

ISLAM ON CAMPUS:
IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF MUSLIM-AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS

By

FAROUK DEY

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2012

© 2012 Farouk Dey

To my children, Ilyas and Yasmine Dey, who I hope will benefit from this dissertation
one day when they enroll in college as Muslim-American students

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I extend my sincere gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Pilar Mendoza, for offering the perfect balance of challenge, support, advice, mentoring, and advocacy. Completing this dissertation would have been impossible without her encouragement and support. I also thank my committee members for the time that they have invested in this process.

I am indebted to my parents, Amor Dey and Zebida Gheziel, for their sacrifice and investment in me and my success. I will forever be grateful to my wife, Amel Rais, for her love, support, understanding, and generosity. She has carried the weight of our household to grant me the time to complete this dissertation. I thank my two children, Ilyas and Yasmine, for inspiring me every day to complete this research project, which I hope will benefit them one day when they enroll into college as Muslim-American students. I thank my friends, especially those on Facebook who have lived through this journey with me and supported me through “likes” and “comments” on status updates.

I am appreciative of the mentors who have opened critical doors along the way: Eric Dermond and Stephane Dermond for welcoming me to the United States and opening the first door that led to many other doors in what has been an incredible personal and professional journey, Scott Peak for believing in my potential as an undergraduate student and providing me with opportunities that continue to produce results today, Dr. Wayne Wallace for accelerating my professional success in higher education, which has led to an amazing leadership opportunity at Carnegie Mellon University, and my current Dean, Gina Casalegno, for her encouragement, support, and flexibility, which allowed me to complete this dissertation while working full-time and attending to my family’s needs. I hope to one day have the opportunity to pay it forward and impact others’ lives the way these individuals have impacted mine.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	4
LIST OF FIGURES.....	7
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	8
ABSTRACT	11
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	13
Purpose and Research Questions	15
Significance of Study	17
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	21
Identity Development of College Students	22
Identity Development of Muslim-Americans.....	29
Religion	30
Culture.....	34
Class	39
Gender	41
Summary	43
3 METHOD	44
Methodology	44
Grounded Theory	44
Theoretical Sampling.....	47
Data Collection	48
Selection of Participants	48
Procedures	50
Data Analysis.....	51
Rigor and Trustworthiness	53
Limitations.....	59
Researcher Subjectivity	61
4 FINDINGS.....	64
Identity Dimensions	65
Religiosity.....	66
Citizenship.....	70
Culture.....	73
Gender	76

Contextual Factors.....	85
Family.....	85
9/11 Backlash - Prejudice, Stereotyping, and Bullying	89
Muslim-on-Muslim Prejudice	94
Peer Support - MSA	96
University Support and Accommodations.....	98
Five Stages of Identity Development	102
Reluctance	103
Identification	108
Immersion.....	111
Negotiation	114
Integration	120
Summary	122
5 CONCLUSIONS	124
Summary of Findings.....	124
Discussion	125
Implications.....	127
Theory	128
For Research.....	129
For Policy	131
For Practice.....	134
Conclusions	138
Reflections	140
APPENDIX	
A RECRUITMENT EMAIL.....	142
B CONSENT FORM.....	143
C DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION PROTOCOL.....	145
D INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL.....	146
E FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS	148
LIST OF REFERENCES	149
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.....	158

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>		<u>page</u>
2-1	Model of multiple dimensions of identity.....	27
2-2	Reconceptualized model of multiple dimensions of identity.....	28
3-1	Simultaneous data collection and analysis	53
4-1	Model of Inter-gender dynamics among Muslim-American college students.....	84
4-2	Identity development stages for Muslim-American college students	102
4-3	Model of Identity negotiation for Muslim-American college students	120
4-4	Model of Identity development for Muslim-American college students	123

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

9/11	September 11, 2001, representing the date of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York, NY, the Pentagon in Washington, DC, and other areas in America.
Abaya	Islamic dress attire for Muslim women that covers the entire body, considered more orthodox than the Hijab.
ACA	Arab Cultural Association
Alhamdoulilah	Praise to God, often used to express being grateful or responding to the question “how are you?”
AllahuAllam	God knows best, usually used to express humility and/or uncertainty.
Assalamu-Allaikum	Peace upon you, usually used to greet other Muslims.
Brother	Used by Muslims to address or refer to a fellow Muslim man.
Deen	Religion in Arabic.
Diss	Slang term for ignore.
Duhr	One of the five daily prayers in Islam, usually performed at mid day.
Eid-ul-Fitr	Islamic holiday that marks the end of fasting during the month of Ramadan
Eid-ul-Adha	Islamic holiday that commemorates the willingness of Abraham to sacrifice his son.
Fajr	One of the five daily prayers in Islam, usually performed at dawn.
Hadith	Narrations or statements of the Prophet Mohamed.
Halal	Permissible, usually refers to types of food, financial transactions, and actions that are allowed in Islamic traditions.
Halaqa	Religious study circle or study group.
Hajj	Pilgrimage to Mekka, one of the five pillars of Islam, performed once in a lifetime by able Muslims.
Haram	Forbidden by Islamic rules.
Hijab	Traditional attire worn by some Muslim women, covers the majority of the body including the head.

Iman	Faith.
Inshallah	God willing, typically used when referring to intent do so something or wish something in the future.
Isha	One of the five daily prayers in Islam, usually performed at night.
Islam	Submission, in religion of Islam, which means submission to God.
Jenna	Heaven.
Jumaa	Friday, also refers to the weekly prayer performed in congregation by Muslims on Fridays.
K-12	Education system between elementary and high school in America.
Khoushou	A sense of concentration and serenity when performing a spiritual act like prayer.
Mahram	A male close relative, usually a brother or father, who is allowed to be alone with a Muslim woman according to Islamic tradition.
Masjid	Mosque.
Mosque	Place of worship for Muslims.
MSA	Muslim Student Association.
Muslim	Someone who follows the teachings of Islam.
Muslim-American	American citizen who subscribes to the religion of Islam, some are naturalized, participants.
Non-Muslim	A person who does not believe in or follow Islam.
PBUH	Peace Be Upon Him, used by Muslims after mentioning the name of the Prophet Mohammed PBUH.
Practicing Muslim	A Muslim person who performs all religious obligations.
Prophet Mohamed	Believed by Muslims to be the last messenger of God.
Quran	Holy scripture in Islam, believed by Muslims to be the exact words of God.
Ramadan	A month in the Islamic lunar calendar in which Muslims fast from dawn to dusk, one of the five pillars of Islam.

Salat	Prayer, one of the five pillars of Islam, performed by Muslims at least five times a day.
Sawm	Fasting, usually performed during the month of Ramadan.
Sheikh	Scholar, knowledgeable one, used to express respect towards an elder who is very knowledgeable about matters of faith.
Sister	Used by Muslims to address or refer to a fellow Muslim woman.
SWT	Subhanahou Wa Taala, an expression in Arabic often used by Muslims to praise and elevate God.
Sunnah	Secondary source of knowledge in Islam after the Quran, records of actions and statements of the Prophet Mohamed PBUH.
US	United States.
Wack	Slang for stupid or crazy.
Wudhu	Ablution, a series of body washing rituals using water in preparation for prayer.
Zakat	Charity, one of the five pillars of Islam that mandates Muslims to donated 2.5% of their wealth to charity.

Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

ISLAM ON CAMPUS:
IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF MUSLIM-AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS
By

Farouk Dey

May 2012

Chair: Pilar Mendoza

Major: Higher Education Administration

Although the study of college student development has progressed during the last decades to address various aspects of identity development across a wide range of diverse populations, there is a noticeable gap in the literature about Muslim-American college students and how the university experience impacts their development as young adults. The lack of knowledge about this growing population juxtaposed with the increased visibility of the Muslim community in America due to the 9/11 events and their aftermath, as well as the increased hostility, stereotyping, and prejudice against Muslims in America and around the world has led to an unknown impact of how college impacts the development of Muslim-American college students, which may be hindering the ability of universities to meet their needs and contribute to their success.

This study was conducted to develop a theoretical model that describes how Muslim-American college students construct their identity in the context of their lives in an American college. The study was conducted using qualitative methods from a constructivist perspective in consideration of Baxter-Magolda's self-authorship model and Jones and McEwen's multiple dimensions of identity. Data was collected and analyzed simultaneously using a constructivist grounded theory methodology. Findings

revealed the salience of four identity dimensions for Muslim-American college students: religion, citizenship, culture, and gender. These dimensions were found to be influenced by various contextual factors unique to the Muslim population: family, 9/11 backlash, Muslim-on-Muslim prejudice, peer support via Muslim Student Associations (MSAs), and university support. A new theoretical model has emerged from interviews and a focus group to describe five stages of identity formation for Muslim-American college students: reluctance, identification, immersion, negotiation, and integration.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

College student identity development has been of considerable interest to educators, researchers, and practitioners since the beginning of higher education as a field of study (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The need to examine college students' human potential in the context of their lives in a college setting has progressed to an entire field of theories and scholarship to guide the practice of student affairs. The Student Personnel Point of View, developed by the American Council on Education in 1937, reminds the higher education community that "the personal and professional development of students was (and remains) a worthy and noble goal" (Evans, Forney, & Guido DiBrito, 1998). Triggered by this statement, identity models have been developed to address many dimensions of personal development, including cognition, ethical development, moral development, reflective judgment, epistemological development, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and sexuality (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

In their synthesis of student affairs literature, research, and trends, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) explain that the study of college students in America has evolved and expanded during the last two decades from a strong focus on the traditional student: White, undergraduate, between the age 18 to 24, full-time students with few if any family responsibilities (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), to an appreciably greater emphasis on the increasingly more diverse student population, accounting for the many factors that impact their development. These factors include gender, age, race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Consistent with the growing diversity of the college student body, American higher education has experienced a shift in recent decades in how colleges impact student development, transitioning from a state of general effect, which represents a similar impact of given experiences on all students, to a state of conditional effect, which represents a wider gap between how students benefit from the same experiences. Due to the increasing diversity in today's demographics, especially on college campuses, the need to study the experiences and development of college students from diverse backgrounds has become more crucial than it has been in past decades (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Identity formation of college students, particularly those of underrepresented groups, has gained increased attention in student affairs and social psychology during the last two decades (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). This premise has given the birth to identity models, developed to address many dimensions of identity, including racial (Cross, 1995; Helms, 1990, 1992, 1995), ethnic (Phinney, 1990, 1992), sexual (Cass, 1979; D'Augelli, 1994; Evans & Wall, 1991; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996), and gender (Ossan, Helms, Leonard, 1992; Josselson 1973, 1987, 1996; O'Neil, Egan, Owen, Murry, 1993). These models have not only helped frame the identity formation for marginalized college students, but also provided a guide to university administrators to deliver additional support and accommodations to insure that students of underrepresented groups are successful in their academic, personal, and professional growth in college (Jones & McEwen, 2000). Yet, there is noticeably very little research conducted about the identity formations of Muslim-American college students, a misunderstood population that has been subject to increased scrutiny and prejudice

since 9/11 and its aftermath (Britto & Amer, 2007; Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; L. Peek, 2005; Sirin et al., 2008; Williams & Vashi, 2007).

The lack of knowledge about this college student population juxtaposed with the increased visibility of the Muslim community in America due to the 9/11 events and their aftermath and increased hostility, stereotyping, and prejudice against Muslims around the world has led to an unknown impact of how college impacts the development of Muslim-American college students, which may have caused difficulties for university faculty and administrators to meet the needs of Muslim-American college students and provide appropriate accommodations to enhance their experiences and development (Britto & Amer, 2007; Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; L. Peek, 2005; Pew Research Center, 2007; Sirin et al., 2008; Williams & Vashi, 2007). Therefore, this study seeks to decrease the gap in knowledge about this student population, and provide a platform for future studies about the experience and identity formation of Muslim-American college students.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to develop a theoretical model that describes how Muslim-American college students construct their identity in the context of their life in college. A theory emerged from individual interviews and a focus group with Muslim-American young adult college students. The study was designed to describe how these students see themselves and identify the factors that influence the process of their identity formation.

This study addressed one principle research question: how do Muslim-American college students construct their identity in the context of their life on a college campus? Answering such a complex question required an exploration of how Muslim-American

college students see themselves and their experiences in the context of their social integration, academic progress, and personal and professional development in college.

Defined as a “process of increasing differentiation in the sense of self and the integration of that growing complexity into a coherent whole” (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; p. 23), identity formation is highly related to the process of self-authorship and knowledge construction; concepts that have been introduced by Marcia Baxter-Magolda (2007) and founded on three basic assumptions: 1) humans actively construct their own reality, 2) meaning making develops overtime and experience, and 3) the process of learning and teaching is strongly influenced by ways participants make meaning. Self-authorship is described in three dimensions: 1) epistemological, in which the individual attempts to answer the question “how do I know?”, 2) intrapersonal, in which the individual attempts to answer the question “who am I?”, and 3) interpersonal, in which the individual attempts to answer the question “what relationships do I want with others?” College students simply cannot achieve self-authorship without having a strong sense of self and knowing how to relate to others (Baxter-Magolda, 2007). Thus, this study mainly focused on how Muslim-American college students see themselves and how they relate to others.

Identity formation is also connected to the process of meaning-making. Baxter-Magolda’s (1992) model of epistemological reflection describes how students construct meaning from their experiences and suggests four patterns of meaning-making that college students ascribe to: 1) absolute knowing, in which knowledge is seen as absolute material to be acquired from figures of authority, 2) transitional knowing, in which the individual encounters thought provoking events and begins to realize that not

all knowledge is certain, 3) independent knowing, in which the individual accepts the idea that knowledge is uncertain, and 4) contextual knowing, in which the individual develops the ability to integrate others' ideas in one's own ideas and develops self-authorship (Baxter-Magolda, 2001).

Based on the three dimensions of self-authorship (Baxter-Magolda, 2007), the research question was addressed on three different levels: 1) epistemologically, by asking questions that explore how Muslim-American college students acquire knowledge, 2) intra-personally, with questions that explore how they see themselves, and 3) interpersonally, with questions that explore how they relate to others (Baxter-Magolda, 2007).

I approached this study from a constructivist perspective using the premise that our understanding of how college students learn has shifted from a paradigm that describes learners as sponges that absorb knowledge, to a model in which the learner is actively engaged in the construction of knowledge (Baxter-Magolda, 1992). The approach informed the questions asked during the interviews and focus group as well as the analysis of the data. The five-stage model that emerged from the data shows that indeed, students' opinions and perceptions of themselves and the world evolve as they actively engage in the process of knowing and constructing knowledge.

Significance of Study

There are several reasons that make the study of Muslim-American college students of critical importance. First, college student development theories are typically formulated to address four key areas: 1) the interpersonal and intrapersonal changes that take place during the student's life on campus, 2) the factors that contribute to the student's development, 3) the impact of the college environment on the student's

growth, and 4) the developmental outcomes that the student affairs practice should seek to attain (Evans, Forney, & Guido DiBrito, 1998). The lack of studies that address these areas for Muslim-American college students has created a void in the study and practice of college student development that may be hindering the way institutions of higher education are responding to the needs and issues facing this growing college student population.

Second, although there is no evidence that indicates an attrition problem among Muslim-American college students, the possibility that these students will leave college due to the stressors they endure does exist. The majority of Muslim-American young adults (over 53 %) report that it has become difficult to be a Muslim in America (Pew Research Center, 2007). In a recent report published by the Pew Research Center (2011), 28% of Muslims-Americans have reported being a target of suspicion by others, 22% have been called offensive names, 21% reported being singled out by airport security, 13% reported being singled out by law officers, and 6% reported being attacked based on their religious and ethnic background.

The lack of accommodations that facilitate performing Islamic rituals in a western society may cause stress and discomfort for Muslim-Americans (Smith, 1999). Research shows that experiences of discrimination and prejudice are contributing factors to college attrition among minority college students (Swail, Perna, & Redd, 2003). Research also shows that prejudice based on religious practice and cultural differences has a negative impact on the educational experience of Muslim students (Cole & Ahmadi, 2003). Such difficulties represent a new challenge for Muslims in general and Muslim college students specifically. The increased attention on the Muslim

community, largely due to recent and current sociopolitical developments triggered by 9/11 and its aftermath as well as the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have contributed to an increase in the number of incidents of prejudice, racism, hate crimes, and hate speech against Muslims on college campuses (Muedini, 2009). Due to Islam's association with terrorism within the current sociopolitical environment, it has become acceptable for the mainstream media and the general public to use derogatory terms to define the Muslim community (Abdo, 2005).

Third, these difficulties also represent an opportunity for society and institutions of higher education to better understand this community and learn about its associated faith, culture, world views, traditions, values, beliefs, challenges, and opportunities to contribute to society. As the increased attention on Muslims has created more incidents of prejudice, racism, and hate crimes on American college campuses, it has become crucial for higher education faculty and administrators to gain a better understanding of the religion of Islam and Muslims. This study and future research in this area will help increase the level of support and accommodations that college campuses, employers, and society can offer to Muslim-American college students.

