular, Connell (2005) claims that lower-income men and men of color perform marginalized masculinities, because they often lack the social status available to higher-income and/or white men. Hegemonic variations of masculinity are frequently constructed against marginalized masculinities. Connell (2005) highlights that racial minorities—in particular Black men—have served important symbolic roles against which hegemonic white masculinities were constructed, namely via white men protecting white women against would-be Black rapist tropes. My findings are interesting because I address the experiences of Arab and South Asian men who are disadvantaged by their racialized status, but who use experiences associated with that status to perform hegemonic masculinity. In other words, whereas one might anticipate that Arab and South Asian men in the U.S. south might perform complicit or marginalized masculinities, I find that these groups also perform hegemonic masculinity in response to Islamophobic racialization.

Recent scholarship (Barry 2018, Bridges and Pascoe 2014, Chen 1999, Wingfield 2013) has expanded on the typologies of masculinity that Connell (2005) has developed. I find that the men in my sample perform hegemonic masculinities when faced with potential Islamophobic encounters targeted at significant women in their lives. This included behind-the-scenes negotiations of women's practices including religious

practices such as determining whether or not their partners should wear the hijab, or work practices such as whether or not women should work outside of the home.

“Hegemonic bargains” are a useful analytic tool for explaining how Arab and South Asian men perform hegemonic masculinities. Chen (1999) finds that Chinese American men engage in “hegemonic bargains”, whereby one “trades or unconsciously benefits from the ‘privileges’ of race, gender, class, generation, and/or sexuality for the purpose of ‘achieving’ his masculinity” (604). I expand this discussion to include Arab and South Asian men. He outlines three strategies for engaging in “hegemonic bargains:” “compensation,” “deflection,” and “denial.” He suggests that Chinese men might engage in “compensation,” whereby men make a concerted effort to break stereotypes against them, e.g. Chinese American men emphasizing athleticism against model “minority stereotypes.” “Deflection” refers to emphasizing certain other attributes to detract from negative stereotypes or perceived shortcomings, e.g. emphasizing wealth or social class despite well-documented discrimination in occupational advancement to management. And “denial” refers to strategies that involve a denial of negative stereotypes or a claim to some form of exceptionalism, e.g. a Chinese man indicating that stereotypes about Chinese American men just not being true about him. The men that I interview engage in “hegemonic bargains” when they took responsibility for protecting significant women in their lives from Islamophobic perpetrators. Notably, I categorize much of this response as deflection, because when asked about experiences with Islamophobia, many of these men pointed out that Muslim women faced more Islamophobia than them and sought to emphasize their ability to protect significant women from said Islamophobia.

Using this theoretical base, I am able to critically analyze the ways that Arab and South Asian men discuss and engage with gender, masculinity, and patriarchy. I argue that, generally, Arab and South Asian Muslim men in the American south are racialized and thus not able to lay pure claims to hegemonic masculinity. However, these same men are able to appeal to hegemony during moments where Muslim women face discrimination. This is evidenced by their claims that women received more and worse Islamophobia than men, and their subscription to hegemonic masculine ideals—particularly in the ways that they were protective of Arab and South Asian women. In the case of Arab and South Asian men—as I will demonstrate—interviewees embodied certain components of hegemonic masculinity when they described or discussed defending significant women in their lives from Islamophobic encounters. Recognition of Islamophobia and attempts to defend Muslim women family members provide stark contrasts with their dismissive responses to personal experiences with Islamophobia described in the previous chapter. These findings offer important insights into how we understand the intersectional positions of marginalized racial groups and into how Islamophobia is experienced and responded to by men—particularly those with higher social status. Additionally, they expand on more recent developments in “bargaining on gender” by analyzing the ways that subordinated men lay claims to hegemonic masculinity through the protective measures they take for women.

*“Women get it worse than men”*

Interviewees were in general agreement that women experienced more and worse Islamophobic treatment than men. Men directly stated that “women got ‘it’ worse than men” particularly when asked “if [they] knew of any groups of Arabs, South Asians, or Muslims who were more susceptible to Islamophobia than others?” Several men,

however, indicated that Muslim women who wear the hijab receive more or worse Islamophobic treatment than men, when they expressed that they enjoyed relative privilege or experienced less Islamophobia than other Muslims because of their more muted markers—e.g. beards and skin-tone—of their religious or ethnic identities. Respondents observed that women may experience more severe Islamophobia than men, and that this might indeed be attributable to the religious practice of wearing the hijab. However, I focus on the differences between how men discuss their experiences with Islamophobia—outlined in the previous chapter—and those of significant women in their lives—in this chapter. Sixteen of the 23 men that I interviewed made direct statements that Muslim women bore the brunt of Islamophobia. I asked follow-up questions that specifically addressed gender, but many men actually offered this commentary before I got there, when they dismissed or downplayed their experiences with Islamophobia—as discussed in the previous chapter. For instance, Imad—a 22-year-old Syrian Muslim—prefaced his description of the Islamophobia that he faced personally with this:

I'm also a male [laughs], right. I'm not a female. I'm not a woman. Um, I'm not a Muslim woman. And for that reason ... the tendency for Islamophobic experiences to occur drastically reduces. And I know for a fact that Muslim women tend to have more severe Islamophobic encounters, particularly those who wear the hijab[.]

According to Imad, women experience both more numerical and more severe Islamophobic encounters than men. As outlined in the previous chapter, this general understanding led many men to downplay their own experiences with Islamophobia. And

it also seems to have led men to highlight moments where men stood up for women against Islamophobic perpetrators—as I address below.

Other interviewees shared a number of stories of Islamophobic encounters to support their claims that Muslim women—particularly those who wear the hijab—are subject to more and worse Islamophobic treatment than men. For instance, Faizaan—a 23-year-old Yemeni Muslim—compares his experiences to those of his female relatives.

My female cousins, my mom, my nieces, they go out and I hear stories all the time about how someone shouted at them, or like someone flicked them off, or like someone told them to go home, or do this or that, it's all, in Metro-City even ... I remember my niece told me a story, she was driving and some guy just yelled across the parking lot, like “terrorist!” for no reason. Like, she was just driving. ... [B]ut I never get that type of treatment, probably because I'm a guy. ... But definitely, I hear stories where Muslim women in the hijab definitely get a lot of hate.

Faizaan indicates that his female relatives' experiences with “individual acts of bigotry” were more common and more severe than his own. Here he outlines a specific incident where his niece had a “public epithet” shouted at her while she was in a parking lot.

Faizaan—and other interviewees—primarily attributed these differences in experience to gender. He says, “Muslim women in the hijab ... get a lot of hate.”

Several of the Islamophobic experiences that men described appeared to be heightened when Muslim women were involved. Thirteen of the 23 men described such experiences. For instance, Bassam—a 22-year-old recent college graduate—details an

off-putting experience that he had that was seemingly amplified by his mother's presence:

One specific instance for me, uh, I went to see the movie, "American Sniper" with my mother. I don't know if you remember that movie ... when that movie was in theaters. ... And I went in there and my mom and I were the only, you know, the out-group, minority in that theater. And the rest were all whites. ... And it, you could tell that the whole setting was kind of like, just a patriotic hoorah type of thing.

So, as we were walking up the stairs, and I was holding my mom's hand to help assist her up the stairs, one man ... said, "Hello" to us. And I was like, "Hi." And he was like, "How are you guys doing today?" And we were like, "Oh, we're good. How are you?" And I guess he didn't hear us. So he reiterated it again. Just not [in] as friendly [of a] tone. And he was like, [greater emphasis] "I said, how are you guys today?" And I was like, "We said, we're good. How are you?" And he was like, "Oh, I'm fine." And I was like, [to self] "Okay weird."

But as we were walking up the stairs, all eyes were on us. It was just kind of just like ... we were getting that vibe where it was like, something might happen.

It is unclear whether the confrontation that Bassam outlines was Islamophobic in nature. It could be that the hijab—a religious marker—solidified Bassam and his mother's identity as Muslims to a would-be perpetrator who proceeded to give the pair a hard time. It could also be that Bassam had a heightened consciousness towards Islamophobia, because the stage was set for a "patriotic hoorah" or because his mother—a woman—was with him. It was, however, enough to make him feel uncomfortable because he feared



that “something might happen.” He seems to believe that these apparent micro-aggressions were attributable to Islamophobia and were likely amplified by the presence of his mother who wears the hijab.

Interviewees also indicated that women were subject to a unique form of violence that is apparently widespread in the U.S. A number of interviewees indicated that they knew of, or knew women personally who had, had their hijabs and headscarves yanked off by perpetrators of Islamophobia. All of the instances reported to me occurred in schools. Abbas—a 23-year-old Pakistani American—indicates that his friends who wore the hijab in high schools in Metro-City were subject to having their hijabs “yanked off” on more than one occasion.

Yes, I have heard stories. Of course I went to high school in Townsburg [currently lives and attends university in Metro-City]. But, I have heard stories from some of my female friends here on campus that wore a headdress. When they went to high school people would literally grab and yank them off of their heads and say different things about them.

Rafi—the father of a Muslim daughter in Townsburg—indicates that his daughter had her headscarf torn off, which resulted in a fight, and that school administrators and officials did nothing about the incident. Still other men reported that Muslim women that they met from other parts of the country were subject to similar treatment while they attended secondary schools. These incidents of racially motivated violence were described as particularly troubling by the interviewees who described them. These incidents were so troubling because they violated a woman’s space—something that interviewees were unable to successfully police—and they were overt acts against the interviewees’

religion. Participants “bargained their gender” by emphasizing women’s negative experiences with Islamophobia while detracting attention from their personal experiences. By focusing on the defenselessness of women, men were generally able to discuss the ways that they succeeded or hoped to succeed as protectors by preventing the brunt of Islamophobic encounters. Physical altercations—like those involving tearing hijabs—meant that these men were unable to successfully protect significant women in their lives.

### *Protecting and Defending Muslim Women*

Perhaps unsurprisingly, interviewees who said that women experienced more or worse Islamophobia than men expressed a high degree of concern for the Muslim women in their lives. Men were fearful for their women family and friends and expressed such in gendered ways. For instance, Zain—a 21-year-old Pakistani American—shares that he has feared for his mother’s safety since he was a younger kid.

Even when I was younger, I would realize my mom has a target on her back and I don’t want anybody to come for my mother. I can fit in. That’s fine. My dad can fit in, that’s fine. We can try at our best. But my mom has a straight distinction to her that keeps her separated as her own sub-group, no matter what.

Zain says that his mom “has a target on her back” and he fears that someone might “come for her” [try to hurt her]. Men expressed hegemonic masculinity when they discussed the ways that they responded to moments of Islamophobia and when they discussed attempts to protect women from experiencing Islamophobia. Notably, many of these efforts at protecting Muslim women were patriarchal in nature. In this section, I highlight the ways men expressed masculinities in response to Islamophobia generally, but also particularly

as it pertained to potential Islamophobia committed against women. I propose that Arab and South Asian men engage in “protective hegemonic bargains” when significant women in their lives are the real or potential subjects of Islamophobia. “Protective hegemonic bargains” are situational expressions of hegemonic ideals, namely those of protecting women either through control or the use of violence in the context of heterosexual or heterosexually modeled relationships—e.g. spouse or significant other, potential partners, family members—e.g., mother, sister, daughter, cousins. I observed men with racialized statuses perform hegemonic masculinity by pointing attention to efforts to protect women. These performances were hegemonic because they generally involved controlling women or celebrating violence in order to protect them.