In fact, campuses and employers are still coming to grips with the types of accommodations that they need to offer to their students and employees (Adams, 2000). Campuses like the University of Michigan are building foot baths to accommodate the needs of Muslim students to perform their pre-prayer ablution ritual. More employers like the District of Columbia Government are allowing their Muslim employees to take prayer breaks during the day and take time off work for the Friday service. We are seeing more veiled women in the workplace than ever before (Adams,

2000). These signs of progress might be encouraging for Muslim-American college students who are often anxious about the stressful task of balancing their cultural and religious values with the western culture they live in; yet they are met with sharp criticism and skepticism from several media outlets, law makers, and peers who may not have taken the time to understand Islam and the Muslim community (Sirin, 2007).

Finally, scholarly work on identity issues for Muslim-American college students and the Muslim community at large in America is scarce. Higher education faculty and administrators can no longer afford to treat Muslim-American students as the invisible minority whose experiences can be embedded in the experience of international students (Cole & Ahmadi, 2003). It is essential to build a strong body of literature and research that explores the various facets and dimensions of Muslims' identity in America within the context of their personal attributes and traits as well as their family backgrounds, socio-cultural conditions, current experiences, career decisions, and life planning (Jones & McEwen, 2000). Further investigation is needed to increase understanding of Muslim-American college students and the factors that influence their identity formation, social and academic integration, and institutional commitment.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Grounded theory, the research method that frames this investigation, suggests that the strategies involved in conducting the study should be flexible and that the literature review should be conducted after the data analysis to allow fresh and new ideas to emerge and prevent the influence of already established frameworks (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). However, a description of the issue and population being studied is provided in this literature review to insure credibility of the investigation (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, 2000; Shenton 2004). Thus, Chapter 2 provides a basic understanding of the Muslim-American population as well as an overview of college student identity formation. Chapter 2 frames this study, provides areas for further exploration, and facilitates rapport development with the population being studied without compromising the development of a new theory from the data.

Chapter 2 first begins with an overview of identity formation as it relates to college students and underrepresented groups, followed by an introduction of Muslim-American young adults. Keeping with the principles of grounded theory, a theoretical framework is not used in this study since its purpose is to generate a theory from the data without the influence of an existing theoretical model (Charmaz, 2000, 2006, 2009; Emerson, 1983; Glaser et al., 1967). However, various theoretical models are considered to help define the concept of identity formation. For example, the concept of self-authorship discussed in Chapter 1 helps define the concept of identity and frame protocol questions used in the interviews and focus group based on three distinct dimensions: 1) epistemological, 2) intrapersonal, and 3) interpersonal (Baxter-Magolda, 1998, 2007). Although self-authorship is not the theoretical framework for this study, it helps structure our

understanding of identity formation and frames the protocol interviews to answer the following questions relative to identity development of Muslim-American college students: 1) how do I know?, 2) who am I?, and how do I relate to others? Exploring these questions with participants was critical in the generation of an identity formation model for this population.

Identity Development of College Students

Studies of college student development in the 1990s and 2000s have generated four clusters of theories and models: 1) psychological and identity formation, which focused on the overall development of college students, 2) cognitive-structural theories, which explored how the process of change occurs and how students make meaning of their experiences, 3) typology models, which emphasize differences between individuals based on distinctive personality characteristics, and 4) person-environment interaction theories and models, which highlight the role of environment and its influence on behavior (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Although this study touches on aspects of all four categories of theories and models, its essence is largely described by elements of psychological development, and identity development in particular.

Identity development describes the individual's movement through two distinct psychological stages: 1) exploration, which is typically motivated by a central crisis or disequilibrium, and 2) commitment, which is motivated by the gravitation towards stability and normalcy (Marcia, 1966, 1980). This premise has given birth to many identity models, developed to address several dimensions of identity: cognitive (Baxter-Magolda, 1992, 1998; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberg, & Tarule's, 1986; Kitchener & King, 1981, 1990; Perry, 1968; Piaget, 1952), racial (Cross, 1995; Helms, 1990, 1992, 1995), ethnic (Phinney, 1990, 1992), sexual (Cass, 1979; D'Augelli, 1994; Evans &

Wall, 1991; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996), moral (Kohlberg, 1958, 1976; Rest, 1979, 1986), and gender (Ossan, Helms, Leonard, 1992; Josselson 1973, 1987, 1996; O'Neil, Egan, Owen, Murry, 1993). Such models have been developed to link the individual sense of self with the surrounding social structure. They all touch on two major aspects of identity formation: 1) sense of self and relations with others (Stryker, 1968, 1980; Turner, 1978), and 2) on-going construction, selection, and negotiation between identity dimensions (Cahill, 1989; Nagel, 1994, 1995; Waters, 1990; West & Zimmerman, 1987).

These models share a general theme of crisis, often associated with acts of prejudice that serve as catalysts for individuals to transform from 1) an identity-diffused state, defined by total disinterest in occupational or ideological matters and acceptance of positions as equal, to 2) a state of foreclosed identity, defined by a commitment to values and positions under the influence of figures of authority without examination, and onto 3) a state of identity-achieved, described by a personal, ideological, and occupational commitment (Marcia, 1966, 1980). For instance, racial identity models, mostly championed by Helms (1990, 1992, 1995) and Cross (1995), provide a framework to understand the identity development of college students of color. Helms (1990) categorized racial identity into three categories: 1) personal identity, described by personal attitudes about self, 2) a reference group orientation, described by the intentional act of ascribing one's values to a group, and 3) an ascribed identity, described by the firm commitment to a group (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Likewise, Cross (1971, 1991, 1995) describes in more specific terms the development of African-American identity using five stages of development: 1) pre-encounter, defined by a lack of salience of black identity, 2) encounter, in which the

individual literally “encounters” a crisis event and goes through a transitional experience that causes dissonance in his or her belief system, 3) immersion-emersion, characterized by the search and exploration for meaning, 4) internalization, in which the individual achieves resolution of dissonance and begins to reach stability, and 5) internalization-commitment, in which the individual commits to an identity and takes action to resolve issues (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Phinney (1989, 1990, 1992) also illustrated the process of identity formation for ethnic minorities using three different states: 1) diffusion-foreclosure, in which the individual justifies and accepts society’s negative evaluation of minorities, 2) moratorium, described by a growing awareness of one’s own ethnic identity, and 3) identity achievement, in which the individual resolves the experiences of dissonance caused by bicultural conflicts (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

In a similar model, Helms (1990, 1992, 1995) describes the identity development of Latinos, Asians, African-Americans, and Native-Americans using six different statuses: 1) conformity, in which individuals derive their identity from whites and accept stereotypes and labels in effort to assimilate, 2) dissonance, in which individuals realize and recognize that they are not fully accepted among Whites, 3) immersion, in which individuals begin a reeducation process about identity and social structures, 4) emersion, in which individuals embrace their racial group, 5) internalization, described by one’s commitment to his or her racial group, and 6) integrated awareness, defined by one’s expression of positive racial identity (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Similar to these ethnic and racial groups, religious groups, such as Jewish-Americans, may have unique identification formation trends and characteristics due to

the possible experiences of discrimination, stereotyping, and bullying (Moore 1986, Williams and Vashi 2007). Likewise, in the aftermath of 9/11, Islam has become more visible and the Muslim community has become subject to more scrutiny and discrimination not only because of its visibly different rituals and practices, but also due its association with global terrorism and violence (Britto & Amer, 2007; Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; Peek, 2005; Sirin, Bikmen, Fine, Zaal, & Katsiaficas, 2008; Williams & Vashi, 2007).

Although the models discussed in Chapter 2 may provide a helpful framework to understand how these crisis events impact the identity development of Muslim-American college students in an environment that constantly questions their standing in the community and loyalty to their country, they have limited applicability to minority populations, and Muslims in particular, because of the lack of focus on the various dimensions of identity. Most identity models that have been developed to illustrate how identity is constructed for individuals or groups have addressed one component of identity only, and did not address the various dimensions of identity formation (Jones & McEwen, 2000). Thus, this study was conducted in consideration to the various identity dimensions and contextual influences that may impact the identity formation of Muslim-American young adults, utilizing Jones and McEwen's (2000) model of multiple identity dimensions as a framework.

Through a grounded theory study that explored the identity development of young female college students, Jones and McEwen (2000) developed a new model of multiple identity dimensions that depicts the various dimensions and contextual influences that surround one's core sense of self (Jones & McEwen, 2000). In this model, Jones and

McEwen differentiate between the concepts of inner identity and outside identity. Inner identity, also known as personal identity and represented by the core in Figure 2-1, is defined as more meaningful, complex, and closely guarded from external influences. On the other hand, the outside identity is less meaningful and often inaccurate due to others' characterization and interpretations (Jones & McEwen, 2000).

The intersecting circles that surround the core represent "externally defined dimensions," which are defined as social identities that can potentially be very meaningful to a person's identity depending on their salience. The closer a dimension is to the core, the more significant and relevant it is to the individual's identity. Jones and McEwen found that the salience level of these social identities has much to do with the privilege level of the individual (Jones & McEwen, 2000). For instance, women tend to show very high salience of their gender identities due to their experiences of women in a male dominated world (Jones & McEwen, 2000).

The Jones and McEwen model explores the influence of the following externally defined dimensions on one's core identity: religion, culture, race, class, sexual orientation, and gender. These dimensions are intertwined and cannot be understood singularly (Jones & McEwen, 2000). These various identity dimensions are experienced simultaneously in different ways for people in general, and for minority groups specifically. The salience of these identities may vary depending on the contextual influences they interact with, which may include family backgrounds, socio-cultural experiences, and career decisions and life planning (Jones & McEwen, 2000).

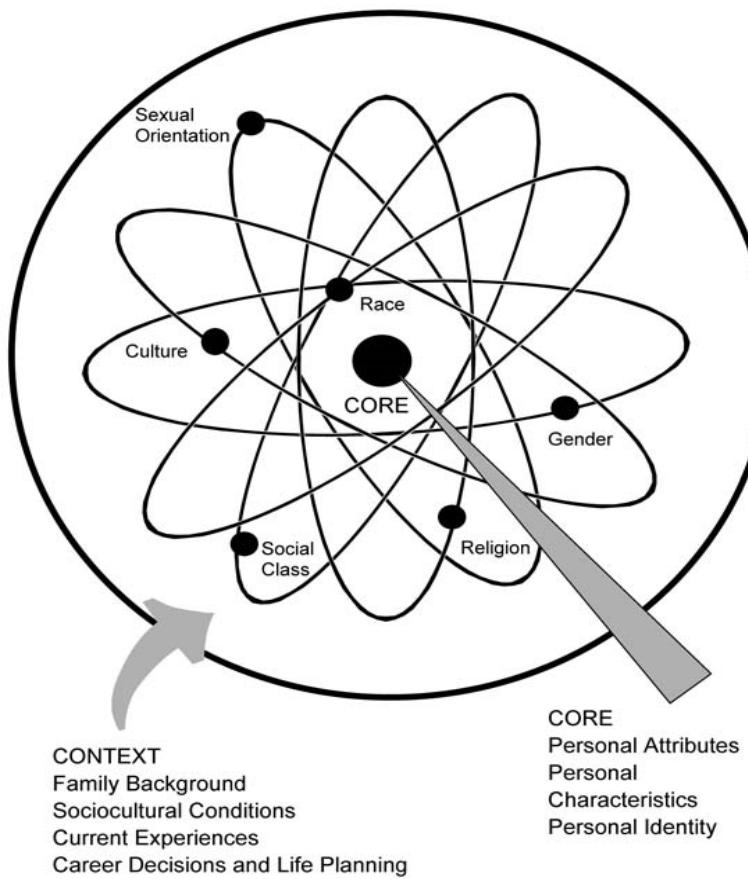


Figure 2-1. Model of multiple dimensions of identity
 [Reprinted from Jones & McEwen (2000) as cited in (Jones & McEwen, 2000)]

As shown in Figure 2-2, the model was later re-conceptualized to incorporate the process of meaning making as a capacity that literally filters contextual influences that contribute to the construction of the individual's personal and social identity (Abes, Jones, & McEwen, 2007). Jones and McEwen (2007) argued that the salience of identity dimensions depends greatly on contextual influences, such as family, norms, environment, and sociopolitical conditions. Research shows that identity development of Muslim-American college students is influenced by various contextual factors such as sociopolitical conditions, experiences of discrimination, hostility, stereotypes, and

influences of peers, family, and community (Britto & Amer, 2007; Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; Peek, 2005; Sirin et al., 2008; Williams & Vashi, 2007) and should be explored further.

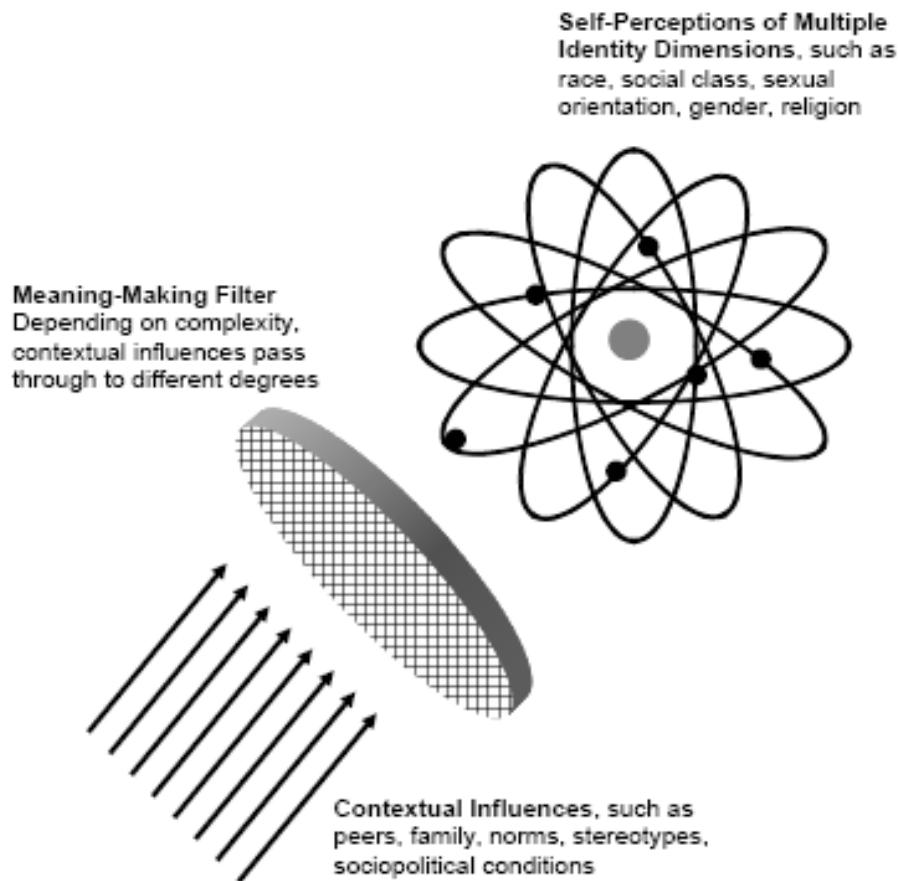


Figure 2-2. Reconceptualized model of multiple dimensions of identity
[Reprinted from Abes, Jones, & McEwen (2007) as cited in (Abes et al., 2007)]

Understanding the identity formation of any group is best achieved within the context of its members' personal attributes and traits, family backgrounds, socio-cultural conditions, current experiences, career decisions, and life planning (Jones & McEwen, 2000). Given the intersecting identity dimensions, historical background, and current sociopolitical context of Muslim-Americans, contextual factors were taken into account when conducting this study.

Identity Development of Muslim-Americans

Muslim-Americans can be categorized in three groups: 1) American converts into Islam, a group largely represented by African-Americans and remnants of the Nation of Islam movement (Smith, 1999), 2) naturalized immigrants who moved to the US seeking opportunity and benefiting from changes in immigration legislation initiated in 1965, and 3) children of immigrants, a group of young adults, mostly in high-school and college, and generally considered first generation Muslim-Americans (Pew Research Center, 2007; Pipes & Duran, 2002; Smith, 1999). This study focuses on the identity development of the third group, Muslim-American young adults who are currently in college.

Although it is difficult to account for all Muslims in America because religion is not a category in the census, experts estimate the Muslim population in America to be around seven million with an annual growth rate of 6%, compared to 0.9% for the total US population. This fast growing population is as large as the Hispanic population was 20 years ago (Pew Research Center, 2007, 2011).

There is a rich ethnic diversity within the Muslim-American population in the US. The largest population of Muslims in the US comes from Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan. The largest communities, which are subgroups formed around common interests, faith, cultural traditions, and national origin, are mostly represented by south Asians, Iranians, and immigrants from Arabic-speaking countries (Pipes & Duran, 2002). The global Muslim community is often referred to by Muslims as “Umma,” meaning community, a term that has sociopolitical implications for Muslims indicating a desire and purpose to unite for the greater good (Smith, 1999).

According to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center (2007), two-thirds of Muslims living in America were born in other countries. Nearly half of them (40%) have moved to the US since the 1990s. Among those, 24% are of Arab decent, 8% from Iran, 5% from Europe, 4% from Africa, 8% from Pakistan, and 10% from other Asian countries (Pew Research Center, 2007).

Despite the lack of research on Muslim-American, there have been a few studies that explored the influences that shape the identity formation of first generation Muslim-American youth. Some focused on the role of gender (Bartkowski & Read 2003; Haddad, 2006, 2007; Hermansen, 2000; Read 2003; Read & Bartkowski, 2000), others on the role of politics (Khan, 2000; Marshall & Read 2003), and several on the role of religion (Abu Laban, 1989; Barazangi, 1989; Haddad, 1996, 2000, 2004; Peek, 2005). None of these studies have addressed the overall identity formation of Muslim-Americans. As described by Jones and McEwen's multiple dimensions of identity model, the salience of these dimensions varies based on several contextual factors that can have a greater impact on the identity formation of the individual. Therefore, it is important to explore the dynamics and impact of these dimensions and contextual factors to explore the identity formation of Muslim-American young adults.

Religion

Although Islam has shared roots with Christianity and Judaism, its practice may be misunderstood by non-Muslims (Smith, 1999). Adhering to Islamic principles requires believing in one God, his messengers, most of which are shared with Christianity and Judaism, the prophet Mohammed PBUH, as well as performing the daily five prayers (Salat), fasting the month of Ramadan (Sawm), giving to charity (Zakat), and performing the once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage (Hajj) (Smith, 1999). Today, Islam is the fastest

growing religion in the US, with approximately seven million Muslims living in America and over one billion Muslims around the world (Peek, 2003; Pew Research Center, 2007; Pipes & Duran, 2002; Smith, 1999).

Religious identity of Muslim-American youth has become a point of interest because of the emergence of what is known as “identity Islam,” and the increased assertion of religious sense of self, a phenomenon largely caused by family influences, organizational affiliations, the sense of alienation, especially in a post 9/11 era (Hermansen, 2003; Peek, 2005). Muslim immigrants tend to turn to religion in an attempt to resolve alienation issues and create a familiar environment in an unfamiliar society (Kurien, 1997; Kwon, 2000; Rayaprol, 1997; Smith, 1999). As a result, religion has become more salient for many Muslim immigrants in America than it was in their own countries (Peek, 2005), launching a new generation of devout Muslim-Americans who later became even more religious than their parents, displaying their faith through their attire, rituals and affiliations with organizations designed to enhance a sense of self and group cohesion (Abdo, 2005; Hermansen, 2003; Peek, 2005; Pipes & Duran, 2002; Sirin, 2007; Smith, 1999; Williams, 1988).

Religion may be the most salient dimension for many Muslim-Americans who either moved to the US or are born to immigrant parents from Muslim countries. Young Muslims who are born and raised in the US “are often more observant of conservative Islamic practice than their parents” (Abdo, 2005). About half of the Muslims who live in the US restrict themselves to Halal food (Pipes & Duran, 2002). More women are wearing the veil and identifying with their religion’s conservative principles, some against their parents’ wishes (Abdo, 2005). About one-third of Muslim immigrants

became more religious after they immigrate to the US (Pipes & Duran, 2002). A third of women do not wear make-up in public for religious reasons (Pipes & Duran, 2002).

Similarly, about one third of women refrain from shaking hands with men who are not related to them and about 25% of school girls cover their hair (Pipes & Duran, 2002).

The 9/11 attacks may have accelerated the process of Muslim-Americans moving away from a secular lifestyle towards a more orthodox one. Muslims who used to attend the Mosque only on Fridays for the weekly Jumaa congregation prayer are now becoming regulars at the daily prayers (Abdo, 2005). However, this rush towards spirituality and religion did not bring Muslim-Americans to extremism. In fact, the majority of Muslims living in America unequivocally reject extremism and terrorism (Pew Research Center, 2007). According to the most recent survey published by the Pew Research Center (2007), nearly 70% of Muslim-Americans view al-Qaeda either unfavorably or very unfavorably and roughly half of them report that they are concerned with the rise of Islamic extremism around the world (Pew Research Center, 2007). However, the fact that almost a third of Muslim-Americans do not share this attitude may be of concern to many non-Muslims, and therefore requires further exploration.

Muslim-American youth have also been trying to craft a new identity for themselves, and they are doing it by returning to the original teachings of the Quran and the Sunna. One possible motivation may be to be part of the worldwide Islamic revival since accepting social norms in America may be in conflict with their intrinsic values and beliefs (Abdo, 2005). For instance, a study conducted by the University of Kentucky revealed a large increase in Mosque construction due to a large increase in attendance at prayer services during the last few years (Abdo, 2005). Over 85% of Mosques in the

Detroit area have experienced significant growth during the last five years (Abdo, 2005). Muslim-Americans today consider Mosques as more than just places of worship. They are their link to other believers and hubs for religious education and social gathering (Abdo, 2005).

Identity construction and negotiation translates into concepts of identity salience, which places various contributing factors to multiple identities into a hierarchy of importance and significance (Peek, 2005). As negative stereotyping of Muslims intensified in the US and around the world, Muslim-American young adults went through a process of strengthening their religious identity, which helped them become advocates for their religion and community (Peek, 2005).

Religion has become the most salient component of identity for these young individuals (Peek, 2005). A study that explored the religious identity of second-generation Muslim American college students found three distinct stages of identity formation: 1) religion as ascribed identity, 2) religion as chosen identity, and 3) religion as declared identity. Participants' faith and religious practice intensified as they moved through the three stages (Peek, 2005).

When individuals, typically children and adolescents, define their religion as ascribed by the fact that they were born into it, their level of engagement in the process of self-reflection about being Muslims is very little (Peek, 2005). As children become older and more mature, they become more introspective and aware of their values and beliefs (Peek, 2005). Consequently, they begin to accept the idea of questioning their ascribed religion and eventually choose it as a significant part of their identity (Peek, 2005). Social environments in college, often facilitated and supported by Muslim

Student Associations (MSAs), may play a significant role in constructing, reinforcing, and affirming the strong emerging religious identity of young adults, which helps them develop through the second stage of religious identity formation (Peek, 2005).

Peek (2005) attributed the third stage, religion as declared identity, to the events and aftermath of 9/11. Muslim-American college students were found to identify more closely with being Muslims than ever before and find refuge in their religion from the increased hostility against their community as a result of these events. Furthermore, the increased attention from the public and media on Islam and Muslims may have Muslim-Americans to seek knowledge and understanding of their own religion in order to be able to respond to the constant questioning they received about it. Overnight, Muslim-Americans found themselves serving the role of representatives of Islam and Muslims (Peek, 2005). This has led Muslim-American young adults in particular to study the Quran and Islamic literature, and eventually align themselves even more with their religion and display it through their behavior, speech, and physical appearance (Peek, 2005).

Culture

Cultural identity captures the intersection and interconnectedness of religion, culture, ethnicity, class, and national identities (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Liebkind, 1992). Ting-Toomey (1985) defines culture as the “patterned ways of thinking, acting, feeling, and interpreting” that a particular group or individual adopts. There are four elements to culture: norms, values, beliefs, and expressive symbols (Fine, 1995). Culture is combination of attitudes, behaviors, and customs that are learned from parents, friends, teachers, and the media. Because culture is embedded in everything that we do, we treat it like the water that we drink or the air that we breathe. We take it

for granted. There are three major characteristics of culture: 1) it is learned and not innate, 2) its various facets are interrelated, and 3) it is shared and defines group boundaries (Fine, 1995).

The religion of Islam and its associated cultures have different rules and standards from the western culture (Sirin et al., 2008). Many Muslims in America are constantly faced with western customs and values that challenge their beliefs and way of life (Pipes & Duran, 2002). They worry about maintaining their family traditions and honor, and fear abandonment of their faith and culture (Pipes & Duran, 2002). Particularly, Muslim-American youth may have to constantly negotiate and integrate these standards in their everyday lives while in college (Sirin et al., 2008).

Muslim-American young adults are often anxious about balancing their cultural and religious values within the world they live in, and constantly negotiate their dual identities (Sirin et al., 2008). The complex process of negotiating identities for Muslim-American young adults has created a need for college administrators and faculty to understand this population and learn about the various facets and dimensions of Muslims' identity in America.

Muslim-American young adults identify with both their Muslim and American identities, a concept labeled "hyphenated self" by Sirin and Fine (2008) in their recent study about identity negotiation for Muslim-American youth (Sirin et al., 2008). For the most part, Muslim-American young adults were found to have the capacity to craft integrated and parallel identities, as well as overwhelmingly prefer being engaged and involved with their ethnic and religious communities as well as the mainstream US society (Sirin et al., 2008). Yet, their national identity is constantly questioned, especially

following the 9/11 events and their aftermath. Findings of Sirin's (2008) study reveal that the three factors contribute to Muslim-American young adults' American identity: 1) stress caused by discrimination, 2) orientation to American culture, and 3) orientation to home country culture (Sirin et al., 2008).

The definition of the label "Muslim-American" is complex as there are many ways for an individual to be a Muslim-American. This socially constructed identity emerged out of the tragic events of 9/11, which caused Islam as a religion to become a more salient dimension for Muslims, and their standing in their community became increasingly questioned (Sirin et al., 2008). As a result of these sociopolitical and historical factors, Americans who practice the Muslim faith have adopted the label "Muslim-American" to assert their religious as well as their national identity, a coping mechanism often used by marginalized minority groups, such as African-Americans, Jewish-Americans, and Asian-Americans (Grewal, 2009; Sirin et al., 2008).

Although Muslim-Americans come from diverse cultural, racial, ethnic, and geographic backgrounds, these events coupled with the US wars in predominately Muslim countries have helped create the Muslim-American label, which transformed into a collective identity overtime, referring to a group of Americans, mostly of immigrant origin, who adhere to the religion of Islam and share similar experiences as citizens of the United States of America (Sirin et al., 2008).

Culture, faith, and politics are intertwined as many cultural customs in the Muslim community stem from religious practice. Marriage and family values are a major part of the Muslim culture. Over 69% of Muslims living in America are married and only 9% are divorced or separated. Approximately 47% have one or more children (Pew Research

Center, 2007). Muslims tend to make decisions based on pleasing God and strive to follow the model of the Prophet Mohammed PBUH (Smith, 1999). Muslim parents expect their children to be respectful to them and to others and to be honest and show humility and modesty in their behavior, speech, and appearance (Pipes & Duran, 2002).

Although Muslim-Americans identify with socially conservative values, many align their political orientation with moderates and liberals. Over a third of Muslim-Americans (38%) consider themselves moderates while 24% consider themselves liberal (Pew Research Center, 2007). Nearly 70% of Muslim-Americans are registered democrats and 11% are registered republicans (Pew Research Center, 2011). Many Muslims have distanced themselves from the Republican Party after the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (Pew Research Center, 2007).

Muslim-Americans seem to be less involved and engaged in American politics than the general population, especially among the youth (Pew Research Center, 2007). This may be caused by the built-up frustration with the political system and disapproval of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Over 75% of Muslim-Americans believe that the US made the wrong decision to invade Iraq and 48% believe that the US made the wrong decision to invade Afghanistan. Approximately 55% of Muslim-Americans doubt the sincerity of the war on terrorism and see it as a war against Islam (Pew Research Center, 2007).

Cultural, moral, and societal factors may also be the reasons behind the noticeable recent increase in piety and religiosity among some Muslim-Americans, especially young adults. Culturally, Many Muslim immigrants have taken refuge in the mosques and community events, which are typically of religious nature, as a response

to the strangeness of the new culture and rituals they are confronted with in the US (Pipes & Duran, 2002). Morally, they are responding to the noticeably liberal and open culture, especially compared to the conservative environment they were brought-up in (Pipes & Duran, 2002). A survey conducted by Cornell University revealed that 44% of Americans feel that the U.S. government should restrict the civil liberties of Muslim-Americans. Muslims may be seeking refuge from the increased hostility and negative attitude they experience from non-Muslim by reverting to their religious and cultural communities (Pipes & Duran, 2002).

Thus, some Muslim-American parents are now choosing to home school their children or enroll them in Islamic schools in hopes of influencing the moral tone of the classroom (Pipes & Duran, 2002). Consequently, some children of Muslim immigrants, including nonobservant Muslims seem to be more attracted to Islam and its morality, discipline, and old fashion ways. They seem to be rediscovering the heritage and principles of the religion, and consequently follow it with various degrees of strictness (Pipes & Duran, 2002).

On the other hand, some Muslim-Americans have assimilated to life in America quite easily compared to other minority groups. Although nearly half of Muslim-Americans identify themselves as Muslims first, which is not too different from any other religious group, 63% do not see a conflict between being a devout Muslim and the modern way of life in America (Pew Research Center, 2007).

Pia Rebello Britto and Mona Amer (2007) conducted a quantitative study to explore the cultural identity patterns of 150 US born or early immigrant Arab Muslim-American young adults between the ages of 18 and 25, using various scales that

measure cultural identity, acculturation, and family functioning. Findings revealed three distinct cultural identity groups: 1) high bicultural, which emphasizes an extraordinary ability to navigate both Muslim and American cultures, 2) moderate bicultural, which highlights moderate abilities to manage both cultures, and 3) high Arab cultural, a group defined by participants' intense desire to gravitate towards the Arab and Muslim culture and reject the American identity. The study shed light on strong acculturation stressors, relative to family and sociodemographic contexts, that impact to a greater extent those who fall in the intersection of the three cultures: Arab, Muslim, and American (Mona & Rebello Britto, 2007).

This study was one of the first of its kind to explore identity formation issues of Muslim-American young adults, but it had some limitations, which I attended to in my study. This study did not account for the impact of religiosity and gender on the development of the sense of self for Arab Muslim-American young adults. To avoid this pitfall, I considered identity formation issues of Muslim-American young adult college students from all ethnic and racial backgrounds, rather than focusing on one group in particular. Furthermore, several hypotheses and assumptions were made about Arabs and Muslims in America in this study. Given the gap in literature and research about this population, I chose to use a qualitative methodology to allow theories and hypotheses to emerge from the data, rather than make assumptions that cannot be supported by the literature.

Class

The dimension of social class in the Muslim-American community is intertwined with culture, especially when it is viewed from the context of family backgrounds, socio-cultural conditions, current experiences, career decisions, and life planning (Abes et al.,

2007). Muslim youth, especially in America, are expected by their parents to pursue prestigious degrees and career paths (Smith, 1999). About half of Muslims living in America have attended college and 24% are college graduates, compared to 18% of the general US population (Census, 2010). Of those, 10% hold post graduate degrees, compared to 7% of the general US population (Census, 2010). Approximately 41% of Muslims living in America earn \$50,000 or more (Pew Research Center, 2007).

Unlike Muslim immigrants in Europe, who mostly live in economically depressed communities, Muslim immigrants in America represent a vibrant community in the middle and upper class, making higher salaries and obtaining exceptionally higher degrees than the national US average (Pew Research Center, 2007). While Europe's proximity to many third world Muslim countries attracts less affluent immigrants, which contributes to increased stereotyping and discrimination towards Muslims, America has attracted more affluent and educated Muslim immigrants whose success was driven by high societal and family expectations of Muslim youth, and largely caused by Americans' tolerance and acceptance towards Muslims, until September 11th, 2001 (Pipes & Duran, 2002). As a result of the intense pressure and expectations from families and the Muslim community, Muslims-American young adults tend to gravitate towards careers in Medicine and Engineering. Combined, the two fields account for one third of the Muslim-American community (Pipes & Duran, 2002).

However, recent sociopolitical conditions have changed the environment for Muslim-Americans who have had to create a more pronounced identity due largely to the increased media and public attention on Islam and the Muslim community in America and around the world. Consequently, they have had to understand who they

are in the context of a culture different from theirs and a world that is becoming increasingly hostile towards them (Abdo, 2005). There is much to be explored in the area of life and career trajectory for Muslim-American young adults as they begin to integrate their own identities and expectations into the expectations of their parents and society.