In addition to believing that their masculinity prevented them from bearing the brunt of Islamophobia, several interviewees seemed to place a high degree of value on protecting the women in their lives from Islamophobic experiences. Interviewees described several precautions that they encouraged or wished women in their lives would take to prevent themselves from being subject to Islamophobia, and they also highlighted and seemingly celebrated moments where they or people they knew defended women from moments of Islamophobia, sometimes by engaging in violence. Only one participant directly cited traditional religious justifications for being protective of the women in his life. Rafi—who has a son and daughter who both experienced Islamophobic violence in Townsburg’s public school—addresses an interviewer question about why he withdrew his daughter from public school, but not his son.

Oh, in Islam, in general, we’re more sensitive towards our female, because they’re the jewels of our life. And we don’t want [women] to be exposed to harm’s way,

by no means. So, a lot of people think that this is a primitive mentality. No, I think it's a bigger responsibility when you put the male and female, they make a unit of a family. And each person has certain characteristics and skills that suits them for that ... role that they play. When you put them both together, they complete each other. ... So, I was more protective of my daughter because I didn't want anybody to hurt her[.]

As indicated previously, no other men expressed such religious justifications for defending women. Several interviewees took pretty strong verbal stances against such religious practices and beliefs, which they categorized as backwards and sexist. One participant in particular indicated that Muslims who maintained more rigid gendered practices “didn't assimilate well” and indicated that he and his family were much more progressive on a wide-range of social issues. However, nine interviewees engaged in what I am calling “protective hegemonic bargains”, because their voiced concerns and efforts to protect significant women in their lives were patriarchal in nature. These defensive responses maintain the dominance of men over women, even if they are, “well intended.”

The first form of protecting and defending Muslim women from Islamophobia involved a control or negotiation of Muslim women in public spaces. According to interviewees, they had to negotiate the general threat of Islamophobic encounters and that women who wore the hijab had experienced more and worse Islamophobia. Two interviewees iterated that they wished that women in their lives would not wear the hijab, because it increased their susceptibility to Islamophobia. For instance Yayha discusses how and why he wishes that his mother would discontinue wearing the hijab:

I don't think we get it as bad as the women in our culture, specifically those who wear the hijab, which my mom wears the hijab. *And I told her a few years ago, I was like, "Mum, just take it off." I'll be honest with you, I did tell her that just because ... it's doing the opposite in this country. It's like, you're labeling yourself differently from other groups, which isn't a bad thing. You should feel comfortable doing whatever you feel. But for me it's just like, "Mum, I don't know, I feel it's dangerous. You should just take it off."* ... And again, the hijab isn't forced on the woman in our culture at all. My sister is in high school. She doesn't wear it. ... It's up to her if she wants to or not. ... And [when] you're putting it on, the purpose is humility or something like that. And then you stand out ... in contrast. [Italics added.]

Yahya states that women should be able to do what they want. However, he also believes that his mother's wearing the hijab in public draws attention to her that might make her a potential target of Islamophobic acts of bigotry. As a result, Yayha has requested that his mother stop wearing the hijab in public. This contrasts his claim that women should be able to do what they want. Although his request may seem relatively benign, it is paternalistic in nature because it involves a control of women's behavior—particularly in the public sphere—by men. This is just one example of the ways that men protected women by controlling their interaction with the public sphere. Notably, Yahya is aware of the stereotype that Muslim men are misogynistic patriarchs, and he works to differentiate his patriarchal request of his mother from his faith or "culture", stating that, "the hijab isn't forced on women in our culture at all." However, the protection of women has long been a justification for the maintenance of hegemonic performances. Under this

justification, women are subordinated and controlled for their “own best interest”—even if the threat of Islamophobic discrimination may be real.

Still other men detailed paternalistic conversations and decisions that they had with women in their lives about going to school, work, or just navigating public spaces. Others described hypothetical scenarios where women traveling to parts of the state associated in their mind with Islamophobia would make them more uncomfortable than their being there. As mentioned earlier, after his daughter and son experienced Islamophobia in Townsburg’s public school system, Raffi elected to homeschool his daughter, but not his son. Other men iterated that they had a heightened awareness when they were with Muslim women in public or rural places—where they believed women might be more susceptible to Islamophobic acts of bigotry. One man in particular encouraged his wife not to work, because he was fearful about what could happen to his wife in the workplace. Omair offers:

We know of a couple of incidences where somebody got threatened because of their religious background or their religion in general. One of those was my wife, she does [laughs], she doesn’t need to work, but she decided to go to work because she was getting tired of sitting in the house. So she went to work, and she worked in a place [retail work], *I wont name it, but I advised her against it. Uh, not because I know that, that place is bad, but just because the nature of that place will have her deal with people from all walks of life. And my idea was that one of those million people that she’ll see on a daily basis will discriminate against her. ... And that’s exactly what happened. ... It actually happened to her three times in a period of two weeks.* [Italics added.]

Here, Omair describes specific experiences that his wife had when she decided to work in a publicly facing retail company. He advised against it, and even had an “I told you so” moment, when his wife experienced racial epithets three times in two weeks of work. Apparently this is more widespread than just his wife, because he later specifies that this has been a problem for Muslim women in the community. Omair’s notion that his wife “doesn’t need to work” is paternalistic, but it is also reflective of his class position. Omair is a software engineer for a large multi-national corporation. Other upper class men indicated that their wives were stay-at-home moms or “soccer moms”—meaning that they took on additional responsibilities with their children’s extra-curricular activities, such as sports. None-the-less, Omair encourages his wife to be a homemaker—in part—because the jobs that she is eligible for involve interacting with customers, customers who have the potential to commit acts of Islamophobia against her. This is paternalistic because even though Omair’s wife had a different vision for herself, she was reportedly encouraged to limit her public presence and increase her economic dependence on him for the sake of her safety. Whereas both upper- and middle- and working-class Arab and South Asian men were potentially disadvantaged by their racialized identities as Muslims, they were all privileged by their status as men. And several of these men performed hegemonic masculinity and paternalistically controlling or expressing a desire to control women “for their own good.” In these instances, men enhanced their status as men, even as their loved ones were disadvantaged due to their racialized Muslim status. They did this by establishing themselves as protectors of women.

A second form of protecting and defending Muslim women from Islamophobia involved confronting people who committed Islamophobic micro-aggressions or

individual acts of bigotry against significant women in participants' lives. For example, when asked if he had any specific examples that supported his claim that women faced more Islamophobic discrimination than men, Yayha describes a confrontation that he had when some people at the state fair said something about his mother.

I remember one time, I was at the [state] fair actually. It was maybe a few years ago. And I remember I was with my mom and then two teenagers, I think they were two teens or two adults ... They said something. And I can't remember exactly what they said, but I know it was towards my mom. And I didn't want to ignore it. And I actually did stop. I was like, "What did you say?" And they were shocked because they weren't expecting me to say something back to them and they acted like they didn't say anything. So, we both went our separate ways. But just stuff like that.

Most confrontations that participants personally described took this form. Like Yayha's experience, a passer-by made an Islamophobic comment or committed another micro-aggression directed at Muslim women or a group containing a Muslim woman, and the interviewee verbally confronted the perpetrator. In almost every scenario described the perpetrator backed off, and the interviewee described the perpetrator as not expecting them to actually say or do anything. What's notable, is again, I did not ask any questions about protecting women or how men responded when women did face Islamophobia. These data emerged as themes later in interview analysis. Protecting women from violence has long been a central justification and pattern in western patriarchy. By emphasizing and gladly telling of moments where they protected Muslim women, interviewees were able to elevate themselves to a stronger position in interviews that



focused on negative experiences associated with their racialized status. Such a focus on Islamophobia committed against women allowed these interviewees to change the script so that they fulfilled hegemonic masculine duties, by protecting Muslim women.

Even interviewees who did not personally recall encounters where women in their lives were threatened detailed, and seemingly expressed some degree of pleasure about, confrontations that friends or people that they knew had when Islamophobic perpetrators said things about their mothers. Notably, reveling in fighting was exclusively a trend that young men discussed. But other men discussed confronting Islamophobic perpetrators fondly. For instance, Ammar—a 20-year-old, Pakistani man—laughs while he describes a fight that a friend got into in defense of his Muslim mother.

Ammar: [Laughter] I do, actually, I do know one thing of discrimination on someone else. ... So one person, uh, was making fun of my friend's mom or something like that. Which I completely understand, if anyone made fun of my mom

Interviewer: Who wears the hijab or who is Muslim?

Ammar: Muslim, yeah. And so he, and then after that, he just kept going on and on while they were in line. They were both in line for something. I think it was like coffee or something.

Interviewer: Were they friends prior to this?

Ammar: No, no, completely strangers. And I guess they went outside and fought.

*And my friend whooped his ass.* [laughter] [italics added.]

In this scenario, Ammar's friend beat an Islamophobic stranger in a fight to defend his mother—a Muslim woman. Many of the men—including Ammar—who recounted such

third-person narratives fondly—indicated that if they were in a similar situation, that they would have probably done the same thing. Other men described scenarios where Islamophobic comments were directed at women, that they did not hear, but when they were told later what was said, they indicated that they would have taken confrontational action. Arab and South Asian men make claims to hegemonic masculine ideals when they celebrate the ability to carry out violence to protect women that they love. Notably, this starkly contrasted the ways that men were dismissive of Islamophobia—as discussed in the previous chapter. Men seemingly reserved more aggressive responses to Islamophobia for scenarios that involved defending women.

I argue that these moments of “protective hegemonic bargains”—where Arab and South Asian men made women’s experiences the topic of conversation and tapped into hegemonic patriarchy—are significant because they dramatize some of the most central tenants of hegemonic masculinity: heterosexism, a control of women, and the threat of physical confrontation. It is evident that interviewees genuinely care for the women in their lives. However, it is also clear that interviewees celebrated moments where they were able to protect women that they loved in hegemonic and patriarchal ways. This is particularly clear when men provided details about hegemonic performances while largely unprompted. This adds a layer to our understanding of how intersectional systems of power operate to keep some groups subordinated while elevating others. While interviewees’ defense of Muslim women was anti-Islamophobic in nature, it legitimated masculine hegemony, thus complicating the ways that these interlocking systems of domination interact to maintain domination.

## *Discussion*

The themes discussed in this chapter have a number of implications for the future study of and understanding of intersectional masculinities. Recall that the interview schedule had a limited focus on gender; so many of the themes outlined in this chapter were relatively unprompted. In my mind, this strengthens the salience of the themes presented here, but further research is needed to verify and build on these findings. It has generally been accepted in activist, religious, and scholarly communities that Muslim women experience Islamophobia in greater quantity and severity than men. My data do not contest these trends; these men's narratives suggest that the women in their lives experience more Islamophobia than they do. What this research does more definitively offer is a critical analysis of patriarchal hegemony in the ways that men talked about how significant women in their lives experienced Islamophobia.