Gender

Depending on the salience of religious identity, the restrictive nature of religion may impact, and at times even foreclose, young Muslim-Americans' exploration and formation of other identity dimensions, such as gender (Sirin et al., 2008). For instance, gender issues and mingling between Muslim men and women are a point of tension on college campuses as MSAs try to negotiate between their cultural values and the American way of life (Smith, 1999). These issues can be clearly observed when attending an event organized by the MSA on campus and seeing that men and women have different seating areas. The separation comes from the cultural and historical traditions in Muslim communities that men and women should refrain from mingling with one another to avoid falling in temptation and entering into inappropriate relations outside of marriage (Smith, 1999). However, some Muslims question the hypocrisy committed mostly by men who feel comfortable mingling with non-Muslim women, yet tend to shy away from befriending Muslim women (Smith, 1999).

The gender dimension for Muslim-Americans is very much intertwined with religion culture. About 46% of the Muslims living in America are women (Pew Research Center, 2007), compared to 50% of the general US population (Census, 2010). Gender roles in Islam and in most Muslim cultures are well defined and may be a source of misinterpretation and misunderstanding inside and outside the Muslim community. For

many Muslims, a certain separation or distance between men and women who are not related via family ties is expected under the assumption that if allowed together, they would be tempted to engage in what are considered sinful acts that will place them outside of the circle of Islam and ultimately have a negative impact on society (Pipes & Duran, 2002).

Although women are allowed to work, they are not expected to provide for their household as this is considered to be the primary expectation for men (Smith, 1999). Following a religious decree, many Muslim-American women choose to dress conservatively and often wear a veil, also known as the Hijab. Men also have to follow a conservative dress code, but because their attire is not identified as a religious symbol, their identity is not as recognized by others as it is for women (Smith, 1999).

Muslim-American women often have to deal with inquisitive looks, assumptions about their ability to speak English, stereotypes, and discrimination. Muslim-American women on college campuses have often experienced prejudice from their peers and faculty who have negative misconceptions about veiled women and view them as oppressed, submissive, or have limited ability to articulate their thoughts and opinions (Cole & Ahmadi, 2003).

The reality is that many of these stereotypes are shared with Muslim men also, but Muslim women who choose to veil are more likely to experience them because they may be easily identified as Muslims (Cole & Ahmadi, 2003). However, many Muslim-American women are taking the high road in trying to experience college life as their counterparts without compromising their values or changing their appearance (Smith, 1999).

Summary

Identity dimensions that typically bind groups together, such as race, traditions, religion, culture, gender, values, and language are usually more salient among minorities than the majority group because they represent the basis for their subordinate standing in the community (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Phinney (1990, 1992, 1995) argues that minorities typically face two challenges: 1) maintaining their sense of self and self-esteem while dealing with prejudice, and 2) achieving balance between the values of the minority and majority groups that they affiliate with. As described in Chapter 4, these challenges are prevalent among Muslim-American college students, and have a tremendous impact on their identity formation.

The tragic 911 events and their aftermath have created a new sociopolitical environment for Muslim-American young adults, in which Islam has increased visibility in the media, Muslim-Americans' standing in the community is increasingly questioned, and their identity is more scrutinized (Britto & Amer, 2007; Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; Pew Research Center, 2007; Said, 2004; Sirin et. Al, 2008; Williams & Vashi 2007). Increased incidents of stereotyping and prejudice against Muslims juxtaposed with the lack of knowledge about this fast growing population may have also contributed to the inability of university administrators and faculty to meet the needs and provide reasonable accommodations to ensure the academic, personal, and professional development of Muslim-American college students. This study helps bridge the gap in the literature and serves as a catalyst for future studies to help university officials understand Muslim-American college students better.

CHAPTER 3 METHOD

Chapter 3 begins with an overview of grounded theory, the research method that frames this investigation. It provides a thorough description of the qualitative research procedures that were undertaken to collect and analyze the data: selecting participants, conducting observations, individual interviews, and focus group, as well as coding, memo writing, and generating themes. Finally, it concludes with a discussion about the researcher's subjectivity and trustworthiness of the study.

Methodology

Grounded Theory

Having emerged from the work of Glaser and Strauss on the experience of dying in hospitals, grounded theory integrates the strengths of quantitative research, such as rigor, logic, and systematic analysis, with qualitative techniques to enable a theory to emerge from the data rather than following the typical deductive method of theorizing first followed by evidence building (Charmaz, 2000, 2006, 2009; Glaser et al., 1967; Walker & Myrick, 2006).

Glaser and Strauss revived and legitimized qualitative research during a time when it was losing ground in face of an increasingly more dominant quantitative research (Glaser et al., 1967). They argued that theory could be driven from systematic qualitative analysis, and defined seven critical guiding principles, which were implemented in this study: 1) data collection and analysis are conducted simultaneously, 2) codes and themes are constructed from data rather than from hypotheses, 3) constant comparison is implemented in each phase of the analysis to ensure rigor and trustworthiness, 4) theory development is a continuous process that is

advanced through the data collection and analysis, 5) memo-writing is used to maintain engagement of the researcher in the data and identify gaps in emerging categories, 6) the purpose of sampling is to construct a theory, not to guarantee appropriate group representation, 7) the literature review is conducted after the data analysis to allow fresh and new ideas to emerge and prevent the influence of already established frameworks, and 8) grounded theory strategies are used flexibly (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser et al., 1967).

The data analysis process in grounded theory strikes an ideal balance between simplicity and complexity, rigor and flexibility, as well as structure and autonomy. This balance has enabled me as the researcher to constantly be entrenched in the data, allowing for theoretical ideas to develop (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser et al., 1967; Walker & Myrick, 2006). Grounded theory has lent itself very well to the study of Muslim-American college students for several reasons. First, the definition of grounded theory as the discovery of theory from systematically generated data through the process of comparative analysis (Glaser et al., 1967) fits well with the purpose of this study: to describe how Muslim-American college students construct their identity during their formative years as undergraduate students in college. The intent of this investigation was to generate a theory that explains the identity construction process of Muslim-American college students using conceptual categories to be presented in the form of codified propositions (Glaser et al., 1967). As proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), the theory that emerged to explain the identity development process of Muslim-American college students was merely momentary and will continue to develop long after it is presented in this paper (Glaser et al., 1967).

Second, because of the lack of knowledge about Muslim-American college students, the expectation of grounded theory to rely on data rather than literature early in the process allowed for independent analysis of the data rather than a thorough literature review (Charmaz, 2000, 2006, 2009; Emerson, 1983; Emerson, 1983). The notion that grounded theorists are not expected to pour their data into someone else's theoretical framework has allowed for innovation and creation of an original theory that emerged from the data to explain the process of identity formation of Muslim-American college students (Charmaz, 2006; Emerson, 1983).

Third, the process of generating theory fits with the reality of social interaction and its structural context (Glaser et al., 1967). Much of what was explored in this study focused on the social environment of Muslim-American college students in the context of their academic progress and personal and professional development in college. Charmaz (2006) defines symbolic interactionism as "a theoretical perspective that assumes society, reality, and self, [which are] are constructed through interaction and thus rely on language and communication" (p. 17). I reviewed several studies that have used symbolic interactionism as part of grounded theory to build my research design. One of these studies examined the role and functions that an email group among parents of children with autism played on how these parents received support, information, and guidance (Huws, Jones, & Ingledew, 2001). In this study, the principle investigators concurrently collected and analyzed data using coding, theoretical memo writing, and theoretical comparisons to make sense of what was being said. This article provided a good model of how to collect and analyze data for this study.

Theoretical Sampling

The process of using grounded theory as the main methodology of this study was both exciting and challenging as it required collecting, coding, and analyzing data simultaneously (Glaser et al., 1967). In preparation for this process, I reviewed a study with a similar research design that addressed how cancer patients made meaning of their experiences and how their spirituality influenced their meaning-making process (Walton & Sullivan, 2004). In this study, data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously as part of grounded theory. Coding, memo writing, categorizing, and reviewing literature all happened simultaneously for the purpose of generating more categories to build them up to a theoretical level and consequently generate a conceptual model (Walton & Sullivan, 2004).

This sampling method was ideal for studying a population that is underrepresented in the research and literature. An element of freedom and flexibility in pursing the data was necessary for the process of discovery in this type of study because of the gap in research about Muslim-American college students. Moreover, formulating a theory as it emerged from the data required a great amount of theoretical sensitivity and insight, a skill necessary to build strong categories and hypotheses (Glaser et al., 1967).

The main premise of theoretical sampling was to gather data and further explain categories, not to insure population representation or increase statistical generalizability of results (Charmaz, 2006). It allowed for constant questioning of what groups or subgroups to approach in the next phase of data collection, a process that was facilitated by memo writing to identify gaps that needed to be filled by the next set of data (Glaser et al., 1967). This process continued until saturation of categories was reached (Glaser et al., 1967). In addition, theoretical sampling allowed for anecdotal

comparisons with my past experiences, previously acquired knowledge, readings, and stories of others as the principle investigator to be made in the data analysis process (Glaser et al., 1967). This was especially convenient for me considering my Muslim and Arabic heritage as both a researcher and college student affairs professional, a factor that not only helped me access the Muslim-American college student population, but also build trust and rapport with them, as well as have the freedom to use my own experiences and knowledge to build comparison points.

Data Collection

Selection of Participants

Although theoretical sampling allowed for flexibility in selecting the next participant after the initial interviews, some minimum requirements were set for the purpose of this investigation. In order to be selected for this study, participants had to be Muslims, between the age of 18 and 23, American citizens having lived in the United States for a minimum of 15 years, and enrolled in an undergraduate college degree program at a four-year university in the US.

Participants were reached through Muslim student associations in four-year institutions of higher education in the United States. Based on the contextual influences described in the re-conceptualized model of multiple dimensions of identity (Abes et al., 2007), special attention was paid to the campus climate, institutional support and accommodations to Muslim students, and the structure of the Muslim student organization on campus. Gift cards were offered as an incentive to motivate students to participate in this study.

Following the recommendations of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Charmaz (2000, 2006, 2009), the number of participants depended on when data saturation was

reached. As discussed in the literature review, because of the gender dynamics in the Muslim faith and its associated cultures, there was balanced representation of men and women among participants to ensure fair representation of voices from both genders.

The study involved 14 Muslim-American college students. Nine of the participants were women and five were men. Most participants attended public elementary, middle, and high school. However, a few attended private educational programs affiliated with their local Mosques for at least a few years. The group of participants was representative of all four college classes: two freshmen, four sophomores, four juniors, and four seniors. Nine out of the 14 participants were majoring in sciences and on a pre-health track and one participant was majoring in Engineering. The other four participants were majoring in political sciences hoping to apply to Law School after graduation.

The majority of participants identified themselves as practicing Muslims, although their levels of religiosity differed based on various factors that are discussed in Chapter 4. Only three participants, two women and one man, shared that they do not consider themselves practicing Muslims, but still identify as Muslims. Six out of the nine women participants wore Hijab. Three out of the five men participants had beards, all at different length and shapes. The decision to wear the Hijab or grow a beard and its relationship with the various identity dimensions and contextual factors is explored further in Chapter 4.

Most participants were born and raised in the US. Two participants were born abroad and moved to the US at a very young age. National origin for the participants included several Muslim countries, including India, Pakistan, Turkey, and various

countries in the Middle-East and North Africa. Seven of the 14 participants attended a focus group that lasted 90 minutes, in which they received an overview of the major themes that emerged from the individual interviews and had an opportunity to reflect and comment on the early findings of the study. The focus group served as a group member checking procedure to ensure credibility, but also provided additional data that was used to create and refine themes.

Procedures

Participants were asked to fill out a brief questionnaire to collect demographic information as illustrated in Appendix C. They participated in audio-taped interviews that lasted approximately 120 minutes and were asked many questions about how they see themselves, how they think others see them, how they related to others, and how they experience college (Appendix D). Probing questions were asked to explore issues that the participants shared. Participants were given a brief break after the first 60 minutes period of the interview. All interviews were conducted in a private area on campus to respect the confidentiality of the information shared, and the names of interviewees are withheld by mutual agreement to protect their anonymity. Therefore, participants are referred to by randomly assigned initials in Chapter 4.

To ensure trustworthiness of the study, member-checking was conducted through individual phone conversations with select participants and a final audio-taped focus group, in which preliminary data was shared with participants. The focus group also generated new data that was transcribed and analyzed for final adjustments of the emerging theory. The focus group also involved participants taking part of “Bead Who You Are,” an exercise designed to identify participants’ salient identities using beads of different colors.

Data Analysis

The analysis method was inspired by an approach illustrated in a study that used grounded theory to explore parents' participation in their child's care from the perspective of the child, parents, and nurses (Coyne & Cowley, 2006). The data analysis process was categorized in four different procedures, which I implemented in this study: 1) listening to tapes and transcribing, 2) line-by-line coding in the margin of the transcript and writing theoretical notes on cards, 3) compiling a list of codes and grouping them into categories, and 4) constantly comparing the codes and generating memos (Coyne & Cowley, 2006).

The data analysis process began by open coding phrases, statements, and observations in the interviews and focus group in a broad manner. Then, transcripts were recoded looking for codes that kept repeating themselves. The third review of the transcripts consisted of re-indexing the codes and fitting them into broader axial codes or categories and merging themes in a way that put similar codes together under the same broad categories (Emerson, 1983).

Coding is a fundamental component of the data analysis phase, which required categorizing data, sorting it using labels representing general themes, and carefully scrutinizing the statements and behaviors of participants and noting inconsistencies and contradictions in order to identify patterns and consequences, whether intended and unintended (Emerson, 1983). The data may have seemed massive, confusing, and without a clear pattern at first, but coding brought organization and order to allow for a theory to emerge (Charmaz, 2006; Emerson, 1983).

In her explication and interpretation of grounded theory in Robert Emerson's book (1983) and later in her own book (2006), Kathy Charmaz offers a series of tips and

recommendations for coding and data analysis in qualitative research, which I embraced and utilized in my study. First, she recommended attending to the context, participants, timing, and structure relative to what participants choose to share and emphasize throughout the study (Emerson, 1983). The idea here was to find the relationship between participants' experiences and their interpretations of those experiences (Emerson, 1983).

Second, Charmaz (1983, 2006) pointed out that building codes should not be about what participants stress only, but also about what they ignore or pass over (Emerson, 1983). As described in Chapter 4, this was particularly helpful in this study as there were elements of identity that participants failed to mention, such as certain American traditions that most Americans would probably mention when discussing their cultural identity. Third, Charmaz (1983, 2006) provided examples for how to turn the data into in vivo codes, a process that raises the imagery used by participants when describing their experiences to new conceptual levels (Emerson, 1983). And finally, she explained, the process of identifying the meaning behind the data by using codes and constantly comparing bits of data with other data for their similarities and differences (Charmaz, 2006; Emerson, 1983).

The process of refining codes and generating broad categories continued as I began selecting what appeared to be the most salient themes. Selective coding helped categorize what appeared to be the central influences on these unique dynamics in one broad category. Through rigorous coding and constant comparison of data, the meaning behind the data emerged into a theory that not only reflects but also describes how young adult Muslim-American college students construct their identity while in college.

Although the simultaneous process of data collection and analysis was intense and time consuming, it provided the necessary freedom to follow the data and decide how to proceed and what data to collect next after the initial analysis (Glaser et al., 1967). Following grounded theory principles, I did not plan further data collection in advance of the emerging theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Instead, I followed the process of giving more control to the data collection, which is known by grounded theorist as theoretical sampling (Glaser et al., 1967). Figure 3-1 illustrates and integrates all steps of data collection and analysis, which were conducted simultaneously in this study: interviews, focus group, member checking, and coding.