I find that though Arab and South Asian men in the American South occupy a marginalized masculinity because of racist stereotypes about them, they simultaneously embody components of hegemonic masculinity in the ways that they discussed responding to Islamophobic threats against women. Whereas these men typically engaged in more passive responses to Islamophobia when they were the subjects of threat and conversation—see previous chapter—participants made women's experiences the subjects of interviews and responded to Islamophobia against women by controlling women's bodies and movement in public spaces and with aggression. These themes parallel more recent developments in the literature on masculinities, because these men are able to “bargain” their gender privilege to elevate their status (Chen 1999). Interviewees emphasized their own masculinities or imitated hegemonic forms of

masculinity by supporting the control of women and violence. They did this by controlling (or attempting to control) when and how women presented themselves in public, for example whether or not women worked or wore the hijab, and through celebrating violence against perpetrators or actively defending women when they were faced with Islamophobia. In doing such, they were able to elevate their own social standing in a situation where they were compromised by their racialized Muslim identities. I expand on these literatures (Bridges and Pascoe 2014, Connell 2005, and Chen 1999) by addressing the ways that Arab and South Asian men bargain their masculinity during moments of Islamophobia where significant women in their lives are the targets. For now, I call these moments “protective hegemonic bargains,” because these men focus their discussion of Islamophobia on the experiences of women and because of the components of hegemony that are embodied during highlighted moments are intended to protect significant women in their lives. Notably the telling of these moments celebrates patriarchal ideals, e.g. heterosexism, controlling women, physical violence. Even men who expressed progressive political, religious, and gender views embodied hegemonic protective masculinity when responded to Islamophobia against women. I posit that men bargain their gender because, perhaps unconsciously, these are moments where men can regain some of the power that they lose by being a member of a subordinated group. I suspect that the men that I interview are performing their masculinities for other men. This is evidenced by the apparent reporting of defending Muslim women to other men in the community. Furthermore, I believe that interviewees may not similarly share these reports in the ways that they did if I—the researcher—were not a man.

Future research should address more centrally the ways that patriarchy informs responses to Islamophobia or at least be cognizant of the ways masculinity informs the perceptions of affected groups. I suspect that there might be significant class differences in the protective responses or at least the celebration of these responses among men, e.g. lower status men may be more likely to celebrate violence than high status men, who can maintain patriarchy by suggesting that women cautiously engage with the public sphere. However, future research should focus more directly on these questions to develop more robust findings. However, most specifically, future research should focus on similar groups who are susceptible to discrimination, racism, classism, xenophobia, etc. and seek to address how and if men in these groups similarly engage in “protective hegemonic bargains.”

## CHAPTER 6: FINDING BELONGING IN TOWNSBURG

In chapter 4, I highlighted that Arab and South Asian men in Metro-City and Townsburg regularly downplayed and dismissed Islamophobia that they experienced or heard about. I argued that upper class Arab and South Asian men were uniquely dismissive of these experiences because of their perceived proximity to economically advantaged groups and white Americans. In this chapter, I analyze the classed and place-mitigated ways that interviewees discussed perceiving belonging in Townsburg. I find that upper class men described a strong sense of connection to the broader population-level community in Townsburg especially in comparison to middle and working-class men.

This particular sense of connection was unique to upper class men in Townsburg because these interviewees felt that Arabs and South Asians had more-or-less earned the respect of the surrounding community through their role as medical providers in Townsburg. I also find that upper class men in Townsburg were still the subjects of racial stereotyping, however they reported that they were frequently cast as “model minorities,” rather than terrorists and misogynists. I argue that participants were willing to overlook these harmful stereotypes or otherwise left them unchallenged while indicating their belonging to the broader community in Townsburg. Limited interview evidence from men from middle- and working-class positions in Townsburg suggests that these interviewees benefitted in some way from local generalizations about Arabs and South

Asians being from upper class backgrounds. However, these interviewees did not discuss belonging in the same way as their Townsburg upper class counterparts. These findings expand on existing analyses of belonging for immigrant-origin populations in new immigrant or non-traditional immigrant destinations such as small towns in the U.S. south, by analyzing the experiences of upper class men Arab and South Asian men. This analysis is place-specific because belonging in Townsburg was predicated on personal relationships to the community rather than the diversity that exists in more traditional immigrant destinations and larger cities.

First, I outline social scientific literature on belonging. Specifically, I draw on frameworks developed by Antonsich (2010) and Yuval-Davis (2006) and more recent studies of belonging in new immigrant or non-traditional immigrant destinations (Dreby and Schmalzbauer 2013, Flores-González 2017, Mendez and Deeb-Sossa 2020). Second, I discuss the ways that upper class Arab and South Asian men from Townsburg were frequently stereotyped as model minorities, rather than exclusively terrorists or patriarchs. Third, I compare perceptions of belonging among upper class Arab and South Asian men from Townsburg with those of the Metro-City men. Finally, I outline interviews with four Arab and South Asian men from Townsburg with middle- and working-class positions and differentiate their discussion of belonging from the ways that the nine upper class interviewees from Townsburg discussed belonging.

### *Social Class in Townsburg*

At the onset of this chapter, I find it necessary to remind the reader of some of the unique characteristics of my sample. I had greater difficulty finding interviewees from Townsburg who were from middle- and working-class standing. I provide an overview of

the social class characteristics of interviewees from Townsburg in table 6.1. During snowball sampling, some interviewees discussed knowing Arabs and South Asians from middle- and working-class positions in the area but were unwilling or unable to put me in contact with these groups. Future studies should continue to focus on the intersectional experiences of groups that have less power and privilege, particularly in non-traditional immigrant destinations. Additionally, 11 of the 13 interviewees that I interviewed were Pakistani. Per several interviewees from Townsburg, this was reflective of the Muslim population in Townsburg that is largely comprised of South Asian and Pakistani Americans. This may impact racial stereotyping as “model minorities” because South Asian Americans may be racialized differently than Arab Americans.



*Table 6.1: Townsburg Participants by Social Class Categories*

Townsburg	<p>Upper Class</p> <p>Characterized by individuals who meet the following characteristics or whose parent(s) do so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Have worked in high status occupational categories—mostly medical doctors and engineers</li> <li>(2) Have obtained high levels of education; all had a masters or doctorate-level degree</li> </ul>	<p>(9)</p> <p>Abbas</p> <p>Hamza</p> <p>Muhammad</p> <p>Musa</p> <p>Mustafa</p> <p>Omar</p> <p>Rafi</p> <p>Samir</p> <p>Talha</p>
	<p>Middle- or Working-Class</p> <p>Characterized by individuals who meet the following characteristics or whose parents do so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Have worked in middle or working-class occupational prestige—ranging from parent(s) who were a public school teacher and a mechanic at the high end, and retail store and food service workers at the low end</li> <li>(2) Have obtained middle-levels of education, typically less than a master’s degree e.g. a bachelor’s degree, associates degree, some college, or no college education.</li> </ul>	<p>(4)</p> <p>Ammar</p> <p>Saeed</p> <p>Rahim</p> <p>Yahya</p>

*Belonging*

Scholars (Antonsich 2010, Dreby and Schmalzbauer 2013, Mendez and Deeb-Sossa 2020, Yuval-Davis 2006) have demonstrated that belonging and place making are complex processes that vary based on populations in question, community characteristics, and place. Antonsich (2010) argues that belonging is a term that is frequently used in a variety of social sciences, but that it is often ill defined. He further claims that scholars

have used “identity,” “citizenship,” and “belonging” interchangeably, or without seeking to address their theoretical or analytical specifics. Belonging-ness may instead encompass identity and citizenship, but it is not synonymous with the two. As I will demonstrate, interviewees with formal citizenship also express varying levels of place-based belonging contingent on social class positioning.

Belonging is multidimensional. It can be analyzed at the individual level via personal feeling(s) of “being ‘at home’ in a place” (Antonsich 2010: 645), or an “identification and emotional attachments to various collectivities and groupings” (Yuval-Davis 2006: 199). However, belonging can also be analyzed at a systemic level via the various “value systems” that people use to determine their own and others’ belonging (Yuval-Davis 2006: 199) or “discursive resources that constructs, claims, justifies, or resists forms of social-spatial inclusion/exclusion” (Antonsich 2010: 645). Because I use individual interviews, I mostly analyze belonging at the individual-level. However, I am able to address system-level belonging in some instances where certain groups feel accepted as community members and others did not.

Antonsich (2010) outlines five factors highlighted in scholarship on belonging that contribute to feelings of belongingness (647). Of these, my findings specifically address “autobiographical,” “relational,” and “economic” factors. I do not address “cultural factors” in this study and “legal factors” are assumed because most of the men in my study reported being formal U.S. citizens (647). In particular, my analysis is built around the social class position of interviewees, which is partially related to economic standing. I highlight many autobiographical accounts of Arabs and South Asians detailing their relationship to the broader community in Townsburg as medical providers, instances

where stereotyping was evaluated by interviewees as benign or positive in its basis, and moments where interviewees felt a strong sense of belonging. I find that all interviewees from Townsburg reviewed the surrounding community positively and benefitted from generalizations about Arabs and South Asians being healthcare providers, but some interviewees with upper class positions were able to use their actual relationships as medical providers to be accepted as productive members of the community. These participants felt a stronger sense of belonging than their counterparts with middle- and working-class positions.

Antonsich (2010) argues that scholars have inadequately addressed place in their analyses of belonging, “as if feelings, discourses, and practices of belonging exist in a geographical vacuum” (647). Some emerging scholarship has addressed this critique by more intentionally incorporating place-specific themes into their analyses and addressing the varied and place-specific pathways to belonging for Latinx immigrants in the U.S. (Dreby and Schmalzbauer 2013, Mendez and Deeb-Sossa 2020). For example, Mendez and Deeb-Sossa (2020) compare the experiences of Latinx women in traditional and new immigrant destinations. They find that in new immigrant destinations women had to overcome social isolation, a lack of public transportation, and the relative absence of co-ethnics. However, these women developed a sense of belonging by overcoming a variety of barriers to meeting their families’ needs. I contribute to this emerging literature by analyzing the ways that upper class Arab and South Asian men from a non-traditional immigrant destination discuss and perceive “belonging-ness” and community membership. I argue that Townsburg—a new immigrant destination in the U.S. South—presents a unique opportunity to analyze how social class positions impact belonging and

place making in the historic absence of other resources for subordinate ethnic groups. I find that Arab and South Asian men with high social class discussed a unique sense of belonging in Townsburg that was predicated on the prevalence of Arabs and South Asians as healthcare providers in the local health system. While interviewees with middle- and working-class in Townsburg enjoyed some of the benefits of being classified with upper class Arabs and South Asians, they did not similarly describe themselves as belonging to the broader community. I assert that Arab and South Asian men from upper class positions and who were connected to the local healthcare system were able to draw on relationships and class position to cast themselves as contributing members of the Townsburg community and as a result, they felt a stronger sense of belonging than middle- and working-class men.

#### *Townsburg as a New Immigrant Destination*

According to interviewees who lived in or came from Townsburg, social class played an important role in how South Asian men in particular, but Muslims more generally, were treated locally. Several interviewees iterated that they were some of the first or were related to some of the first Muslims or South Asian families to settle in Townsburg. These interviewees told me that the move to Townsburg was a calculated one. Early “pioneers” of the Muslim community reported that they were taking advantage of U.S. programs that offered benefits like paths to citizenship in exchange for working as medical providers in rural and high need areas. They also discussed the proximity to Metro-City as a significant reason that they moved to Townsburg. It was appealing to have a large city close where they could visit with other Arabs, South Asians, or Muslims if they were not able to establish a community for themselves in Townsburg. These early

pioneers discussed the ways that they intentionally recruited other Arab or South Asian medical doctors to join them in Townsburg once they were there. Others who joined the community later specified that they or their families were drawn to Townsburg because of the community of Arab and Pakistani medical professionals in the area.

Per a number of accounts, the Arab and South Asian population in Townsburg is roughly two generations old. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a handful of Pakistani medical professionals moved to the area and helped to establish a local mosque. As the local hospital system expanded, greater numbers of Arab and South Asian families moved to the area—many with professional and familial ties to the existing medical community. Today, much of the Arab and South Asian community of Townsburg are medical doctors and several had medical practices in the area. Samir—an upper class Pakistani American man—estimates that over a third of the healthcare providers in Townsburg are Pakistani or Indian. He indicated that that status impacted the way that—at least—Pakistani Muslims were treated and viewed in the local community.

I would say at least a third, maybe even a little more than that, of the healthcare providers in Townsburg are Pakistani or Indian. And so as far as status within the community goes we were treated with respect.

I assert that this history of mostly upper class Arabs and South Asians settling first in Townsburg offers a unique vantage point for understanding belonging and place making. Though I focus on the prior, I emphasize that interviewees are not simply the passive recipients of reportedly high esteem from the surrounding community. Rather, their positive treatment by the surrounding community of Townsburg is the product of collectively drawing on social class and occupational standing to establish a recognized

presence in a particular place. Interviewees were able to feel a sense of belonging because Arab and South Asians strategically built a presence in the surrounding community where their standing was recognized.

*“A Doctor Until Proven Otherwise”*

Nine of the 13 interviewees from Townsburg asserted—sometimes repeatedly—that the generally high social class standing of Pakistani and South Asian Muslims positively shaped the ways that they were perceived by and interacted with the broader community. For young interviewees, this class position translated into positive experiences with non-Muslim peers. For example, Samir—an upper class Pakistani American man—states: “[s]pecifically, the Pakistani community in Townsburg, we were lucky in the fact that our social class let us become popular.” Interviewees with upper class backgrounds were in general agreement that this social class was almost exclusively derived from the predominance of South Asians as medical doctors in Townsburg. This relationship, in their eyes, explained their positive treatment. For example, Omar—an upper class Pakistani American man—offers:

I just can’t help but think that us, that our parents were well respected, stuff like that. “Oh, he’s a doctor. He’s part of another community, who does a lot of good work in the town. They don’t get into trouble. Blah, blah, blah.” Um, and so, I think that has something to do with it.

Here, Omar directly connects the respect that his parents’ received to his father’s occupation. In other words, Omar believes that his family was treated well because his father was believed to be an asset to the community. These discussions frequently followed an interview question that asked: Is there anything unique about being an Arab

or South Asian man in Townsburg? As I will demonstrate, generalizations about the Arab and South Asian communities in Townsburg seemed to lead many to believe that they experienced less Islamophobia than they otherwise might in a rural town in the U.S. South. However, upper class interviewees, and particularly those who were connected to medical professionals described a particularly deep sense of belonging.

One trend in particular was unique exclusively to Townsburg and not Metro-City. Interviewees indicated that they were sometimes stereotyped as “model-minorities” rather than as potential terrorists or misogynists. Poon et al. (2016) define the model minority myth as a “racial stereotype [that] generally defines AAPIs, especially Asian Americans, as a monolithically hardworking racial group whose high achievement undercuts claims of systemic racism made by other racially minoritized populations, especially African Americans” (469). They further argue that this myth serves to maintain a racial structure of white supremacy by supporting racist ideologies and maintaining racial barriers. Interviewees from Townsburg were assumed to be smart, good students, who had a likely future in medicine. I didn’t observe any such discussions of model-minority stereotyping in Metro-City. Most young interviewees who attended secondary schools in Townsburg discussed stereotypes held by classmates, which assumed “brown” kids like them to be intelligent, wealthy, or otherwise on track to become a doctor. For example, Mustafa—a Pakistani American from a family with upper class standing—shares:

I think the people of Townsburg mainly they saw us as basically doctors, because that’s just the field that we dominated and just health care. ... there was a more positive stereotype. ... Now obviously, being in school, I got terrorist jokes or

whatever. But ... I don't think the people that said that really meant them in that way. ... *But, I saw more of, 'oh, he's brown. He's probably really smart. [He's] probably going to be a doctor. That was really the stereotype that I got a lot of growing up.*

Interestingly, Mustafa describes model minority stereotyping as “positive.” This is one of the dangers of “model minority” stereotyping, that it can be used to downplay the experiences of Asian Americans and other groups with racism. Perhaps Mustafa intended to iterate that model minority stereotypes were preferable to him to Islamophobic stereotyping, but here he uses it to downplay the Islamophobia and racial stereotyping that he did experience. I assert that this acceptance of “model minority” stereotyping complies with the dominant racial order in Townsburg, and that upper class interviewees are willing to overlook this form of racism in favor of individual-level belonging. As I will discuss later, interviewees from middle- and working-class positions sometimes reported being stereotyped as “model minorities,” however this did not translate to a strong sense of belonging. This trend is consistent with what I outlined in chapter 5 where particularly upper class interviewees were more likely to dismiss or otherwise downplay Islamophobia. In Townsburg, upper class interviewees noted stereotypes about themselves and connected these generalizations to positive treatment.

Such stereotypes were not exclusive to school-aged interviewees, Musa who is a medical doctor with upper class standing—and one of the “pioneers” of the community in Townsburg recounts what he characterizes as a humorous case of mistaken identity at a Townsburg hospital where the local Imam was assumed to be a doctor by medical staff.



I'll tell you one funny thing. ... We've [South Asian's in Townsburg] had quite a bit of presence at the local hospital ... and if you were of the appearance of a Pakistani or Indian, by default you were a physician until proven otherwise. So our preacher, you know, sometimes, if anybody from our community was sick, would come visit there. Uh, you know, just as a courtesy, he would come. And all of the nurses would before they asked for identification say, 'doctor, how can we help you?' He's our preacher [laughs]. But they were very respectable in that manner.

In general, interviewees used these reports to emphasize that in contrast to experiencing rampant Islamophobia, Townsburg Arabs and South Asians perceived their standing as generally high locally. However, I again assert that such an acceptance of stereotyping ignores the negative effects of model-minority myths on affected groups.

*Upper Class Men: Townsburg as 'Family'*

Interviewees from both locales generally reviewed the places that they lived positively. Both Metro-City and Townsburg were described as not representative of the widespread Islamophobic attitudes in the U.S. South. By this, Men perceived their surrounding local populations as less likely to be racist and hold Islamophobic beliefs than the rest of the state and the U.S. South. Musa a 56-year-old Pakistani American medical doctor with upper class standing from Townsburg, reports that Arabs and South Asians are viewed positively in Townsburg.

Interviewer: How do you think Arabs, Pakistanis, or South Asians are viewed in Townsburg?

Musa: Okay, so Townsburg as I told you, pretty well respected. But when you zoom out, overall you go to the state level or the country level. There's a very negative attitude.

These ideas were so widespread that even interviewees who were from Metro-City and had not lived in Townsburg believed that Islamophobia was less rampant in Townsburg. Musa and others repeatedly reported that they felt that Arabs, South Asians, and Muslims were respected—or at least tolerated—in Metro-City and Townsburg. Many reciprocally iterated that they were not similarly esteemed in other parts of the state and American South. As I will discuss, this treatment in Townsburg was presumed to mostly stem from the relatively high economic and occupational standing of particularly South Asian groups in the community.

While all of the men both locales generally reviewed the places that they lived positively, there were important differences in how interviewees from these locations described belonging. Predictably, interviewees from Metro-City referenced the value of diversity, socially progressive attitudes, and the significant immigrant and Muslim populations and organizations in Metro-City, as reasons that they felt at home in Metro-City. For example, Imad—an upper class Middle Eastern medical school student from Metro-City, offers:

I think it's important to divide Metro-City and [the state] too, because Metro-City is definitely the anomaly in this case. ... [B]ecause of the great diversity in terms of racial and ethnic composition, as compared to the rest of the state. But, in addition to that, the just, progressivism in the attitudes that people have in Metro-City are much more welcoming to people of, I guess I would say, non-traditional

descent, or just immigrants and refugees in general. And so, I know of people who come from different small areas in [the state]. And when they come to Metro-City they found that there is a pretty dramatic change in how they are perceived and viewed, and it's typically on the more welcoming and hospitable side.

Imad differentiates Metro-City from the rest of the state and emphasizes the diversity and progressive characterization of this metropolitan place as compared to the other state. Elsewhere he indicates that Metro-City is his favorite place and that he intends to live there for the foreseeable future. Imad later emphasizes that his closest friends were ethnic and racial minorities and that he felt more connected to those groups than the dominant white population. Most interviewees in and from Metro-City appraised the city in this way. They believed it was a great place for Arabs and South Asians to live because of the diversity and acceptance that the city offered, and they celebrated the ability to be around other Muslims or other ethnic and racial minorities.

In contrast, I find that seven of the nine upper class Townsburg interviewees described a strong sense of belonging to the broader community in Townsburg despite a lack of diversity or progressive attitudes. Notably six of these seven respondents were somehow connected to medical practices—either they were themselves doctors or they came from families with at least one doctor in the community. Several of these interviewees explicitly indicated that they were connected to non-Muslims and presumably white Americans and used strong language to describe this connection. For instance Abbas evokes the word, “family,” when describing life in Townsburg.

Abbas: One word that I would use to describe it all would definitely be *family*. So whether we're related or not, um, if anyone ever needs help in the community, people are always there to back you up. ... We're very close-knit as a community in Townsburg.

Interviewer: And you're still generally referring to all of Townsburg?

Abbas: Correct, yeah. [Italics added]

I add emphasis to Abbas's use of the word, "family" because this image is particularly powerful in terms of rhetorically defining oneself as belonging. Family communicates a high degree of intimacy, and Abbas expands on this by saying that community members are willing to "back you up." And when asked to confirm that he was not exclusively talking about the Muslim community or Pakistani community in Townsburg, Abbas responds in the affirmative. Omar—another upper class Pakistani American man—similarly says that people in Townsburg treat his family or Arabs and South Asians in Townsburg "really nice."

I'm not trying to characterize things, but I think there's a perception that these kinds of people are racists. But I gotta say, *I defend them* because in my experience, man, they treat us really nice. [Italics added]

I emphasize Omar's defense of the broader community of Townsburg as not being racist because language like this is important rhetorically for establishing belonging. By defending people from Townsburg against being called racist, Omar is establishing a line of connection between himself and these community members. Instead of simply coexisting with the community of Townsburg, he comes to their defense when they are

spoken about negatively. This is also notable because community members did commit acts of Islamophobia and stereotyped Arabs and South Asians as “model minorities,” but men with upper class backgrounds tended to dismiss these experiences. Respondents like Omar draw important lines of community membership and belonging by defending the general population of Townsburg from being called racist. They are rhetorically positioning themselves with the broader community, rather than separating themselves from Townsburg’s community.

Three upper class interviewees from Townsburg who were medical doctors all believed that their relationship to the broader community as medical providers led to positive treatment as community members. They all generally felt that they experienced less discrimination and received more respect because they were known as doctors in the community. For instance, in describing why he feels he has not faced notable discrimination, Muhammad—an upper class Pakistani American doctor—offers:

There have been people who I have treated here in Townsburg who have been in prominent positions, who work in big offices and stuff like that, who I have taken care of in their elder ages. So, it has been very gratifying, very satisfying. ... *If I walked out right now in Walmart, there would be somebody who, [imitates conversation] “oh, you took care of my grandmother.” [or] “You took care of my family.” So that part probably plays a role.* [Italics added.]

Muhammad reports that others recognize him as a part of the community because he has cared for aging members of many families in the area, and he provides examples of interactions that he has had that verify his feelings of belonging. He also emphasizes that he, personally, derived a great deal of meaning from this relationship. This

recognition is an important prerequisite to interviewees' perceptions of belonging. Upper class men felt strongly that they belonged when dominant group members recognized their contributions to the community.