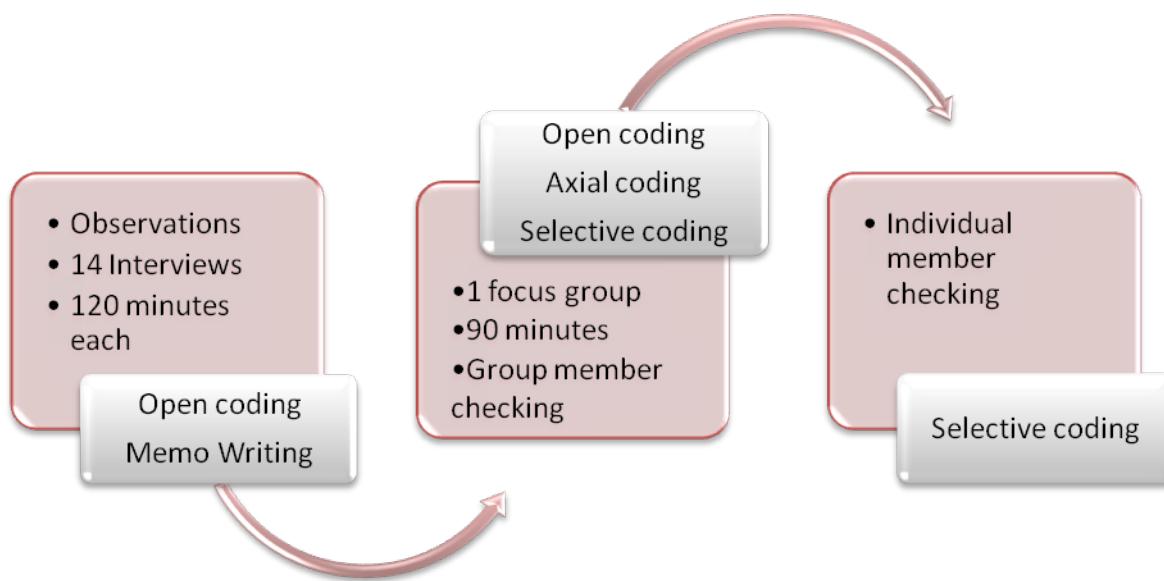


Figure 3-1. Simultaneous data collection and analysis

Rigor and Trustworthiness

Qualitative research has gained prominence and acceptance as a legitimate method of inquiry (Charmaz, 2000, 2006, 2009). Unlike quantitative research, which seeks truth through measurable data, qualitative research focuses on the meaning derived from one's experiences, a definition that places a greater emphasis on the

context of inquiry and the role of the researcher (Pitney, 2004). Because of the recent epistemological shift in qualitative inquiry, from positivism to constructivism, the role of validity, reliability, and generalizability as primary ways of validating knowledge has been discarded over a debate that lasted over two decades (Kvale, 1995; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Peck & Secker, 1999; Pitney, 2004; Rolfe, 2006; Tobin & Begley, 2003; Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2000). There has been significant debate during the last three decades over how to evaluate the quality and accuracy of qualitative research (Rolf, 2006). Constructivism and the surge of new qualitative studies have given birth to new concepts that I utilized to ensure that reality was represented fairly and accurately by my study's findings: 1) trustworthiness, 2) rigor, and 3) goodness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, 2000; Tobin & Begley, 2003).

Despite Glaser and Strauss' (1967) best efforts to challenge positivistic quantitative methods, grounded theory gained notoriety for its rigor and positivistic nature (Charmaz 2000, 2006, 2009). Charmaz (2006) is among a growing number of scholars who have moved grounded theory through various epistemological perspectives, from 1) positivism, which holds that true knowledge is based on positive verification only (Creswell, 2008), to 2) constructivism, which holds that knowledge and meaning are created from experience (Creswell, 2008), and to 3) interpretivism, which holds that knowledge is a matter of interpretation (Creswell, 2008). This transformation in perspectives has further enabled grounded theory's guidelines to be applied with a broader range of studies and modern methodological assumptions (Charmaz, 2006). In fact, Charmaz (2006) challenged Glaser and Strauss' assumption that theory is discovered as it emerges from data; rather, she assumes that "we are part of the world

we study and the data we collect," (p. 10) and argues that theories are constructed through the continuous involvement with "people, perspectives, and research practices" (p. 10), concepts that helped generate authentic data from genuine interactions with the participants in this study. Thus, the theory that emerged in this study was an interpretation and construction of reality, not a replica of it based on data. This process required rigorous and intense involvement in the world participants live in, which has led to many new insights and ultimately a theoretical model of identity formation of Muslim-American college students.

To demonstrate trustworthiness, Lincoln and Guba (1985, 2000) suggested four categories of steps, which I pursued in this study: 1) credibility, 2) transferability, 3) dependability, and 4) confirmability. Establishing credibility was one of the key criteria to ensure trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, 2000). Following Shenton's (2004) recommendations, the following provisions were met to achieve credibility: 1) the research design and methods were well defined and thoroughly reported, 2) familiarity with the internal culture of participants has been already achieved through my background as a Muslim and a university administrator, 3) random sampling and initial selection of participants was achieved through an email invitation sent to Muslim student associations, 4) theoretical sampling was achieved by analyzing data immediately after each interview and selecting the next participant based on the data analysis and initial themes that emerged, 5) participants were encouraged to be frank and honest throughout the study and were informed of their rights to refuse to participate and to withdraw at anytime during the study, 6) probes and other questioning tactics were used to elicit additional details and information and prevent lies or

miscommunication from contaminating data, 7) data was constantly revisited and scrutinized before findings and an emerging theory were confirmed, 8) debriefing sessions were conducted with supervising faculty and six peer colleagues with experience in conducting research, two of whom were current doctoral students in Education and four have successfully defended their dissertations within the prior five years, 9) a sample of the data was analyzed and scrutinized by two peer colleagues to verify fair and accurate representation of participants' voices, 10) a reflective statement commenting on my impressions of the process, participants, and setting was provided in Chapter 5 to ensure continuous progressive subjectivity, 11) my personal and professional background as the principle investigator was shared in a comprehensive subjectivity statement and biographical sketch, 12) member checking was conducted in a focus group with seven participants and via follow-up phone conversations with four select participants to ensure congruence between findings and data analysis of participants' voices, 13) a description of the issue being studied has been provided in the literature review in Chapter 2, and 14) other similar studies were examined and compared with this study to check for congruence between findings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, 2000; Shenton 2004).

To ensure that the themes generated from the data accurately represented the participants' voices, membership checking was conducted in a focus group with seven members in addition to individual meetings with four members who were selected based on their availability, maturity, and engagement in the study. Member checking is typically a single event conducted to ensure accuracy of transcripts and interpretations (Doyle, 2007). Methods of conducting member checking differ in the literature. It may be

conducted informally or may follow a structured plan and format. It may be conducted in one single instance during the research process (Doyle, 2007; Carlson, 2010), or as described by Lindolf (2011) “with key persons at the end of the study” (p. 168).

My initial plan was to conduct member checking with all participants in a focus group. The opportunity to attend the focus group was offered to all participants. However, only seven out of the 14 participants chose to attend because some had scheduling conflicts and others did not feel comfortable discussing personal issues in a group setting. To follow-up on the member checking conducted in the focus group, individual member checking was conducted with four members to ensure trustworthiness. In addition, Lincoln (1995) recommended several strategies that I followed in this study to demonstrate trustworthiness: 1) prolonged engagement with participants, 2) persistent observations of activities that involved Muslim-American college students, and 3) audit trails to demonstrate the credibility of the study.

Transferability, which is concerned with the generalizability of the study findings, was rejected by early qualitative work, arguing that populations in qualitative investigations are too small to generate findings that can be applied to other settings and populations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, 2000; Shenton, 2004; Tobin & Begley, 2003). In their early work, Lincoln and Guba (1985) along with other scholars (Bassey, 1981; Denscombe, 1989, Firestone, 1993; Starke, 1994) offered an opposing view, arguing that transferability should be considered in qualitative research providing sufficient detail about the context of the investigation to allow for justifiable comparison and application to other settings and populations (Shenton, 2004).

Shenton (2004) suggested six specific contextual details that are important to share for the reader or practitioner to be able to make a transferability inference: 1) details about the organization participating in the study, 2) restrictions in types of participants, 3) the number of participants, 4) the method utilized for data collection, 5) the timeline of the data collection, and 6) specific details about each component of the data collection. These details were provided in Chapter 3 to ensure that the reader clearly understands the findings of this particular study within a very specific context: undergraduate students enrolled in an American four-year university who identify as Muslim-Americans. Thus, practitioners and readers are able to apply transferability carefully. However, they should not generalize findings of this study to other settings or populations (Shenton, 2004), such as Muslim-American high-school students or Muslim international students.

Detailed reporting of the research process helped demonstrate dependability and will enable future investigators to repeat the process in future studies (Shenton, 2004). Following Shenton's (2004) recommendations, three specific elements of this study were shared to ensure dependability: 1) research design and implementation, 2) process for data collection, and 3) my reflective evaluation about the investigation process.

As suggested by Shenton (2004) and Lincoln and Guba (1985), confirmability was achieved by demonstrating that findings were directly driven by and from the data and not from my personal assumptions or imagination. This was achieved by a process of peer debriefing that involved advising faculty and colleagues, analysis, and comparison of a portion of the data set with findings (Tobin & Begley, 2004). In addition, the

researcher's subjectivity statement played a key role in the study's confirmability (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Shenton, 2004). Chapter 3 includes a comprehensive subjectivity statement that addresses my qualifications as a qualitative researcher, personal biases, as well as my personal and professional background and how it has impacted the study. Confirmability was also addressed with an audit-trail, illustrated by Figure 3-1, which depicts the steps undertaken in the data collection and analysis process to increase the readers' confidence in the findings (Shenton, 2004).

Limitations

The study was conducted using a qualitative methodology, which restricted the generalizability of findings. Recognizing that generalizability of findings is a decision or inference made by the reader and consumers of the study, rather than the research itself (Shenton, 2004). Thorough details about Muslim-American college students, participants and their background, and the context of the fieldwork was shared to ensure that practitioners will have sufficient confidence to decide whether findings can be applied to the setting and population of concern.

I caution practitioners and researchers that the findings described in Chapter 4 should not be generalized to the general Muslim-American college student population. This was a qualitative study focused on a small segment of the population. However, the depth of the research and details gathered through the long hours of interviews and focus group may help practitioners make the appropriate connections with the themes and the identity development model that emerged in this study.

Another limitation was represented in the difficulties I experienced to access the Muslim-American student populations in various universities. My attempts were met with resistance and suspicion. Recent and current sociopolitical developments, triggered

mostly by the 9/11 events, such as the Patriot Act, the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, and the backlash from terrorism are some examples of factors that have created skepticism and mistrust among Muslim-Americans, especially young adults, of any form of inquiry, fearing being trapped in national security investigations that may pin them for comments that may be perceived as unpatriotic (Abdo, 2005). Many MSA leaders refused to send my email request via their distribution list. One group in particular responded that in recent months, their members agreed to participate in a similar study, which turned out to be a fake study set-up by local enforcement. I was forced to refocus on one institution only, which I am familiar with and have personal contacts with its MSA membership and Muslim community.

I also suspected that the awkward gender dynamics between Muslim men and women would make it difficult for me to have access to female participants and conduct interviews with them in a confidential manner. I was prepared to seek the assistance of a female student to be present in the interviews to help create a comfortable space for female participants. My assumptions were incorrect. Although I had some difficulties to have enough female volunteers at the beginning, nine out of the 14 participants in this study were women. I was surprised by their openness and comfort level with me in the interviews. I offered to keep the door open in each of the interviews. I was surprised by their openness to the process. Many emphasized that they knew me and trusted me. Being part of the Muslim community may have helped create a comfort level with the participants, but being known for many years prior to conducting this study was critical to having access to this population. One of the students, AB, said: "I don't care that you

were a male because I know who you are, and you are Muslim. I trust you, and I've seen your children at the Masjid."

Researcher Subjectivity

I recently conducted two pilot studies during the past few years that have provided me with the necessary skills, knowledge, and insight to conduct this qualitative research study. These pilot studies addressed issues facing Muslim-American college students. The first study focused on career development issues and interventions for Muslim-American students. Findings showed that parental influences, prestige, and peer influences play a major in their Muslim-American college students' career decisions, which tend to be around healthcare, mostly medicine, and engineering fields. The second study focused on the social dynamics between male and female Muslim-American college students and revealed an invisible gender barrier created from cultural backgrounds, community expectations, and religious interpretations.

In addition, my personal connection with the Muslim community was both a strength and a challenge. As a Muslim male, I approached this study with an inquisitive eye, but I also allowed myself to use my insider knowledge to guide me in the process of developing questions, knowing what to observe, and most importantly building rapport with participants. However, my faith and cultural background as a Muslim may have presented some challenges as it was difficult not to draw conclusions too early in the process. Relying on a grounded theoretical framework helped me remain open to possibilities and wait for themes to emerge from the data. In fact, paying attention to my own subjectivity allowed me to discover new dynamics that I had not anticipated in the

past, such as the students' reluctance of being involved with the Muslim community in their early stages of development as young adults.

Despite my religious and cultural association with the Muslim-American population, I am still considered an outsider of this community. Although I am a Muslim, I do not identify as a Muslim-American as I am not a US citizen and my time and experiences in America are limited to my time as a college student and a university Student Affairs professional. My association with the community and outsider status helped achieve a much needed balance between objectivity and insider knowledge and familiarity when conducting this study. Through memo-writing, I continued to remind myself of these two positions to achieve assumption-control.

By relying on a central premise of grounded theory and theoretical sampling, I was able to also utilize anecdotal comparisons of my own experiences, knowledge, readings, and stories I have heard from others (Charmaz, 2006; Emerson, 1983; Glaser et al., 1967) to analyze the data and formulate a theory about Muslim-American college students. Grounded theory gave me not only the flexibility but also the validation of my own background as a useful part of the research process rather than an inconvenience.

In addition, I approached this study as a university student affairs professional, an element that has provided me with a rich body of knowledge about college students, issues that impact their development, and appropriate interventions for a wide range of student populations. My professional experience helped provide insight, breadth, and depth to my study. However, it may have also limited the impact of the data as sometimes being too close to the subject matter may cause important aspects of the population to be taken for granted and missed.

My challenge in this study was to find the ideal balance between using my own experiences and previously acquired knowledge as a Muslim and a university student affairs professional as well as remain aware of the risks and limitations of these experiences and knowledge. Maintaining objectivity but also validating my subjectivity when appropriate was a challenging balance to strike, but I was able to rely on my self-awareness and utilize grounded theory principles and strategies to overcome this challenge.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

Chapter 4 provides a synthesis of the themes that emerged from the data analysis of the interviews and focus group. Following the principles of grounded theory, it proposes a new identity development model that involves five stages of identity formation for Muslim-American college students, as illustrated in Figure 4-2. These identity formation stages are: reluctance, identification, immersion, negotiation, and integration. Although these stages may seem similar to the stages described in the ethnic and racial identity development models discussed in Chapter 3 (Cross, 1971, 1991, 1995; Helms, 1990, 1992, 1995; & Phinney, 1989, 1990, 1992), this new theoretical model integrates new identity dimensions that are unique to Muslim-American young adults, such as religiosity, gender dynamics, and sociopolitical issues. As discussed in Chapter 3, these themes and the emerging model, shown in Figure 4-4, cannot be generalized to the general Muslim-American college student population. However, they can provide an important framework to help understand the issues Muslim-American college students face in comparable university settings.

Chapter 4 also describes the identity dimensions and contextual factors that impact the identity formation of Muslim-American college students, which are appropriately framed by the model of multiple dimensions of identity described in Chapter 2 (Abes, Jones, & McEwen, 2007). The identity development model that emerged from the data, illustrated in Figure 4-4, is an integration of the salient identity dimensions, contextual factors, and stages of identity formation for Muslim-American college students.

Quotes and excerpts from the focus group and 11 of the 14 interviews conducted are shared to illustrate the themes discussed in order to best represent the participants' voices rather than paraphrasing their thoughts, feelings, and opinions. According to Cordin and Sainsbury (2006), it is important to use quotes when reporting findings of qualitative research in order to 1) present the discourse as a matter of inquiry, 2) present participants' own spoken words as evidence to explain themes, 3) illustrate major theme and findings using the participants' voice, 4) enable participants to tell their own story using their verbatim quotations, 5) deepen understanding of the participants and the issues they are presenting, and 6) enhance readability of the findings. Participants who were more articulate in their depictions of their experiences were used more often than others to best represent the themes that emerged and the overall story of Muslim-American college students.

As discussed in Chapter 3, my interpretations, past experiences, and existing knowledge as the principle investigator are also used as a valid perspective in the generation of quotes, themes, and emerging theory (Charmaz, 2000, 2006, 2009). Following the participants' preferences, their identities are protected using randomly assigned initials. For consistency purposes, the researcher was assigned the initials FD.

Identity Dimensions

Four identity dimensions have emerged as influential aspects of the identity development process and construction of personal and social identity for Muslim-American college students: religiosity, citizenship, culture, and gender. Based on participants' anecdotes, these dimensions appear to be the most salient in the way students view themselves within the context of their college experience.

Religiosity

The salience of religiosity and centrality of Islam in the participants' lives was evident by the many counts of how it affects their decision making and choices of activities that they partake in as well as the friends they choose to associate with. Whether participants described the importance of their spiritual growth as Muslims in the context of their past experiences, current situation, or wishes for the way they want to live their lives in the future, being a "good Muslim" is the ultimate goal for them. This was described by SB, a female Muslim-American sophomore, who said: "I always see myself Muslim first and try to be better every day." AB, another female junior, also said: "I am trying to get closer to Allah SWT. If you ask me what my career goal is, it would be to get into Jenna. That's my sincere goal."

Religion for these students is more than a spiritual practice, it is a way of life that ultimately impacts all other aspects of their lives, including their values, daily activities, relationships with others, life and career goals, and academic success. FZ, a female Muslim-American sophomore, credits the structured prayer schedule and states: "being Muslim, it's required for you to wake-up for Fajr, so you go to class on time. Islam teaches you discipline". It became evident early in the research process that Islam was considered the lens that these students used to make sense and meaning of their experiences, goals and aspirations, in everyday actions. Similar sentiments were expressed by other Muslim-American students.