Another upper class medical doctor highlighted belonging when providing an autobiographical account of Islamophobia when he and his family were out bowling with staff and staff's families from one of his medical practices. Talha has a number of medical practices in several rural communities in the surrounding state. When he and his wife went bowling with some of his staff members from one of these rural practices, his wife is approached and antagonized by a perpetrator that Talha characterizes as potentially drunk. Talha gladly reports that his staff and staff's families stood up to the perpetrators in their defense. He indicates that a lot of people might characterize these staff and their families as "rednecks." Here, Talha reflects on his relationship with the families that he works with:

*But the way they came, 'You guys are family. So we cannot let anybody come and talk to you disrespectfully, the way you guys treat us.'* So when somebody's not in their senses, what the hell are you going to say? *So, all I'm saying is purely a lot of people call them rednecks, but what also you have there, how deeply we care for each other.* [Italics added.]

Talha uses this narrative about an Islamophobic encounters to highlight a positive experience where non-Muslim community members in Townsburg came to his family's aid. Like Abbas, Talha describes the use of the term "family" in his account of his relationship to the broader community in Townsburg. Unlike Abbas and Omar, however, Talha describes a scenario where people from the broader community came to his

defense and described their relationship as a familial one. He later indicates that the story is meant to convey, “how deeply we care for each other.” I assert that the strong rhetorical use “family” and description that “we” [the community in Townsburg] care deeply for each other depicts a strong sense of belonging. And I further argue that this strong sense of belonging was made possible because of the established Arab and South Asian community in Metro-City and Tahla’s social class position and employer-employee relationship with Townsburg residents.

Interviewees did not experience the same belonging when they went to locales where their upper class position was not already established or acknowledged. This further supports my claim that interviewees’ belonging was predicated on place-specific generalizations and relationships connected to their social class position. When men left Townsburg as a “community of belonging,” they appeared to be more aware of Islamophobic events. For instance, Hamza, a Pakistani-American who came from an upper class background reports only one experience with Islamophobia when he attended medical school in a rural town in the state:

Um definitely in [small rural town in state] it’s a little more uncomfortable because it’s like eastern [state] there and rural. There’s barely any people of color there. So, just walking into the Walmart, you get some stares. ... when I go to Walmart ... so maybe every couple of days.

Notably, Hamza did not similarly state that he was the subject of stares in Townsburg, I argue in part because Arabs and South Asians had an established and perceived sense of

belonging there. Abbas similarly reported that when he visited relatives in another southern large southern city, that people were more “aggressive” towards Muslims.

When I did visit my family in [another southern city], um, people were fairly aggressive there. ... By aggressive, like, there’s more senses, and this could be because of cultural, like differences, how we look etcetera. Uh, there’s usually more stares. ... Like, “oh, there’s something wrong with you.” That kind of thing. Like, “Oh you don’t fit in.” Uh, when it comes to Townsburg, when you’re at Walmart, people smile. That kind of stuff.

Abbas describes his interactions with people as aggressive and he indicates that he is the recipient of more micro-aggressions, such as staring when he is in places that are not Townsburg. Upper class interviewees generally did not perceive themselves as safe or belonging when they left Townsburg because their relationships and established generalizations as local medical doctors did not travel with them.

*Middle- and Working-Class Men: Townsburg as Livable*

Interviewees from Townsburg with middle- and working-class positions also reviewed the places they lived positively and some even described the town as “home.” For instance, Ammar—who came from a working-class family describes his experiences as positive and says that Townsburg is “home.”

Interviewer: How would you describe your experiences in Townsburg?

Ammar: ... Positive, only. It’s my home.

Interviewer: Are there any specific reasons for that?



Ammar: I've never really had a negative, yeah. Everything has happened there.

As I will demonstrate, interviewees perceived that they were generally well treated in Townsburg, and they explained this by referencing generalizations about Arabs and South Asians as medical providers in the local health system and through exposure to Arab and South Asian groups. Even though middle- and working-class respondents felt that they were treated well, this did not translate into the same strong sense of belonging expressed by some of the interviewees from Townsburg with upper class positions.

Interviewees who came from middle- and working-class families reported enjoying the benefits of the generalization that Arabs and South Asians had high social standing. For example, Saeed—a working-class Pakistani-American—believes that he may have faced more severe Islamophobia growing up in the rural South if Muslims weren't deeply connected to the medical community locally:

I think the one major advantage is the whole community was pretty predominant, as far as being the medical group in Townsburg. ... if that wasn't the case, ... I think there might have been a different turn out.

Rahim—a middle-class Pakistani American interviewee—who moved to Townsburg during childhood further verified this theme when he compared his experiences growing up in another state where the general social class position of Muslims was lower. He reported shock when his Muslim peers were near the purported top of the social hierarchy in the local public high school.

The Pakistani community here is [treated] differently than we were in Michigan, because here, everybody, all my friends, all their dads are physicians. They're all

doctors. They're all known in the community. Back in Michigan, where I was, the people of my culture were gas station owners or tech shop owners, small business owners. It was completely different.

Reports such as this make it evident that interviewees believed they benefitted in some ways from the general standing of Arabs and South Asians in Townsburg. However, these benefits did not extend far past presumably experiencing less Islamophobia locally for most men.

While respondents with middle- and working-class positions from Townsburg did report being the benefactors of positive generalizations and perceived the town as home, they did not generally emphasize deep feelings of connection to the community of Townsburg like upper class men did. For instance Yahya—a Palestinian American from a middle-class family—describes Townsburg as “home,” but indicates that people keep to themselves and that he wished he knew his neighbors better.

In general, people seem to be nice. No one really is in your business all the time or everyone is on their own. If anything it's too quite. ... *They keep to themselves a lot, too much actually. I would like to get to know my neighbors more, but yeah.*

[Italics added.]

And Saeed—working-class Pakistani American who grew up in Townsburg and some of the surrounding towns—offers:

Um, that is a, a little bit of a loaded question, but um, so you know, I. I guess to answer that, I love [the state], but I hate it as well. ... So because there is not a

diverse group of individuals in [the state], I guess you could say it's a little rougher at times. ... I mean, it's livable.

Yahya—a middle-class Palestinian American—indicates that people seem to be nice in Townsburg, but iterates that he does not feel that he knows his neighbors very well. He indicates that they “keep to themselves” and that he wished he knew them better. This is a sharp contrast from the ways that upper class men described their connection to the surrounding community of Townsburg when they used terms like, “family.” Saeed similarly indicates that he was appreciative of growing up where he grew up, but simultaneously suggests that his experiences were not always great. Instead of raving about Townsburg or the places that he lived, he describes them as “livable.” This too contrasted the deep sense of belonging that interviewees with upper class positions described feeling in Townsburg.

Interviewees from Townsburg with middle- and working-class positions indicated that they appreciated their upbringing, but—as you may recall from chapter 5—they were typically more critical of Islamophobia than upper class interviewees. Yahya—a middle-class Palestinian American who grew up in Townsburg but went to college in Metro-City explains:

In Metro-City, I don't think Islamophobia is as bad, just because ... I feel people have gotten used to knowing there are Middle Eastern families, their kids are going to school with other Middle Eastern kids. ... and plus Metro-City is a big refugee area. [...] ... Townsburg is probably worse, maybe not as bad now just because, like I said, it's more diverse, I feel like.

Yahya echoes the claims of Metro-City residents, that Metro-City was a site with less rampant Islamophobic attitudes than the rest of the state because of racial and ethnic diversity within the city. Yahya also indicates that due to the increasing presence of immigrants of color, Townsburg was becoming more hospitable to Arabs, South Asians, and other immigrant groups. But he does not shy away from saying that it is a worse location in terms of experiencing Islamophobia. This is different than similar appraisals from some upper class men who indicated that they were respected in Townsburg. Many of the men—including Yahya iterated that community exposure Muslims, Arabs, South Asians, and other immigrant groups of color is important in decreasing such negative attitudes about these groups. But this generalized exposure is different than having and benefiting from established relationships with the broader community. Unlike their counterparts in Townsburg with upper class positions, Yahya did not benefit from occupational relationships with the community to gain personal respect or be accepted as personally belonging in Townsburg.

### *Discussion*

Recall that Antonsich (2010) argues that scholars have inadequately addressed place in their analyses of belonging (647). Emerging scholarship has addressed this critique by more intentionally incorporating place specific themes into their analyses and addressing the varied and place-specific pathways to belonging for Latinx immigrants in the U.S. (Dreby and Schmalzbauer 2013, Mendez and Deeb-Sossa 2020). I contribute to this emerging literature by analyzing the ways that Arab and South Asian men from a non-traditional immigrant destination discuss and perceive “belonging-ness” and community membership.

I argue that Arab and South Asian belonging in Townsburg offers a unique opportunity to observe how belonging and place making are established and experienced by immigrant-origin groups in a new immigrant or non-traditional immigrant destination because the two-generation South Asian community in Townsburg has a particularly strong presence in the local health system. One respondent even estimated that approximately a third of Townsburg's medical professionals were South Asian. Because of this standing, nearly all interviewees reported that they believed themselves to face less Islamophobia than they otherwise might in a rural town in the U.S South. The belonging expressed by Arabs and South Asians in Townsburg differed from that of interviewees from Metro-City—a location with larger Arab and South Asian populations and more cultural resources such as ethnic mosques and community centers. Whereas interviewees from Metro-City generally highlighted diversity and progressive ideas as reasons that they “belonged” in Metro-City, interviewees with upper class positions in Townsburg detailed moments where their belonging was highlighted or recognized through their relationships with others. This sense of belonging was place-specific, because “pioneering” Arab and South Asian medical doctors in Townsburg had established themselves in the community in the local healthcare community, and because this strong sense of belonging did not translate to other non-traditional immigrant destinations in the American South.

Perhaps because of the relatively high social class standing of the South Asian community in Townsburg, interviewees also reported being the subject of “model minority” stereotyping whereby they were presumed to or joked about being good students with a future career in medicine. These stereotypes are place-based because no

similar reports were offered in Metro-City. Upper class Interviewees from Townsburg were generally dismissive of these stereotypes and instead viewed them as evidence that they were highly esteemed in the local community. However, this acceptance may also be complicit in maintaining the racial status quo in Townsburg. If Arab and South Asian American Muslims are more widely cast as “model minorities,” future studies should investigate under what conditions this stereotyping occurs.

Recall also that, Antonsich (2010) outlines factors that contribute to feelings of belongingness (647). I address “autobiographical,” “relational,” and “economic” factors in my study. In particular, I use interview data and autobiographical accounts to demonstrate that upper class Arab and South Asian men in a non-traditional immigrant destination are able to draw upon social class and relationships with the surrounding community to feel an individual-level sense of belonging. Upper class men were able to use relationships to establish themselves as contributing members of the local community. These interviewees provided autobiographical accounts where they identified themselves as community members—using strong language like “family”—and in a few instances provided autobiographical accounts where others recognized their individual-level belonging. Middle- and working-social class Arab and South Asian men reported that they benefited from generalizations about Arabs and South Asians in Townsburg but were not able to similarly draw upon existing resources and subsequently did not report as deep an individual-level sense of belonging. They still described Townsburg as home, but they reported a more ambivalent understanding of their connection to the community. They did not report similar autobiographical accounts whereby their individual-belongingness was recognized. My findings point towards

place-based understandings of belonging for new immigrant groups that account for social class standing and unique community and occupational characteristics that might change the ways that groups are perceived and interpret their own belonging.