SB Being a Muslim provides a way of life for you, the way you practice Islam, it provides a guide for you in every aspect of life. For me, being a Muslim is a way of life, not just a religion, in everyday dealings. You always connect it to the religion. You see it through Islam.

MH Islam is in the center and everything else revolves around it. Everything I do, my education, my family life, my personal life, everything revolves around Islam.

Based on the participants' statements, religion is a source of comfort for many Muslim-American young adults. They believe that it helps them cope with challenging situations, knowing that God has the ultimate influence over their trajectory and trusting in his wisdom and the outcome, regardless of how unpleasant it may be, as his ultimate decision for what is best for them. SB illustrated this point best by explaining: "being a Muslim helps my academics in a way because Islam teaches putting everything you have into something and leave the rest for God." SB continued to explain her contentment with the outcome of exams, whether positive or negative. She said: "...if I don't do well, I am not too upset because I know I gave it my all and it was up to God."

Religion also provides a guide for moral and ethical behavior for Muslim-American young adults. Many of the participants are very intentional about observing the rules, guidelines, and etiquette of Islam. Performing the five daily prayers seemed to be on the minds of most participants as the ultimate expectation for being a "good Muslim," which seemed to be a common goal among many of them. However, they were all aware of the importance of practicing beyond the ritual and seemed to understand the need for experiencing a strong connection with God. FZ explained: "I feel like if you're mindlessly praying or fasting or dressing a certain way, you're doing it just to show off to people that you're practicing, but you're not really doing it for God."

Although some of the participants struggle to live up to these expectations, the theme of persisting and finding a support system to stay on the "right path" and practice their faith was evident in many of their statements. EG, a female Muslim-American senior described that even though she does not consider herself too religious, she prays

five times a day, but sometimes forgets to pray. She said: "I try to get into the habit...I usually have class, but a friend told me about the prayer room here on campus, so we went there and prayed a few times."

A code of ethics or behavior was also mentioned as a central part of one's religiosity for most of these students; even the ones who felt that they did not fully adhere to the rules. Many of the participants described abstaining from alcohol, pork, and romantic and sexual relations as the ultimate test for them in college. EG described how Islam helps her refrain from certain activities when she said: "I am not religious at all. I am religious to the point that I have a connection with God." She also explained the continuous challenge that she experiences with others tempting and at times pressuring her to engage in activities that may not meet Islamic standards. She said: "I had friends who tried to have me break rules, and I said 'no,' I am not going to do that. They tried to get me to drink, they'd say how come you don't have a boyfriend, you should just try it...and I wouldn't do that." As described in Chapter 2, Muslim-Americans worry about maintaining their family traditions and honor, and fear abandonment of their faith and culture (Pipes & Duran, 2002). The anecdotes shared by EG and other participants support the notion that Muslim-American youth have to constantly negotiate and integrate these standards in their everyday lives while in college (Sirin et al., 2008).

As described by Peek (2005) in Chapter 2, religion is the most salient identity dimension for the majority of Muslims in America, and it appeared to be the most salient dimension for the majority participants in this study. Peek (2005) shared three stages of religious identity formation for Muslim-American college students that seemed to apply to the participants of this study: 1) religion as ascribed identity, 2) religion as chosen

identity, and 3) religion as declared identity. The majority of participants seemed to fall in one of these stages based on their maturity level and their year in college. Seniors seemed to be in the declared identity stage. Sophomores and juniors seemed to be in the chosen identity stage. Freshmen seemed to be in the ascribed identity stage. RZ said: "religion defines me a lot. A lot of things that molded me in the person I am have to do with the religious values I had instilled in me since I was young. I know what's wrong, what I should do and shouldn't do, what I should talk about and shouldn't talk about." RZ is clearly in the chosen identity stage, and seems to anticipate that one day he will reach the declared stage, but feels that for now, he wants to focus on fitting into the campus culture. He said: "at this point, I am trying to fit it, but inside I am a different person from the people I am trying to fit in with."

MH, another male student who has been immersed in the culture and religion of Islam from a young age, is clearly in the declared stage. He said: "I am just Muslim. That encompasses everything, everything else revolves around that, school life, everything, who I am is a result of that... I don't identify as American or Pakistani...I just characterize myself as a Muslim." MH's assertion about his religious identity and description of its centrality in his overall identity is clear in his next statement: "being Muslim means to be the best in all aspects, school, family life, continuously striving and struggling for the sake of Allah."

As described in Chapter 2, participants' level of religiosity intensifies as they move through the three stages of religious identity formation (Peek, 2005), but regardless of which level they are in, the centrality of their religiosity in their overall identity is

undeniable. Being a Muslim, and being a “good Muslim,” is the most important aspect of identity for Muslim-American college students.

Citizenship

The contrast between how quickly participants described their level of religiosity versus the long pauses they took when describing their affiliation with their citizenship and culture was very strong. One of the participants, MH, was speechless, took long pauses, and used the expression “I guess” several times when attempting to describe what being an American meant to him. Finally, he said “wow, I honestly never thought about that before.” He later added: “I am an American just because I was born here, raised here, and have citizenship.” When asked to define themselves, many participants shared that they are Muslims first, followed by their nationality of origin, such as Pakistani or Egyptian, and if they mentioned being an American as part of their identity, it was usually at the bottom of the list. Most of them described their American identity as purely accidental, a result of their parents immigrating to the US.

The experience of being aware and appreciative of the privilege of being an American was a reoccurring theme. Many cited their first visit to their country of origin as the first time they realized that they are Americans and are blessed of being so. For instance, FZ, one of the female participants, said: “when I visited Pakistan a couple of years ago, I realized the American part of me...it made me appreciate what we have here in America a lot more. More grateful of what I have as an American.” To these students, being an American is first connected to the freedom and opportunities they have for a better quality of life, especially compared to many of the countries their parents came from.

Most participants took the opportunity to also emphasize that they are Muslims first, or that they don't feel patriotic. AB explained that she is "grateful for being an American." She later added: "I know that I wouldn't have had the advantages and opportunities I have if it weren't for being an American or living in America. I am more grateful for being an American than being overly passionate about it though." BN, another female senior, also expressed her appreciation for being an American by stating: "I like that quote 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.' I like that, it means I can do what I want and not be persecuted for it...freedom." Similarly, FM, said: "I definitely love my country, I feel patriotic as an American. We go out and watch the fireworks on July 4th, it's a beautiful thing to see, I am definitely proud to be an American." The awareness and appreciation of the privilege of being an American was a prevalent theme, which is a possible indicator of Muslim-Americans' global competency and knowledge of the world outside of the US and the challenges that face societies in other countries, particularly their countries of origin or Muslim countries in general.

In contrast with their described lack of passionate nationalism, some participants were defensive about their American identity being questioned by others. Although they understand and can articulate the possible reasons behind these perceptions, which include the 9/11 events and their aftermath, they do point-out that they wish they did not have to prove or defend their American identity. SB explained: "non-Muslims probably think I am Muslim, I guess foreign, from somewhere else. I guess they don't think I am born here. It's not upsetting, but it's not totally ok either." SB was able to articulate the connection between Muslim and American values, emphasizing that being Muslim isn't

in direct opposition of being an American. She said: "...for non-Muslim friends, it's a surprise for them that I am an American and was born here...they are surprised that I speak English fluently...I am American too, born in America, all the values in America, I have that in me as well."

As described in Chapter 2, 63% of Muslims in America do not see a conflict between being a devout Muslim and the modern way of life in America (Pew Research Center, 2007). Yet, the dissonance that Muslim-American college students experience from their interactions with others makes them feel that they are not fully accepted in American society. This experience is similar to the experience explained in the dissonance stage in Helms' (1990, 1994, 1995) identity development model for Asian, Latino, and African-Americans, or the encounter stage in Cross' (1971, 1991, 1995) identity development model for African-Americans. The common theme among these stages is the encounter of a crisis event that causes dissonance in the individual's belief system and sense of belonging in society.

The discussion about American identity was also an opportunity for some participants to share their political views and disagreement with the US international policies and involvement in Muslim countries. Some were able to reconcile their American identity with America's international policies. For example, SB said "...patriotic wise, I wouldn't support everything America does or that goes on in America. Being an American, you have the right to criticize and to have a voice, and to stand-up against something that you think is wrong. I consider myself patriotic."

However, a few distanced themselves from their American identity, citing American foreign policy as the main reason. One comment stood out from RZ, a male

junior, who was unapologetic about his views. He said: "I don't really consider myself American. The way America is handling things right now, I am not really proud of that. I don't like being called Muslim-American. I am a Muslim. I am not an American. It's not something I would wanna be." These comments were common among participants who seemed to be going through a phase of immersion, in which they embraced their cultural and religious identity and began to disassociate themselves from the identity characteristics of the majority group. This trend parallels the stages of immersion/emersion described by Helms' (1990, 1994, 1995) identity development for Asians, Latinos, and African-Americans and Cross' (1971, 1991, 1995) identity development for African-Americans.

As described in the proposed identity development model in Figure 4-2 in Chapter 4, the expectation for Muslim-American college students is to move passed the immersion stage into negotiation and integration, in which they begin to resolve the experiences of dissonance caused by bicultural conflicts and reconcile being an American with being a Muslim and reach what Phinney (1990, 1992) referred to as achieved identity.

Culture

Most participants seemed to identify more with their cultures of origin and the countries that their parents are from than their American culture. For instance, EG explained her strong identification with her faith and culture of origin rather than American culture. She said: "American would be at the bottom of identities. Egyptian and Muslim are at the top. Even though I never lived in Egypt, I love the culture and people more." There are several reasons behind this strong association that was common among other participants. Some participants recalled tangible items such as

food. Others mentioned cultural elements such as the food and music. With these comments, EG and others were clearly showing signs of internalization and strong commitment to their heritage, as described by Helms (1990, 1994, 1995) and Cross (1971, 1991, 1995).

Later during the interview, EG took the conversation beyond food and music and commented about sociopolitical events and how they have strengthened her connection with her national heritage. She said: "after the Egyptian revolution, I was like yeah!...I am really proud of it." This sense of pride in one's national heritage and culture was common among many participants, especially those whose parents emphasized the culture at home through traditional food, music, language, and for some through frequent visits to the country of origin.

On the other hand, participants who had parents who emphasized Islam more than culture did not have a strong identification with their culture of origin. AB explained: "I like the food, the music is good once in a while...but, I don't feel that I have to identify with it. My parents didn't emphasize it. Their focus was 'we are Muslim first.' I feel that I am a Muslim-American." Most participants were proud of their culture and heritage, but some expressed sadness that they were not very connected with their cultural background. It was also obvious that most of the participants used culture and faith interchangeably at times, further emphasizing how intertwined the two are for Muslim-Americans. Some participants were able to articulate the benefits and drawbacks of each culture and how it impacted them as college students. For example, EG said: "American culture is competitive, so that drives me to study harder. In Arab culture, you are always taken care of, so that's why I don't ask questions a lot." EG and other

participants discussed what they felt were some of the negative aspects of their culture of origin, including the part of being sheltered and less independent, which in their opinion has set them behind compared to other Americans who are much more used to making their own decisions and communicating with others about their needs. EG illustrated this point best when she described the advantage others have by not having to deal with language issues in school.

EG Sometimes I feel that my American friends have an advantage because of language...they understand the testing way better. I always feel that they know the system better in college. They are very independent, so I always felt that because I was always overprotected when I was younger, I am not really ready to be that independent, the way my American friends are. The only people who understood are my Arab friends, they knew what we could and could not do. I guess because we can run back to our parents, when we go home over the summer. We're like a child again. But my American friends when they go back home, they can talk back at their parents or be very independent with their opinions. That's not something we can really do. So it's kinda interesting that my American friends can take more initiative and lead more, and that's something I don't really have, leadership skills, and that's something that has to do with my upbringing.

Although students like EG have shown signs of commitment, motivated by the gravitation towards stability and normalcy (Marcia, 1966, 1980), EG's comments are an example of students' continued journey through exploration, which at times is motivated by a central crisis or disequilibrium, or by a process of identification with elements of a culture that is familiar, as described by the proposed model of identity development for Muslim-American college students in Chapter 4. Phinney (1990, 1992) described this stage as moratorium, which is defined by a growing awareness of one's own ethnic identity.

Gender

As described in Chapter 2, the salience of social identities, such as gender and religion, depends on the privilege level that the individual enjoys (Jones & McEwen, 2000). Women tend to show very high salience of their gender identities, compared to men, due to their experiences of women in a male dominated world (Jones & McEwen, 2000). This is especially relevant in the context of the Muslim community. As such, the gender dimension was much more salient for women than men in this study, especially given the juxtaposing of their Muslim identity, which is sometimes visible through their choice of attire, over their gender identity. SB shared: “being a female in general gives you a stronger voice, I think people want to hear the female voice...being a Muslim...and wearing Hijab, people really want to hear what you have to say and respect your opinion and care about what you think.”

Whether they wear the Hijab or not, the female participants discussed the issue of attire as an important part of their identity. As described in Chapter 2, Muslim-American women on college campuses, especially those who chose to wear the Hijab, have often experienced prejudice from peers and faculty who have negative misconceptions about veiled women and view them as oppressed, submissive, or have limited ability to articulate their thoughts and feelings in English (Cole & Ahmadi, 2003). Although some Muslim men may experience similar challenges, Muslim women who choose to veil are more likely to experience them because they can be easily identified as Muslims. This has caused many of the female participants to be reluctant of wearing the Hijab when they first enter college. For instance, SB shared that she did not wear the Hijab when she first entered college, but later decided to wear it as she gathered more courage and

realized that it can strengthen her identity and spirituality, as well as give her a platform to impact others and the Muslim community.

SB Deciding to finally wear the Hijab made me happy because you can show that you are Muslim, you are female, and you are able to wear it and still have a life and go to college and be an active member of the community. I can still do all this and wear the Hijab and I don't have to sell myself to get anything. I can still attain everything without having to show my hair or anything. Because women a lot of times are hired for their beauty, they are looked at for their beauty instead of their knowledge or how they speak, I guess Hijab makes your voice stronger.

This was a reoccurring theme as most of the female participants described the process of moving from reluctance of wearing the Hijab or being around women who wear the Hijab for either fear of discrimination by non-Muslims or judgment by Muslims, towards a stage of integrated or achieved identity, in which they take action to commit to their chosen identity and begin to express it openly and in positive ways. This process mirrors the three stages of identity development models, which are described in Chapter 2: 1) internalization-commitment stage proposed by Cross (1971, 1991, 1995), 2) identity achievement proposed by Phinney (1990, 1992), and 3) integrated awareness proposed by Helms (1990, 1994, 1995).

The discussions with female participants seemed to focus on issues of attire, society's expectations, dealing with discrimination and injustice, life and career goals, and inter-gender dynamics with their male counterparts. Some of these discussions involved the issue of male privilege, which seems to be especially prevalent within the Muslim community. Many Muslim female college students seem to be subject to stricter rules by their parents than their male peers. SB explained this issue when she shared: "sometimes my friends and I wish we were guys because we feel they can do more than

us...and have more opportunities because of the freedom their parents give them or because Muslim society in general allows males to do more or be out more."

The discussion about the perceived inequality between Muslim men and women was a reoccurring theme in this study, which is usually caused by parents who seem to continue to apply the same cultural guidelines and rules they were raised with. SB continued to explain: "girls are always more conscious of their parents...parents are always more concerned about their daughters, so they would want a supervisor or someone older to go with them. There are more limitations for girls to do things." These limitations are often the result of parents' fears for their daughters' safety or of their daughters being involved in romantic relationships, which may be unacceptable for many Muslims. Parental expectations coupled with religious interpretations and various cultural norms may have resulted in awkward inter-gender dynamics between Muslim-American men and women.

Furthermore, all participants were eager to discuss the unique dynamics, challenges, and influences that impact the relationship and interaction between Muslim-American men and women. Participants described the relationship between men and women within the Muslim circles on campus as awkward, uncomfortable, and a source of anxiety for most of them. Many of them referred to an "invisible barrier" that exists between Muslim men and women and complicates the relationship between them. I was able to witness this "invisible barrier" first hand when I conducted an observation of an MSA general body meeting to prepare for this study. One of the first observations I made was of the physical separation between the genders that seemed to take place naturally as students entered the room. Men sat in the left section of the room and

women sat in the right section of the room. Later during the meeting, the barrier became more evident when the group of students decided to play a jeopardy game and divided the attendees into two groups by gender. The moderator introduced a new speaker who would lead the Jeopardy game. He happened to be a man, and he began the game by referring to the two groups as “brothers” and “sisters.”