The themes discussed in this chapter have a number of implications for the future study of and understanding of belonging in new immigrant and non-traditional immigrant destinations. First, research should address more centrally the ways that social class position impacts perceptions of belonging and the role of immigrants from various social class positions in place making in new immigrant destinations. The strong evidence that I present here should be verified or compared to studies in other new immigrant destinations. I suspect that because we live in a society stratified by social class, occupational prestige and economic resources play important roles in establishing immigrant groups' belonging in new immigrant destinations. Second, I demonstrate that upper class men in Townsburg are able to draw upon their social class position and occupational relationships with the local community to perceive a strong sense of belonging in Townsburg. I did not, however, interview women in Townsburg about their perceptions of belonging. It remains to be seen whether women who are family-members of men in such social class and occupational positions similarly perceive themselves as belonging at an individual-level or if women who themselves are medical doctors can similarly draw upon these occupational relationships in Townsburg. Lastly, future research on Islamophobia should carefully consider how place factors into Islamophobic experiences. Thus far, U.S studies of Islamophobia have mostly considered the experiences of Arabs and South Asians in large cities, but I find evidence that rural

experiences with Islamophobia have place-specific impacts. These should be explored in greater detail.



## CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I review my findings from the previous three chapters and discuss their implications and connections to literature on belonging in new immigrant destinations, gender, intersectionality, and Islamophobia. First, I summarize and discuss the findings of this study. Second, I discuss the limitations and subsequent future research that this study points towards. I conclude with a discussion of how these findings nuance what we know about Islamophobia, intersectionality, and belonging in place and how future scholars can continue to build on emerging intersectional studies of intermediary racial categories and groups racialized as Muslims.

### *Summary of Findings*

In order to more fully understand the intersectional ways which Islamophobia is experienced, I addressed the following primary research questions: First, how do Arab and South Asian American men experience and perceive discrimination in new immigrant destinations in the U.S. South? Second, how do place, masculinity, and social class affect experiences and perceptions of belonging among Arab and South Asian American men in new immigrant destinations in the U.S. South? I uncover a complex interplay between Islamophobia, social class, gender, and place through my analysis of 23 interviews with upper-, middle-, and working-class Arab and South Asian men from two non-traditional immigrant destinations.

In chapter 4, I highlight how social class shaped the ways Arab and South Asian men discuss Islamophobia. Interviewees reported a wide range of routine experiences with Islamophobia. I found that men in general were dismissive in their reports of—sometimes quite severe—personal experiences with Islamophobia, albeit in classed ways. Interviewees with upper class backgrounds drew on occupational prestige and proximity to high status groups when they dismissed Islamophobia. These men tended to describe a close proximity to high-status groups, e.g. upper class whites and “Americans,” while distancing themselves from subordinate groups, e.g. poor whites and Arabs and South Asians who—some interviewees claimed—refused to or were unable to assimilate. These interviewees repeatedly theorized that they might not experience the brunt of Islamophobia because they were “pretty Americanized” and emphasized their “American-ness” in interviews. In contrast, middle- and working-class men typically took a more serious tone when they discussed Islamophobic experiences than their upper class counterparts. Middle- and working-class men described people committing Islamophobic acts as more threatening than upper class men. When these men did downplay experiences with Islamophobia, they did not draw upon class resources or position themselves as close to dominant groups. Upper class men attempted to claim the benefits associated with substantive citizenship and belonging when they downplayed Islamophobia committed by dominant group members in Townsburg. Recall that substantive citizenship refers to the ability to lay claim to the social rights and privileges and sense of belonging popularly associated with citizenship, which generally requires acceptance by community members (Glenn 2011). In doing such, I argue that these men

attempted to position themselves better in local racial orders but were ultimately complicit in that order.

In chapter 5, I highlight the ways that Arab and South Asian men discussed Muslim women's experiences with Islamophobia. The themes in this chapter are especially pronounced when compared to those in chapter 4. Whereas Arab and South Asian men were generally dismissive of their own experiences with Islamophobia, Islamophobia directed at Muslim women troubled them. This study is not positioned to ascertain whether middle- and working-class men experience more incidents and more severe Islamophobia than their upper class counterparts or women. The Arab and South Asian men that I interviewed reported—frequently unprompted—that women were more frequently the targets of Islamophobia and were subjected to more severe incidents as compared to Muslim men. Deeper analysis revealed that Arab and South Asian men embody components of hegemonic masculinity in the ways that they discussed responding to Islamophobic threats against women. Arab and South Asian men reported that they controlled or expressed a desire for Muslim women to adjust their behavior in public to decrease their susceptibility to Islamophobia. Some interviewees celebrated moments of violence where they or people that they knew defended the honor of Muslim women by confronting Islamophobic perpetrators. I draw on the work of Chen (1999) to analyze these themes. In particular, I argue that Arab and South Asian men engaged in “deflection” when they focused attention on women's experiences instead of their own and then engaged in hegemonic bargains when they emphasized or celebrated their ability to defend women in interviews. Because these bargains occurred during reported Islamophobic encounters, I call these performances “protective hegemonic bargains.”

In chapter 6, I analyze the different ways that Arab and South Asian men in Townsburg—a rural town in the U.S. South, and a non-traditional immigrant destination—described belonging to the broader community. Numerous interviewees reported that the Muslim population in Townsburg was just two-generations old and that Arabs and South Asians had a strong presence in the local health system. One respondent even estimated that approximately a third of Townsburg’s medical professionals were South Asian. Interviewees reported that because of this local history, participants were sometimes stereotyped as current or future rich medical doctors instead of as potential terrorists. Though Arabs and South Asians from upper-, middle-, and working-class backgrounds reported that they benefitted from generalizations about Arabs and South Asians as medical providers and the resultant positive treatment, upper class interviewees described a particularly strong, place-specific form of belonging in comparison to Arab and South Asian men from Metro-City and middle- and working-class men from Townsburg. These findings offer insight into how upper class immigrants and immigrants with occupational resources such as prestige experience and affect belonging in non-traditional or new immigrant destinations. In doing such, I affirm Antonsich’s (2010) theory that relationships and local histories are important for successfully constructing or claiming belonging.

#### *Recommendations for Future Research*

I argue that future studies of Islamophobia should critically address the ways that social class influences how and what types of experiences are reported by Muslim Americans or those racialized as such. Furthermore, future studies of Islamophobia should study the experiences of low income and poor groups who are racialized as

Muslims to see if these groups similarly dismiss or downplay experiences with Islamophobia. These analyses will allow for future research to more comprehensively understand the pronounced trend of downplaying Islamophobia. If lower-class men do not downplay and dismiss Islamophobia similarly to the mostly upper-, middle-, and working-class men that I study, then my argument that social class resources and perceived proximity to powerful groups affects interpretation of discriminatory experiences might be verified. If this claim were verified, then this would help scholars to understand how social class shapes racial ideologies for groups experiencing racism. As discussed previously, the men in this study interpreted Islamophobic experiences as less threatening when they came from upper class positions. If men from upper class backgrounds are less likely to report discrimination that they downplay, then these findings would have implications for activist organizations that track Islamophobia and discrimination because such trends would mean that Islamophobic discrimination is significantly underreported among upper class Muslim populations. Organizations tracking these trends would need to use more intentional language in surveys to track the range of Islamophobia experienced and not simply rely on complaints filed for statistical evidence. Future studies should also address whether women similarly downplay and dismiss Islamophobia. Similarly, if studies find that women do not downplay Islamophobia in ways that mirror the men that I interviewed, then my claim that men dismiss and downplay personal experiences with Islamophobia as a masculine performance might be verified. Verifying these arguments would help scholars and activist organizations to understand how gender shapes racial ideologies and reporting of discrimination.

Future scholarship should also expand on my findings that men performed masculinities in response to discrimination against Muslim women. Scholars could further study the ways that men racialized as Muslims respond to Islamophobic discrimination against women, or they could study the ways that other groups respond to scenarios where significant women in their lives face discrimination. These studies could even take the form of participants responding to hypothetical scenarios in a controlled setting, so that statistical analyses can be performed.

Future studies should seek to address whether and how Arab and South Asian women with upper class backgrounds similarly perceive themselves as belonging in non-traditional immigrant destinations in the U.S. South. If these women experience greater and more extreme Islamophobia then perhaps even women who are positioned by class or occupationally to “belong” might not similarly experience belonging. Such studies would offer theoretical insight into whether and how perceptions of class positionality transfer across gender when considering responses to Islamophobia. Furthermore, further research should seek to address when and how dependents perceive themselves as belonging in response to the family narratives.

Finally, future research into the experiences of groups racialized as Muslims in non-traditional immigrant destinations should look at a larger sample of interviews as this study was shortened by the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. With a larger sample, researchers can make more robust place-based comparisons. Since my samples were small, nuanced trends of belonging did not emerge from interviews in Metro-City.

### *Social Class and Perceiving Islamophobia*

Recall that scholarship (Abu-Ras and Suarez 2009, Allen 2018, Selod 2015 and 2019) has addressed the gendered experiences of men and women who are racialized as Muslims and demonstrated that these groups experience Islamophobia and are racialized differently, e.g. men are casted as anti-American patriarchs and potential terrorists and women are stereotyped as helpless victims of misogynist men. Despite this, relatively little scholarship has addressed the ways that the interlocking systems of social class and gender influences experiences and perceptions of Islamophobia. I contribute to this void by critically addressing the different ways that upper-, middle-, and working-class Arab and South Asian men perceive and report their experiences with Islamophobia.

Social class clearly has an effect on reporting experiences with Islamophobia, if not also experiences themselves. Discrimination is a complex phenomenon and challenging to quantify in comparative ways, especially for qualitative research. Nonetheless, scholarship has demonstrated that racial discrimination is common and has a significant impact on the lives and well being of people of color (Golash-Boza 2016). The findings from this research project demonstrate that social class shapes the ways that Muslim men interpret their own and the experiences of others with Islamophobia. Interviewees with upper class backgrounds were generally more dismissive of Islamophobia as they were able to draw on class resources when revisiting these experiences.

I propose that these findings add nuance to scholarship that seeks to explain the experiences and positions of intermediary racial categories. For instance, if the U.S. is moving towards a tri-racial society, as Bonilla-Silva (2004) has suggested, then research

should address the ways that social class, gender, and place influence the ways that groups are situated in the racial order. I concur with Bonilla-Silva (2004) that the position of Arabs and South Asians in this new racial order is largely predicated on social class and may even be place-specific. I argue that Arabs and South Asians in the U.S. South occupy an honorary white racial position in the tri-racial order, but that their experiences of this position vary widely on the basis of social class and gender. For example, upper class Arab and South Asian men are positioned to benefit from their class position and thus perceive themselves as close to powerful groups, such as wealthy whites. I propose that Arab and South Asian women, and men from middle-, working-, and lower-class positions may not similarly feel that their experiences are similar to whites. They also may be more deeply affected by Islamophobic encounters because they lack social class and occupational resources to lay claims to substantive citizenship and belonging. My analysis strengthens scholarly understandings of some of the ways that intermediary racial groups experience intersectional forces of Islamophobic racism and social class, since social class at least appears to have muted the emotional effects of experiencing Islamophobic discrimination.

If upper class Arab and South Asian men are willing to overlook or dismiss Islamophobic experiences, then they may be complicit to existing racial regimes. This is supported by the fact that six upper class interviewees described themselves as Americanized or otherwise made a point to express very pro-American meritocratic ideals while dismissing or downplaying the Islamophobia that they did experience. I argue that some of these men were attempting to claim to benefits of substantive citizenship and reap the benefits of belonging when they described a close proximity to



Americans and whites and distanced themselves from immigrants perceived to have not yet culturally assimilated. In some instances, upper class interviewees downplayed Islamophobic experiences when whites were the perpetrators but not when “Black people and Mexicans” made Islamophobic comments. In contrast, middle- and working-class Arabs and South Asians were more likely to read rural whites as threatening and described a close proximity to other subordinate racial groups, e.g. Black classmates for school-aged students. I propose that upper class Arab and South Asian men attempted to lay claim to substantive citizenship when they dismissed Islamophobia out of a well-to-do position, but these responses to Islamophobia did little to challenge the Islamophobia racism in Metro-City and Townsburg.