When asked about this separation in meetings, both male and female participants described it as normal, natural, and comfortable. UR said “it's more comfortable to sit there and not have to be conscious of that, when...well when you're sitting with a guy you're like, uh, is he too close?” Although this separation is comfortable, and perhaps desirable for most Muslim-American young adults, the barrier between Muslim men and women is considered to be source of anxiety, discomfort, and at times tension that makes the interaction between them awkward.

The invisible barrier between men and women creates an added complexity that prevents them from sharing their concerns and discussing these issues freely. Thus, Muslim-American college students seem to be stuck in a vicious cycle in regards to their relationships with the opposite gender, which may lead to a prolonged state of foreclosed gender identity for both men and women. SB shared her thoughts about this issue and said: “we’re not as open or free with each other as non-Muslims would be with the opposite gender, there is definitely a gender gap...because of Islamic principles, they don’t want to get close to the other gender just to prevent themselves from doing anything wrong.”

The “invisible barrier” seems to even impact how Muslim men and women greet one another. Many participants discussed the simple act of greeting one another and

whether they should say Assalamu-Allaikum, the traditional Islamic greeting, to each other when they run into one another on campus. These awkward dynamics are typically related to the person's religiosity and his or her personal interpretations of religious expectations. Cultural norms, which may be intertwined with religious interpretations and family expectations also have an impact on these dynamics. Some Muslims believe that interactions between men and women should be limited. Some believe that shaking hands with the opposite gender is not permissible. Some Muslims believe that a Muslim woman cannot be alone with a Muslim man without the presence of another male family member, referred to as Mahram.

Applying these seemingly strict guidelines in American society can be challenging for Muslim-American young adults, but some have been able to negotiate the different standards in the two cultures they live in. For example, MH said: "if a girl put her hand out, I would still shake her hand, even though my personal belief is that I shouldn't shake hands with women. I do it for the greater good, not to be rude, and not to have to explain my religion." However, these strategies can be seen as a double standard by other Muslims of the opposite gender, who at times may not receive a greeting from their peers.

UR shared her thoughts on these dynamics and the double standard she has observed in relation to the interaction between Muslim men and women on campus. She said: "a lot of Muslim females complain that when Muslim guys walk passed them they don't say anything." UR explained that this behavior is offensive to Muslim women and said: "...when you know a male and he knows you're a Muslim and doesn't say Salam to you and doesn't even acknowledge your presence whatsoever, and then you

turn around and he's talking to a non-Muslim girl." UR's comment refers to a double standard that many of the participants expressed concerns about. Although many of them may be guilty of this double standard, they reported feeling aggravated by the fact that the same Muslim who did not greet them is seen interacting with comfort with non-Muslims of the opposite gender. UR said: "he didn't say Salam to me when he saw me, and I see him talking to non-Muslim girls on campus all the time."

Relative to the inter-gender dynamics issue, the study revealed that the central reason behind the self-described "anxiety" that Muslim men experience when being around Muslim women is related to whether or not the man is considering marriage, a major value for Muslims, and whether the woman he is talking to is a "potential prospect for marriage". The main reason many Muslim men can easily talk to and "hang-out" with non-Muslim women is that they don't see them as potential prospects for a romantic relationship or marriage. This was a major revelation of this study, even to me as Muslim male. What Muslim women interpret as a sign of "being ignored" is really a sign of 1) "respect," and 2) nervousness because Muslim men see them as "potential prospects" for marriage.

Marriage, or the desire to be married in the near future, was another common theme in the discussions with participants. Marriage is seen by Muslim-American young adults as an obligation, a way to protect one's self from sin, and the ultimate goal for many of them. Some participants referred to marriage as "half of the deen," referring to a popular Hadith that encourages Muslims to complete half of their religion by getting married. MH responded to my question about marriage by saying: "do I think of marriage? All the time. I've been thinking of marriage since middle

school...[laughter]...I'm not even kidding." He later described the reasons marriage was so important to him. He said: "the companionship, the sexual factor, especially here."

The complex relationship and interaction between Muslim males and females seems to also be influenced by other factors that relate to cultural and family backgrounds, levels of religiosity, level of engagement with the Muslim student association on campus, and the perceptions of other Muslims. Social skills also emerged as major influential factors on the inter-gender relations between Muslim-American men and women in college. Many of the participants disclosed that they felt a deficiency in their skills to connect, relate, and communicate with other Muslims of the opposite gender due to the 1) limited interactions they have had with people of the opposite gender throughout their lifetime and possibly 2) their foreclosed gender identities. AH shared: "Muslim men and women don't usually have for example dates...so they wouldn't have the experience getting into a relationship or trying to get into a relationship...when the time comes when they're thinking of getting married, they don't know what to do...they don't know what to do and how to act." He continued to explain that Muslim men seem to lack this skill with Muslim women only and appear "to do just fine with non-Muslim women." The issue of Muslim women being seen as potential prospects is central to this finding.

The discussions around the lack of social skills with members of the opposite gender among Muslim-American young adults brought-up an interesting question that was discussed at length during the focus group: if communication is strictly limited between Muslim men and women, and marriage is highly desired by Muslim-American young adults, how do marriage prospects meet in a Muslim-American community? MH

said: "marriage, is on every guy's mind...Helping people find ways to meet with prospects is something we need to work on and find a way." The question seemed to stump most participants during the focus group. Most participants shared that family interventions or introductions by friends can help. They also said that being an active member of MSA and holding an elected position can help create an environment in which they can meet people who may become marriage prospects. They all agreed that this was an area of growth for their community and that a solution needs to be reached within the boundaries of Islam.

A theoretical model, illustrated in Figure 4-1, emerged from the data to describe the complexities in the relationship and dynamics between Muslim-American men and women. The model shows the presence of a dynamic barrier that separates Muslim men and women that is directly influenced by identity filters: religiosity, culture, family background, gender identity, social skills, and desire to get married. The intensity and magnitude of the barrier between men and women depends on the salience of these identity filters. The model suggests that perceptions of others and concern for one's reputation, which also can be interpreted as fear of judgment by other Muslims, may be a principle reason for the invisible barrier that exists between Muslim-American men and women in college. The model also highlights the perceived double standard that exists in relation to the ease in interaction without barriers between Muslim-American young adults and non-Muslims of the opposite gender.

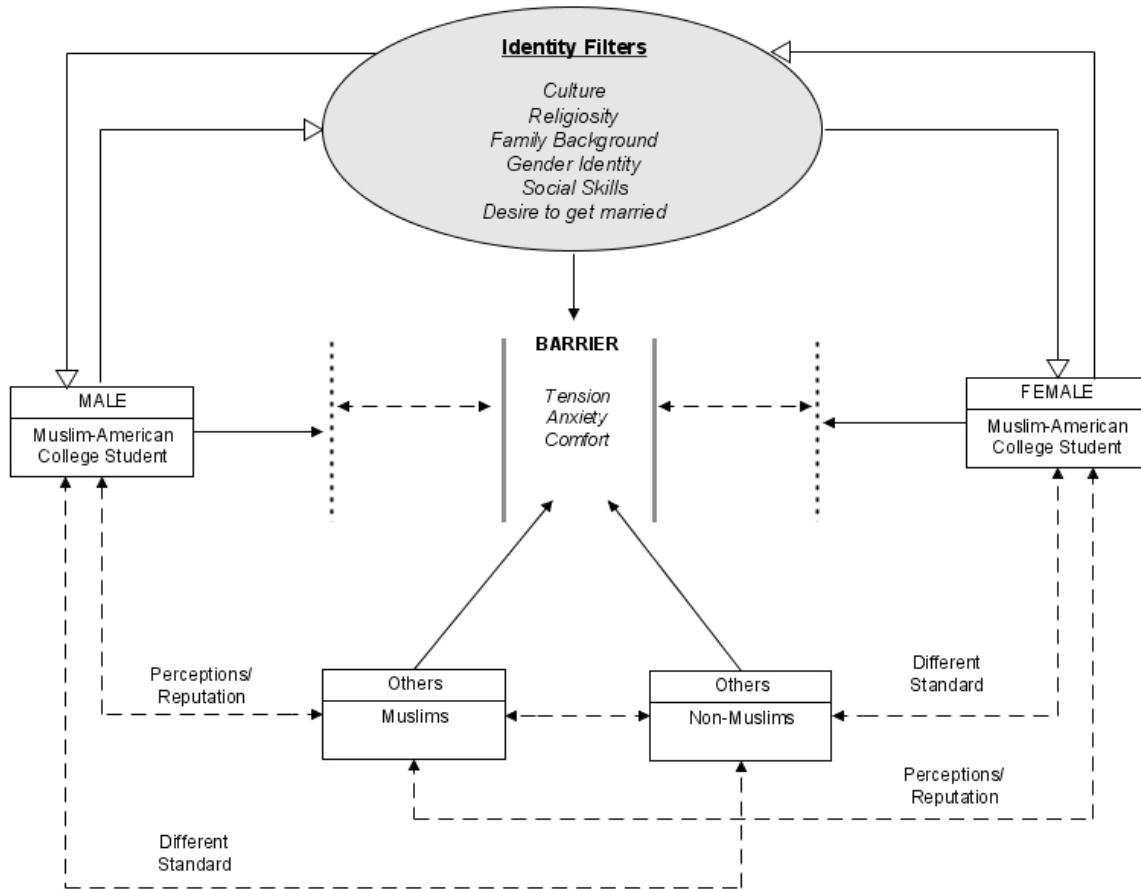


Figure 4-1. Model of Inter-gender dynamics among Muslim-American college students

While conducting member checking, I shared these observations and the inter-gender model depicted in Figure 4-1 with the participants who attended the focus group. Interestingly, men and women sat in separate sections of the room. Many of them giggled when I pointed out some of the observations about the barrier between men and women and the awkwardness that they experienced when they interacted with one another. The questions and comments I received during the discussion confirmed the findings of the study and exposed a genuine interest among Muslim-American students to decrease the intensity of the barrier. All participants agreed that the barrier “has gotten out of control,” but they all expressed a desire to maintain a certain level of

separation as they believe in its spiritual and cultural benefits. One of the unintended consequences of this study is that it may provide a platform for Muslim-American young adults to continue discussion about these inter-gender dynamics.

Contextual Factors

As discussed in Chapter 2, the salience of identity dimensions depends on contextual factors that have the potential to greatly influence one's identity (Abes, Jones, & McEwen, 2007). In this study, several contextual factors have emerged as influential forces in the identity formation of Muslim-American college students. These contextual factors are: family, 9/11 impact, Muslim on Muslim prejudice, inter-gender dynamics, peer support through MSA, and university support.

Family

Family has emerged as a major influential factor in the identity formation of Muslim-American young adults. All of the participants referenced their families' influence on their upbringing and impact on their values and decisions. As discussed in Chapter 2, Muslim parents face the challenge of raising their children within western customs and values that challenge their beliefs and way of life (Pipes & Duran, 2002). They worry about maintaining their family traditions and honor, and fear abandonment of their faith and culture (Pipes & Duran, 2002). Therefore, many families tend to emphasize religiosity and Islamic values when raising their children, and at times may be overly strict in doing so. AB recalled her experience and said: "I grew-up in a very strict family, we didn't have music, we didn't have pictures on walls. I grew-up listening to the Back Street Boys without my parents finding out...but all in all, I know they were strict for my own benefit."

Many of the participants spoke about their families' influence on their identity in terms of their own level of religious conservatism. Those who were raised in somewhat conservative and strict environments seemed to be conservative themselves, and those who were raised in less religious or more secular environments seemed to reflect those values as well. For example, FZ shared that her conservative family has made her become conservative. She said: "My family is conservative and religious, so that has impacted me and made me conservative." On the other hand, SB shared that she was raised in a more secular environment, and that has impacted the person she is today as well. She said: "my parents were not very extremely conservative Muslims...that kinda contributed to who I am. Because of them, I am able to not judge people....so that really contributed to me being who I am." She also discussed how she consulted her mother when she decided to wear the Hijab. She said: "I talked to my mom about wearing the Hijab...she wears the Hijab too, but she never told me to wear it. She was kinda reluctant at first."

Some Muslim parents are generally pleasantly surprised to see their children begin to grow religiously and spiritually, and even attempt to support this process with additional resources. For example, EG shared her father's reaction when he learned about her involvement in religious activities on campus. She said: "we had a Muslim study on Friday, a Halaqa...my father found out about it and he was really proud and happy, he started giving me books to read after that." However, SB's mother's reaction to her decision to wear the Hijab was very common. Muslim parents are sometimes reluctant to see their daughters wear the Hijab or their sons grow beards as they fear for their safety and being subject to discrimination and harassment.

The intersection between religiosity, family background, and culture was apparent in the stories of students who did not have any religious upbringing. Some participants shared that because their parents did not really emphasize religion in their youth, they were not being religious also, and wished their parents had instilled religious values at an earlier age. BN shared her regret of not being raised in a more religious household. She said: "when my parents were together, we practiced it [*Islam*], but when they got a divorce, I stayed with my mom. She didn't really practice. Now I don't feel comfortable with practicing any religion...I feel like I've lost all of it...I don't practice it now, which makes me feel bad." RZ also shared his experience of growing-up in a non-religious household: "what made me leave the Islamic lifestyle was my old friends, and my parents...they didn't care what I did, if I became religious or not."

In addition to having an impact on the students' values and morals, families, especially parents, also provided a source of motivation for success for their children, even when they are not present. EG described how she could hear her father's voice in her head when she did not want to study. She said: "sometimes I just sit there and don't want to study, then I heard my dad's voice in my head saying 'you should study,' so that motivates me." In addition, the expectation and pressure to succeed academically translated into very limited career paths for Muslim-American young adults. This was discussed at length with the participants who shared that their families and the Muslim-American community in general expected them to pursue careers in Medicine or Engineering. As discussed in Chapter 2, the fields of Medicine and Engineering combined account for one third of the Muslim-American community (Pipes & Duran, 2002). This trend is widely known among Muslims-Americans. AB explained her

experience with this expectation when she said: “if you’re Muslim and you’re studying social sciences, oh man, people would be...‘you’re brown and you’re doing social sciences?’ What are you doing? You should be doing medicine.’ Typical of our community.” Most of the parents of Muslim-American young adults are first generation immigrants from developing countries that have a few lucrative and prestigious careers, which explains the intense focus on Medicine and Engineering. EG and RZ explained how their academic majors and career paths were determined by their parents’ perceptions of what is lucrative and prestigious in American.

- EG You want the stability and the money, they don’t really see other jobs being prestigious, they just see those tow, medicine and Engineering, and also Lawyer. If I had my choice, I would be a psychologist and do therapy, but the whole doctor part, that’s more my parents. If I’m a psychiatrist, I won’t just subscribe medication, I would still do therapy.
- RZ I’ve always wanted to do Pharmacy. I wanted to go into something in science, and the financial thing is a big thing too. My parents always wanted me to do something pre-med and pre-health track, something like Doctor, Engineering, something prestigious, I guess. I guess they realize what kind of opportunity they gave us by coming here, so they want us to take advantage of it.

Many participants discussed how their parents continue to be a guiding force in their lives, even if they no longer live with them. Based on the participants’ anecdotes, it seems that Muslim-American young adults rely heavily on their parents’ advice and guidance for major life decisions, such as choosing to wear the Hijab, choosing a career, and even marriage. Although participants at times struggle with the high expectations and interference with their parents in their life decisions, they seem to understand it, rationalize it as being for their own good, and submit to the fact that their parents are to be respected and obeyed, which are central values in Islam and its associated cultures.

9/11 Backlash - Prejudice, Stereotyping, and Bullying

Muslim-Americans have been subject to increased scrutiny, stereotyping, and prejudice since 9/11 and its aftermath (Britto & Amer, 2007; Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; L. Peek, 2005; Sirin et al., 2008; Williams & Vashi, 2007). Due to Islam's association with terrorism within the current post 9/11 sociopolitical environment, as well as the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the number of incidents of prejudice, racism, hate crimes, and hate speech against Islam and Muslims has increased (Muedini, 2009). For many of the participants in this study, who happened to be between the ages of nine and 13 when 9/11 happened, they have experienced forms of bullying and stereotyping at a very young and vulnerable age, which may have caused some of them to question their identity and even disassociate themselves with Islam. BN shared her experience as a victim of post 9/11 bullying.

BN It was great when I was kid, I was really happy, I used to celebrate Ramadan. Then ten years ago, that thing happened [*referring to 9/11*], and everyone just decided to hate Muslims, so I started shying away from that a bit. I had a Muslim friend in middle school, both of us got a lot of heat from that. That was the last close thing I had with Muslims. I just started shying away from it... in my senior year, some guy said 'you can't even read...oh...I guess you can read because terrorists have to read instructions on a bomb. At least the Nazis did something right, they should've burnt the Quran too.' That was terrible; it knocked me back into my shell.