I reveal the power of racial ideologies among Arab and South Asian men with respect to framing experiences and potentially barriers to addressing Islamophobia. I do not mean to suggest that upper class Arab and South Asian men are unsympathetic to the experiences of groups with lower social class standing. Many interviewees, in-fact suggested that they experienced privilege in comparison to these groups. However, because they thought of their own experiences as benign, they may be less likely to report and draw attention to Islamophobia in their localities—some Arab and South Asian men even indicated that they did not discuss these experiences with friends or family. These findings are important for activists seeking to address and dismantle Islamophobia that is widespread in the U.S. Knowing what groups are likely to underreport Islamophobia allows these groups to more strategically engage to understand experiences and trends with respect to discrimination and Islamophobic experiences.

*Responding to Islamophobia as a masculine performance*

I contribute to the literature on Islamophobia through an in-depth analysis of the ways that Arab and South Asian men perceive and respond to Islamophobia committed against Muslim women. I suggest that these themes are particularly noteworthy because interviews often shared their assessment of women's experiences with Islamophobia without being prompted to do so. In light of the findings presented in chapters 4 and 5, I argue that Arab and South Asian men perform masculinity first by downplaying their own personal experiences with Islamophobia, and second by emphasizing women's experiences with Islamophobia and discussing the ways that they intervened or prevented these experiences on behalf of significant women in their lives. As an aside: deflecting, downplaying, or otherwise minimizing personal experiences with Islamophobia did not exclusively occur in contexts where men performed hegemonic masculinity in tandem with controlling or defending Muslim women. I argue that minimizing severe experiences with Islamophobia is still a gendered practice, even when it occurs without referencing Muslim women or women's experiences. I found that some men reported controlling or attempting to control the ways that women inhabited public spaces and celebrated moments where they defended the honor of women through physical and verbal altercations.

These findings add nuance to existing theories of masculinities, because I find that men who are marginalized by their racialization as Muslims perform hegemonic masculinity in their defensive responses to Islamophobia committed against women. Chen (1999) forwards the concept of the "hegemonic bargain" to describe when men "trade or unconsciously benefit from the 'privileges' of race, gender, class, generation,

and/or sexuality for the purpose of ‘achieving’ his masculinity.’” Chen’s (1999) concepts of deflection and hegemonic bargains explain these trends well, as interviewees emphasized their ability or response to Islamophobia against women when they were asked about their own experiences with Islamophobia. I call these moments “protective hegemonic bargains” because they focus on relationships with women and hegemonic ideals of protecting women’s honor in order to perform a version of hegemonic masculinity. By emphasizing qualities of hegemonic masculinities, these men were able to “save face” in situations when they are typically thought of as victims. I suggest that Chen’s (1999) discussion of hegemonic bargains should be expanded to include performances that occur in relationships, because hegemonic performances often depend on other actors. In this case, they depend on significant women in the lives of men. My concept of protective hegemonic bargains should be expanded where applicable to other intermediary groups who routinely experience discrimination to determine how racial discrimination and hegemonic masculine ideals interact to subjugate women and certain men.

In the context of literature on complicit masculinities and hegemonic bargains, these trends strengthen sociological understandings of the ways that racism and classism interact to maintain white masculine hegemony. They demonstrate that discriminatory experiences can actually reify gender orders for affected groups or at least in the minds of men. Furthermore, they point towards a system-centered (Choo and Ferree 2010) understanding of intersectional forces. When Arab and South Asian men control or attempt to control women in their lives to protect them from Islamophobia they uphold the existing unequal gender order. These practices and their logics reify hetero-normative

gender ideologies that cast women in general as defenseless and in need of protection. Interview evidence from some interviews suggested that some of the women that these men were referring to did not or were encouraged not to work outside of the home or go to certain places where Islamophobia is believed to be likely to occur. Thus, keeping women from work or otherwise limiting their mobility deepens economic dependence on men. The celebration of violence or protection against Islamophobic perpetrators reifies hegemonic masculine ideals that suggest that men who defend women are superior to men who are unable to do so. In these instances, Islamophobic experiences or the threat of these experiences serve as the impetus or logic for maintaining the gender order. I suspect that the men that I interviewed were performing hegemony for other men. For instance, some men shared other stories of men performing hegemony that had evidently been shared with them. I also suspect that these interviewees would have at least shared these narratives differently if I were a woman. Future research should seek to address these questions.

Recall that intersectionality encompasses both academic theory and activist efforts to dismantle systems of oppression (Collins 2000). As such, activists seeking to address systems of racism that affect Arab and South Asian men—specifically Islamophobia—should remain cognizant of the ways that masculine domination of women is built into experiences with racism. Activist should ensure that they don't reify gender domination in their response to wide spread Islamophobia in the U.S.

Before I conclude this section, I want to emphasize that Arab and South Asian men's adherence to patriarchy is not qualitatively different than that which we see from other groups of men, but it is unique. In other words, I do not want to reify stereotypes

that suggest that Muslim men are uniquely patriarchal. For example, Stone and Lovejoy (2019) and Stone (2007) find that white, upper-income men say they support their wives working outside of the home, but still retort that they are too focused on their careers to help with children or house work. Thus, the “it’s your choice” rhetoric that many of these men use actually leaves partners without a choice and so women are forced to stay home with their kids. In this study, Arab and South Asian men are discussing “taking away” women’s choices, e.g. dress or employment, but they claim to be doing so “for their benefit. These Muslim men respondents are reporting a desire to take away the choices of women to protect them from the very real effects of Islamophobic racism.

*Islamophobia and Belonging in non-traditional immigrant destinations*

A final contribution that I make to research literatures is by contributing to a growing body of scholarship that addresses immigrant-origin group experiences in new and non-traditional immigrant destinations. Recall that much of the existing body of literature that addresses immigrant experiences and belonging in non-traditional immigrant destinations addresses the experiences of Latinx groups. I build on the work of these scholars by addressing the ways that Arab and South Asian men experience and perceive belonging in the U.S. South. Furthermore, I address the ways that social class affects belonging for upper-, and middle- and working-class Arab and South Asian men. Thus, my analysis is more nuanced than merely an analysis of Arab and South Asian men in a non-traditional immigrant destination. I am able to critically analyze how community histories, general social class standing, and personal class resources—such as occupational relationships—shape the ability of Arabs and South Asians to perceive themselves as belonging in the rural U.S. South. Recall that while many interviewees

from Townsburg felt “at home” in Townsburg, the belonging discussed by upper class Arab and South Asian men was particularly pronounced because they described meaningful relationships, interactions, and used strong language like “family” to describe their relationship to people in Townsburg. Middle- and working-class men more frequently iterated that their experience in Townsburg was a “mixed bag” with some good and some bad experiences. They did not use similar language to emphasize their relationship to the Townsburg community.

Scholars who study Latinx women and mothers in non-traditional immigrant destinations, for example, have found that Latinx women are able to experience a personal sense of belonging by overcoming barriers to engagement (Mendez and Deeb-Sossa 2020). In other words, through the process of overcoming everyday obstacles such as lacking reliable transportation by learning to drive or discrimination in local school systems by critically engaging with the school board, mothers claimed belonging by developing and exercising personal agency. Instead, I find that Arabs and South Asian men with upper class positions are able to draw on class and occupational resources such as community standing for doctors to perceive themselves as belonging to the broader community. I propose that occupational prestige could translate to other STEM fields outside of medicine, though further research would need to determine if it was truly the relational component of being a medical doctor that informed belonging. That Arab and South Asians with high occupational standing expressed a deeper sense of belonging than middle- and working-class men adds nuance and examples to Antonsich’s (2010) claims that belonging is place-specific and dependent on local histories and relationships. Arab and South Asians from upper-, middle-, and working-class backgrounds in Townsburg all

cited the Arab and South Asian population's unique labor migration history in as rural health care providers as a cause of their experiencing less and less severe Islamophobia than one might expect in the rural U.S. South. The upper class Arabs and South Asians who are medical doctors cited their relationships with the surrounding community as evidence of the deep sense of personal belonging that they felt. I expect that there are likely other communities like Townsburg, where new immigrant communities are built around pioneers who are well-to-do or medical doctors. It is possible that my findings are more broadly representative of the ways that belonging and place-making operate in these communities.

I argue that intersectional scholarship should more deeply incorporate place into their analyses because place was so central to understanding how interviewees made sense of their experiences. Moving towards a place-inclusive analysis of intersectionality will allow scholars to address how particular geographic locations; material forms, meanings and values shape the localized systems of domination through racism, classism, and sexism more closely. Again, a nuanced understanding of these place-specific logics is not only needed for theoretical development, but also for activists seeking to promote belonging and dismantle systems of oppression like Islamophobia (Collins 2000). Activists seeking inclusion and belonging for Arabs and South Asians in new-immigrant destinations need to address the place-specific iterations of Islamophobia and racism. In the case of this study, the positive evaluation of "model minority" Arabs and South Asians may detract important attention from Arabs and South Asians who do not feel a strong sense of belonging and who may more deeply feel the effects of Islamophobia and Islamophobic encounters.

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## APPENDICES

### *Appendix A: Interview Outline*

#### I. Introduction to Study:

Hello, and thank you so much for your willingness to participate in and interview for my research project on Arab and South Asian American men's identities. My primary interest for this study is in the experiences, perceptions, and identities of Arab and South Asian American men in [Metro-City] and [Townsborg], [State]. By participating in this research study, you will engage in an interview that will last about 60 to 120 minutes and that will be audio-recorded and transcribed with your permission. During this study I will interview 40 to 60 Arab and South Asian American men with immigrant family origins in [state] and ask them questions about...

First, this research asks for about 1 hour of your time to conduct an interview that will be audio-recorded and transcribed. During this study I will interview around 20 participants, asking them similar questions.

The records of this study will be kept private. There will be no information included that will make it possible to identify you in any reports that are published. Individuals in this study will be given a pseudonym to protect for confidentiality and research recordings will be erased once they have been transcribed.

Finally, taking part in this study is voluntary. You may decline to answer a question you do not wish to answer and you have the right to leave the study at any time. Please keep your copy of the consent form and contact me if any questions or concerns arise.

I would like to be very respectful of your time. Do you have any questions before we begin the study? ... Thank you again. Let's begin.

#### Demographics

A. Survey [Appendix B]

B. Tell me a little bit about yourself. Where do you work? How long have you worked there (or attended X school)? What do you most often do when you're not working (or in school)?



## Identity

- A. How would you describe yourself?
- B. If you had to choose a community that you feel you are most connected to, what is it? How would you characterize this connection/community? How did you come to identify with this community? Are there any other communities or groups that are important to you? How did you come to identify with that community or group?
- C. How would you describe the Arab/South Asian/Immigrant community in in the U.S.? in X city? How connected are you to that community? What does connection to that community look like? How did you come to be connected to that community?
- D. Do you know anyone from the [other community] Arab/South Asian community in Metro-City / Townsburg, [state]? What is your perception of that community? What is it like? Is it distinct? How is it different from the [respondent] Arab/South Asian community in Metro-City / Townsburg?
- E. Tell me about your family. Why did your parents, or grandparents come to the U.S.? How does their immigrant status affect your life? What might your experiences be like if you came from an immigrant family but lived outside of the U.S. or in another part of the world?
- F. Do you have any connections to friends and family members internationally? What are these relationships like? Do you consider them to be close relationships? How often do you see them or otherwise make contact with them?
- G. Who are your closest friends? How would you characterize them? Are they also Arab/South Asian/Immigrant family origin/Muslim/men? Why do you think that this might be? Where did you meet these friends? What do you do together? How would you characterize this friendship?

## Islamophobia

- H. How do you think your X identity affects you in Metro-City / Townsburg? For example, when you shop, eat out, walk down the street, or go to other public places.
- I. Have you ever had interactions with the police? What was the interaction? What did you think about it?
- J. How do you think your X identity affects you in the workplace?
- K. How do you think co-workers perceive your racial or ethnic identity? Does this affect how they treat you? How so?

- L. Have you ever experienced mistreatment that might have been due to how others perceive your ethnic/immigrant/religious identity?
- M. Do you know anyone who has experienced mistreatment that might have been due to how others perceive their ethnic/immigrant/religious identity?

Place

- N. Did you/your family live somewhere else prior to living in Metro-City / Townsburg, [state]? Where did you/they live? Why did you/they move there? When/Why did your family move to Metro-City / Townsburg, [state]?
- O. What do you think about [state]? About Metro-City / Townsburg? Would you describe your experiences in Metro-City / Townsburg as generally positive or negative? Is there any reason you feel this way?
- P. Do you know any Arab or South Asian Americans in [other site] Metro-City / Townsburg, [state]? How do you know them? How frequently do you see them or make contact with them? What do you think about [other site] Metro-City / Townsburg, [state]?
- Q. Do you think that you will continue to live in Metro-City / Townsburg, [state]? Why or why not? Where else would you like to live? Why?
- R. Do you ever travel to other places in [state]? In the U.S.? Internationally? How often would you say that you do this? Why do you do this? For example, I have a friend who lives in Townsburg who frequently travels to [other cities] to buy Halal meat in bulk. Or I have other friends with relatives in the UK, who have traveled internationally to visit them.

Closing of Study:

Thank you so much for your willingness to take part in this study. That is all of the questions that I had. Are there any points that you think that I might have missed out on? Or any questions that I should consider asking respondents in the future? Are there any questions that could be reworded or that you found to be particularly troubling?

Here's my contact information again and please feel free to call me or email me if any questions or concerns arise. Thank you so much, have a great day.

*Appendix B: Demographic Survey*

Please complete the following brief demographic survey to the best of your ability.

1. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where were you born? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is your family's nationality of origin? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How would you racially categorize yourself? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you identify with any particular ethnicity? If so, What is it? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Do people ever mistake your racial or ethnic identity? If so, what do they mistake you for? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What is your gender identity? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What is your religious identity? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Do you have any other family members that live in the United States? If so, whom? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Do you have any other family members that live in the United States? If so, whom? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Do you have family members that live outside of the United States? If so, whom? \_\_\_\_\_
12. How long has your family lived in the United States? \_\_\_\_\_
13. What generation of your family are you that has lived in the US? [e.g., first, second, third] \_\_\_\_\_
14. What do you/your family do for work? \_\_\_\_\_
15. What is your highest level of completed education? \_\_\_\_\_

## CURRICULUM VITAE

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### **Current Position(s)**

2020 - Current

**Epidemiologist** at the Center for Health Equity at the Louisville Metro Department of Health and Wellness, Louisville, KY

### **Education**

\*\*Ph.D. *ABD*

\*\*University of Louisville, **Applied Sociology**, Anticipated 2021  
Areas of Specialization: Race, Class, Gender and Race and Ethnicity  
Dissertation \*\*\*  
Dissertation Committee: (co-chair) Dr. Karen Christopher, (co-chair) Dr. Melanie Gast, Dr. Latricia Best, Dr. Gul Marshall, Dr. Julie Peteet

M.A.

University of Louisville, **Sociology**, 2017  
Thesis title: American Muslim Men and Stigma: The Use of Religious Communities as Mechanisms for Stigma Management

B.A.

Asbury University, **Sociology**, 2015

### **Academic Employment Experience**

2016 - 2020                    **Graduate Teaching Assistant** for the Department of Sociology at the University of Louisville, Louisville, KY

2019 - 2020                    **Graduate Research Assistant** for the Department of Sociology at the University of Louisville, Louisville, KY

### **Publications**

#### **Reports**

**Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness, Center for Health**

#### **Equity:**

Allen, Trey. 2021. "2014-2018 Birth and Death Trends, Jefferson County Kentucky: Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness. 2020-2021 Vital Statistics Report.

#### **University of Louisville, Peers Making Change Project:**

Gast, Melanie, James Chisholm, Yohimar Sivira, *Trey Allen*. 2019. "Peers Making Change: Bilingual Youth Mentoring English-Language Learners": Cooperative Consortium for Transdisciplinary Social Justice Research. Policy Brief.

Gast, Melanie, James Chisholm, Yohimar Sivira, *Trey Allen*. 2019. "Transformative Bilingual Peer Youth Mentoring": Cooperative Consortium for Transdisciplinary Social Justice Research. Policy Brief.

#### **Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles and Book Chapters:**

(Forthcoming) Gast, Melanie J., Dina Okamoto, and *Jack "Trey" Allen*. "Being Heard and Being Together: Mixed-Status Latinx Families' Belonging and Engagement in San Francisco." In *Beyond Deportability*. By Mendez, Jennifer B. and Natalia Deeb-Sossa (eds). Arizona University Press

Allen, Jack "Trey." 2019. "He goes by Mo': Drawing Boundaries Around Muslim Identities." *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion* 15 (5):1-22

Allen, Jack "Trey." 2018. "Muslim American Men and Stigma: An Argument for the Use of Theories of Stigma Management in the Study of Post-Terror Muslim Experiences." *Contemporary Journal of Anthropology and Sociology* 8 (1): 5-18

#### **Other Writing:**

(Accepted) Allen, J. 2021. "Tanya Maria Golash-Boza Explaining Racism and Mass-Deportation during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries." In *Routledge Encyclopedia of Race and Racism*.

Gousee T, Rodgers K, *Allen T*, Graham A, Chambers S, Baker T. 2021. "The

Community Resilience Framework: A Novel Approach for Confronting Health Inequity and Building Community Resilience” in NACCHO: Exchange 20 (1) Winter 2021 Health Equity: p 9-13.

Allen, Jack “Trey”. 2018. “Teaching Racism in the Garden: Incorporating Strmic-Pawl’s (2015) White Supremacy Flower.” Mid-South Sociological Forum: Voices of the Mid-South (Spring Issue) 14-16

### **Web Applications, Maps, and Resources:**

ArcGIS Map of Selected Maternal and Child Health Outcomes and Indicators: 2010 to 2019 Vital Statistics Data.

<https://lojic.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=f3b83d61b6c94879ae970a8ba0f473b9>

Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness. COVID-19 Testing Site Map (ArcGIS). 2020-2021

<https://lojic.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=97ee2cc9981244feb48658d30c0d3181>

### **Presentations**

#### **Academic and Professional Conferences:**

Latinx mothers’ experiences giving birth during the COVID-19 pandemic. 2021 Kentucky Public Health Association (KPHA) Annual Conference

Gast, Melanie J., James Chisholm, Yohimar Sivira, Jack “Trey” Allen. 2020. Sociology of Education Association Conference. “Bilingual Peer Mentoring, Symbolic Violence, and Racialization of ESL Students in a diverse School.”

Gast, Melanie J., Dina Okamoto, and Jack “Trey” Allen. 2019. Anthropologists and Sociologists of Kentucky. “Being Heard and Being Together: Mixed-Status Latinx Families’ Belonging and Engagement in San Francisco.” in Immigrant Communities and Identity

Allen, Jack. 2018. Southern Sociological Society. “‘He goes by Mo’: Muslim American Men and Name Changing as a Form of Impression Management.” in The Racialization Process in Reproducing Racism

Allen, Jack. 2017 Mid-South Sociological Association. “American Muslim Men and Stigma: An Argument for the Use of Theories of Stigma Management and Modified Labeling Theory in the Study of Post-Terror Muslim Experiences.” in Graduate Student Research

Allen, Jack. 2017. North Central Sociological Association. From “American Muslim Men and Stigma: The Use of Religious Communities as Mechanisms for the Stigma Management.” in New Research and Innovation Round Table [Presiding]

**Invited Lectures/Presentations:**

Allen, Trey. 2021. Healthy Babies Louisville Reboot at the Center for Health Equity Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness. "Selected Maternal and Child Health Outcomes and Indicators: 2010 to 2019 Vital Statistics Data."

Chisholm, James, Melanie Gast, Yohimar Sivira, Jack Allen. 2020. MOSAIC Group for Research on Multilingualism at the University of Birmingham. "Bilingual Peer Mentoring, Symbolic Violence, and Racialization of ESL Students in a Diverse School."

**Grants/Financial Awards**

**Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness, Center for Health Equity**

Resilience Catalysts, National Association of City and County Health Officials, 2021

**University of Louisville**

Department of Sociology, Jon H Rieger Endowed Research Fund, 2020

Graduate Network in Arts and Sciences Research Fund, 2020

Department of Sociology, Jon H Rieger Endowed Research Fund, 2018

Graduate Student Congress Research Fund, 2017

Graduate Network in Arts and Sciences Research Fund, 2016

**Honors/Awards**

University of Louisville, Sociology Departmental Award for Outstanding Teaching by a Graduate Student, 2020

University of Louisville, Sociology Departmental Award for Outstanding Research by a Graduate Student, 2020

University of Louisville, Sociology Departmental Award for Outstanding Teaching by a Graduate Student, 2019

University of Louisville, Sociology Departmental Award for Outstanding Service by a Graduate Student, 2019

University of Louisville, Delphi Center for Teaching and Learning, Faculty Favorite [Nominee], 2018

### **Service**

#### **Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness, Center for Health Equity**

Data Standards: Race/Ethnicity/Nationality, Data Governance Working Group

#### **University of Louisville:**

Sociology Graduate Student Association Secretary, 2019-2020

Sociology Graduate Student Association President, 2017-2019

Sociology Graduate Student Association Department Representative to Graduate Student Congress, 2016-2018

Jon H. Rieger Speaker Series Selection Committee, 2017-2018

Graduate Student Congress Diversity and Inclusion Committee, 2017-2018

Graduate Student Congress Research Grants Committee, 2016-2017

#### **Ad Hoc Reviews:**

Social Problems, 2020

### **Teaching Experience**

**Graduate Teaching Assistant** [Instructor of Record] – University of Louisville:  
Race in the U.S.      Fall 2017, Spring 2018, Summer 2018, Fall 2019, Spring 2020

Social Theory      Fall 2018, Spring 2019

**Graduate Teaching Assistant** – University of Louisville:  
Race in the U.S.      Fall 2016, Spring 2017 [online]

Social Theory      Summer 2018 [online], Summer 2019 [online]

### **Professional Memberships and Organizations**

National Association of City and County Health Officials, 2020-current

American Sociological Association, 2015-2020

Anthropologists and Sociologists of Kentucky, 2019

Southern Sociological Society, 2018

Mid-South Sociological Association, 2018

North-Central Sociological Association, 2017



**Professional Development/Training**

**University of Louisville:**

Diverse and Inclusive Teaching Circle, 2018-2020

Graduate Teaching Assistant Academy, 2016-2017

Community Engagement Academy, 2016