Similar experiences of harassment and bullying were shared by several other participants, and most said that the incidents were either not reported or not dealt with appropriately by the school teachers and administrators. Clearly, these experiences had a great impact on the participants' self-confidence and identity development, and may have caused them to be anxious about entering a new environment in college. Victims of bullying may suffer from difficulties with family relationships and peer relationships.

They tend to have low self-esteem and lack self-confidence and assertiveness (Connell & Farrington, 2000). They usually question their identity and how they fit in their environment and society. Bullied children also often tend to suffer from some disturbed personality and have a difficult time trusting others. They are always cautious and careful with what they say and what they do (Connell & Farrington, 2000).

Bullying occurs when a less powerful person is oppressed by a more powerful person. It may take the form of physical, verbal, or psychological attack. When bullying occurs, there usually is an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim (Connell & Farrington, 2000). Bullying incidents typically happen during a prolonged period of time between the same people, such as physical violence, threatening and teasing, intimidation, extortion, stealing or destruction of possessions, ridiculing, name-calling, and social exclusion (Connell & Farrington, 2000). Being a victim of bullying correlates with depression, anxiety, and other mental health disorders. Bullied children and adolescents suffer from these mental health problems because of chronic adversities and failure to receive social support from their social environment (Connell & Farrington, 2000). Thus, further research on the impact of post 9/11 bullying on school age Muslim-American children is of critical importance.

As anti-Islam rhetoric increased in recent years, especially since the 2008 election of Barack Obama, a son of a Muslim man from Kenya, as President of the United States, participants reported experiences of more hate and prejudice on campus. Although these acts were not in the form of individually bullying, they still have an impact on the psychological well being of Muslim-American young adults, as illustrated by the participants' anecdotes.

This study coincided with the controversy surrounding a church near campus that displayed signs that read “Islam is of the Devil” and had its members wear shirts that displayed the same message. The pastor of this church declared a day of Quran Burning, which attracted national attention and placed some of the participants of the study in the center of the controversy. SB shared the difficulties she experienced as a result of the actions of this pastor. She said: “this last year was hard because of the Terry Jones [*the pastor of the church*] and Dove Church [*the name of the church*] controversy. That made me angry. But the response of the community was great and made us feel safer...It made me stronger because when you have to deal with people who attack who you are, it makes you wiser and stronger.”

AB shared similar sentiments about these incidents actually making her stronger and expressed her gratitude for the non-Muslims who support and defended the Muslim community. She said: “we’re going through a time now where Islam is the new black. It feels like we’re being pounded on now. It really hurts my feelings as a Muslim-American because they are dehumanizing what I believe in. It makes you stronger though, and prouder of being a Muslim. The support from the non Muslim community ... made you feel that you’re not just a Muslim, you’re a Muslim-American.” EG shared a similar story about her friends’ support. She said: “...my friends and even my roommates were very supportive, they even had shirts that said ‘Islam is of the Heart;’ they couldn’t believe that someone would do that.”

The students’ ability to make meaning out of tragic situations was quite remarkable. Often, they discussed how these incidents taught them about the diversity of their community, or that there are other good people in this community ready to

support, or made them realize that they are responsible for their community's public perception. For example, MH explained: "all the hostility we've experienced against Islam, I like it because it's a reminder that I am not doing my job to let people know what Islam really is. I don't care what they do, burn the Quran or whatever, I can't control that. But I can control what I do....It's my responsibility to let people know what Islam is about."

The effects of hate crimes, prejudice, discrimination, and bullying against Muslim-Americans as a result of the 9/11 backlash deserve further research and exploration. This study revealed that Muslim-American youth feel a lack of belonging as Americans, are always on the defensive about their faith and culture, and at times even fearful for their safety and the safety of their families and friends. AB discussed the stress that hate speech and acts have caused her and her family. She said: "*the Dove [referring to the name of the church]* thing was difficult to deal with...It was actually fine, but just hard because my family was stressed and afraid that this church was going to try to kill us. My parents called the police station and gave them my phone number and address in case something happens. They were really afraid."

The participants' comments show that fear for one's safety and the safety of one's family continues to exist even a decade after 9/11 among Muslim-Americans as a result of the 9/11 backlash. In addition to the concern for safety, participants discussed the impact of these incidents on their morale and well being. Some may have felt sad when reading disparaging remarks about their faith or culture, as described by FM. others may have felt marginalized because of how they are portrayed in the media, as described by EG. Even non-intentional jokes that are based on stereotypes may cause

psychological harm among Muslim-American young adults, as described by EG's second comment.

EG It does make me angry that some people are so ignorant about Islam, just to see it in the media like that; every movie you watch, they have a Muslim guy who's a terrorist, with a big beard.

FM There are several from the college newspaper and outside, they came to interview me and others; when I actually went to see the article online, the comments were so hostile and horrible. It made me feel very bad that people don't understand the religion very much.

EG Sometimes my friends would make the stereotypical joke...‘oh what’s your uncle doing?’ Sometimes it’s funny, and other times it’s like ‘ok, just stop,’ because that’s the only joke you hear. It was like that in high school too... it was just when they try to be funny. They would be...‘the gas prices went up, oh tell your uncle to lower prices.’ It wasn’t too bad, they weren’t believing in the stereotype really, but it still made me feel bad.”

Whether they are victims of bullying, hate crime, hate speech, harassment, or an intentional stereotype-based joke, Muslim-American youth have one common experience and feeling: “I don’t belong.” As described by EG, people insist to ask them where they are from, assuming that they must be from somewhere else. EG said: “with other Americans, they still think you’re foreigner...I was actually born American. When people ask me where you are from, I say ‘Tampa,’ and they say ‘no really,’ and I say ‘uhh...Egypt!’ Then they ask, ‘you are a citizen?’”

When they are not asserting their American identity, Muslim-American young adults find themselves having to defend and represent their faith and culture of origin. SB explained this point when she said: “there is pressure because everything that you do you have to keep in the back of your mind that you are carrying the weight of your religion and your people; when people see what you do, they kinda connect it to Islam, so you have to be conscious of how you carry yourself or behave, so there is pressure.”

FM explained how she had to defend her religion numerous times on and off campus. She said: "I often have to defend my religion and its teachings. I've had a number of people come to me at the bus stop or school and question me about what I believe."

One of the critical findings of this study is that the backlash from 9/11 and its aftermath has created a hostile environment for Muslim-American young adults in which they feel 1) traumatized from past experiences of post 9/11 bullying as school children, 2) afraid for their personal safety on and off campus, 3) unwelcomed and unwanted in their own country, 4) forced to defend their faith and culture of origin, 5) forced to persuade others and assert their American citizenship and identity, and 6) humiliated and marginalized by the constant micro-aggressions directed towards Islam and Muslims through jokes and misrepresentation in media. Clearly, 9/11 and its aftermath have had a significant impact on the experience and identity formation of Muslim-American college students.

Muslim-on-Muslim Prejudice

In addition to dealing with prejudice and discrimination from non-Muslims, participants discussed dealing with prejudice from "their own" also. Typically occurring in high school, this Muslim-on-Muslim phenomenon is usually based on judgment or criticism that is usually committed by those who are more religious and practicing towards those who are less religious. None of the participants shared their experiences as the perpetrators of these acts. Rather, they discussed how being victims of their Muslim peers' judgment may have intimidated them and kept them from exploring their Muslim identity further. For example, EG shared her experience of being judged by other Muslims for not wearing the Hijab. She said: "in high school...there were other

Muslims who were very judgmental and would say ‘oh she doesn’t wear Hijab’ and make up rumors about it, ‘oh she’s dating someone.’”

Similar feelings were shared by BN who experienced this type of judgment from her relatives. She said: “I visited my uncles and cousins in Colorado...I would put a good amount of money that I was judged, they probably said ‘she doesn’t practice religion, she doesn’t pray, she shows so much skin, she’s loud’...I was so miserable.” This contextual factor is highly related to the dimension of religiosity as most of the judgment that Muslim-American young adults tend to experience from their peers is about their level of knowledge and practice of Islam. Those who do not outwardly “appear Muslim” or do not seem to know the proper Islamic etiquette, tend to feel marginalized by the Muslim community on campus.

The majority of comments related to this issue came from female participants, possibly due to the Hijab and the outward expression of religiosity among Muslim women, which may make it easier for them to be the target of judgment and prejudice by other Muslims. SB said: “women tend to be more cliquish and gossipy, so sometimes it’s hard to connect if you’re a Muslim at a different level, religious wise. We have more work to do at MSA in this area.” Several participants shared similar concerns about MSA being perceived as exclusive and agreed that more efforts need to be invested in order to make it more inclusive of all members of the campus community. EG explained how she felt about MSA during her freshman year and how intimidated she felt about joining the organization and connecting with other Muslims who seemed much more religious and knowledgeable about Islam than she was.

EG Some of the Muslims who were in private school [*Islamic school*] all the way through high school, they kinda run their own cliques; they usually start gossiping

about other people; they say who practices more and who prays more. It almost becomes a religion about rules vs. a religion about praying to God. They look at girls and say oh look at how she dresses, or oh, she didn't come to prayer on this day so we're going to talk about her. So they kinda view me as someone who doesn't practice a lot and doesn't wear the Hijab. MSA was totally closed. I didn't feel like I could join at first...I had to prove that I am a practicing Muslim.

Muslim-on-Muslim prejudice was a surprising revelation of this study, indicating another complexity that Muslim-American young adults have to navigate while in college in addition to the other stressors already discussed: family dynamics and the 9/11 backlash again Muslims in America. Further research about the psychological impact of this phenomenon is needed in order to determine the appropriate interventions and research to assist Muslim-American college students successfully address this issue.

Peer Support - MSA

Student organizations on college campuses are known by higher education researchers and practitioners to play a critical role in the development of minority students by providing them with a network of support, lifetime friendships, and mentoring relationships that impact their social adjustment, academic success, and persistence in college (Swail et al., 2003). As such, this study reveals the tremendous impact MSA has on the lives and experiences of Muslim-American college students. MH shared MSA's impact on his experience when he said: "It gives me a sense of belonging. Without MSA, my experience here would have been poor. That's my social outlet....MSA has fulfilled a need in the community that the mosques should have."

MSA was found to help students' social skills. FZ expressed her gratitude for MSA helping her be more social and more open with others. She said: "At first, I was shy and quiet. Now, I am more friendly, open, and involved...I am not very social, but being involved with MSA has helped me be more social."

MSA was also found to provide Muslim students with an environment that helps them “stay on the right track,” referring to staying on the religious path and refraining from behaviors that contradict Islamic values. RZ explained how lacking the support of an organization like MSA has led him off the “right track.” He said: “I became religious for a while, then I fell out of it and began doing what Americans do. It was hard to keep-up with it with no support group.” FZ explained that MSA can play the role of support system during the critical transition to adulthood in college.

FZ When you’re on your own, you have a lot of freedom, and your parents aren’t there to watch over you. So it’s kinda like a transition to adulthood. So you have to control yourself. Some of my friends took the wrong turn. So, your environment affects who you become. Alhamdulillah, here we have MSA, so that gives me the environment that help me stay on the right track and not do something wrong. If you’re in an area where there aren’t a lot of Muslims, you are more likely to get lost.

The majority of participants shared similar sentiments and affirmed the role that MSA has played in providing a sense of comfort and serving as a support system and home away from home. SB said: “being involved in MSA gives you life lessons and also makes you wiser. The most growth I have done is through MSA... MSA brings Muslims together...It gives you an environment with people like you. It helps you grow together spiritually, gives you a support system.” FM shared similar sentiments about MSA helping her build relationships with other Muslims. She said: “I got involved with MSA since my first semester here. Being involved definitely opened me up to the Muslims on campus.”

This study revealed that Muslim-American young adults look at the strength of the MSA as a factor in their decision making process when considering the university they want to attend. SB said: “when I was thinking of coming here, I was impressed, just to

see MSA be such a big and successful organization; it's one of the top 5 organizations at the university. To see that we [*referring to Muslims*] have such a big budget ...that in this country, a Muslim organization could be so prosperous, teach about Islam, so that was one of the most positive things that helped my decision to come here."

The MSA is clearly an agent of change in the experience of many Muslim-American college students and should be supported by the university as a critical intervention and resource that helps facilitate the identity formation of Muslim-American college students and address the various complexities and difficulties they experience while in college. Further research on the psychological impact that MSAs have on Muslim-American young adults is necessary to determine the appropriate interventions from university faculty and administrators.

University Support and Accommodations

Participants in this study were very complimentary of the resources and support they receive from their university. They specifically mentioned tangible examples such as the large budget the MSA receives from the university, the prayer room they've been provided in the library, and the ability to reserve rooms at the union building for prayer meetings. They have also given examples of top administrators visiting MSA meetings to listen to their concerns and offer support. FM said: "the university has done a great job; included Muslims in the UF populations; there are prayer rooms in the library, I use that every single day. We have prayer rooms in the union. There is a prayer room in Broward Hall. They actually acknowledge us."

Several participants shared similar statements about their appreciation for the prayer space they have and the support for MSA by the university. FZ said: "there is so much accommodation and flexibility on campus. We're given rooms for our prayers and

flexibility around classes.” Similarly, EG said: “the university already has MSA and ACA, I think that helps a lot. They offer prayer rooms...I didn’t even know that MSA was so big on campus. More information about the groups during orientation would help.”

As mentioned in the subjectivity statement in Chapter 3, my Muslim background may have created potential challenges in the research process, but also possible benefits in that my knowledge of the faith and associated cultures allowed for deeper questioning and probing and not accepting answers at surface level. I was aware that being grateful for what one has is a treasured value for Muslims, which is often manifested in the Arabic statement “Alhamdoulilah,” which means “Praise to God.” Many participants used this expression when describing their appreciation for what the university has provided to them. However, when I probed further, additional requests and potential concerns became evident.

I was aware that the university had granted Muslim students a permanent prayer space in the library, but I also knew that it was the size of a closet without proper washroom access, which Muslims need to perform Wudhu before prayer. As I probed further, participants began to share that they would appreciate a more appropriate and larger prayer space. Because religiosity is the most salient dimension for these students, the need for a permanent prayer room, that’s bigger than a closet size room, outfitted with special washrooms that allow for the appropriate Wudhu ritual to be performed was consistently mentioned in most interviews and discussed at length during the focus group. AB said: “what would be really cool is if they can provide us with those things that you can make Wudhu in, because that would help keep the bathrooms cleaner and it would make it easier for the Muslim students.” SB said: “I know that in

other universities there are permanent prayer rooms, they even have bathrooms set up where you can do Wudhu...also, an Islamic Studies program would be really helpful as well. It would provide a center on campus, kinda like the Hillel, a Muslim academic type of center."

AB and other participants shared their wish for more Halal options on campus. AB said: "one thing they can do is not to make it so hard to have Halal food on campus or at events." Participants also discussed the need for more faculty and staff who are familiar with their faith and heritage. Hiring more Muslim faculty and staff would send a message to Muslim-American students about the university's commitment to diversity, and to their needs specifically. AB said: "the university could find more professors who can be advisors to Muslim-Americans." Some additional accommodations with class schedules and exams during the month of Ramadan were also discussed, as was described by AB who said: "the hardest thing, whenever is Ramadan, it's really hard to get through school. That's one thing that the University can do is to make exceptions for exams during Ramadan".

Overall, participants seemed very pleased with the support they received from the university. Many discussed the controversy surrounding the Dove Church and its pastor Terry Jones. They expressed their gratitude for the way the university handled the situation. SB said: "support from the university has been getting better as time progresses. They were always supportive of MSA and during the dove church controversy, they set-up a press release for us. They respect us as an organization. They care about how Muslim students are treated on their campus. They want to make sure that no one is insulting us. They are always trying to reach out to us."

On the other hand, some participants shared their concern about the university's inconsistencies when responding to hate speech or hate crimes on campus. MH explained his dissatisfaction in this area when he said: "I have this notion that the university administration is fearful that if they support MSA or the Muslims, they're going to get some backlash...I asked someone in the administration in the past 'why wouldn't you send a campus email about the Islam is of the Devil thing, because you sent something about the Nazi thing.' She was blatant and said 'honestly, there is a thing that happened in the past when we sent something in support of MSA, and we had to retract it'...there is definitely a double standard there. It's my right to be defended just as everyone else...I just wish they were stronger. I feel like when it has something to do with us, they are walking on egg shells."

MH's statement describes a real dilemma that universities have had to grapple with in recent years. As described in Chapter 2, Islam's association with terrorism since 9/11 and the current sociopolitical environment, especially after the election of Barack Obama as President of the United States, has made it acceptable for the mainstream media and the general public to use derogatory terms to define the Muslim community (Abdo, 2005). The participants felt that it has also become risky or politically dangerous for non-Muslims with authority, power, and privilege, such as university administrators, to defend Islam and Muslims publically. The contribution of this study is that these revelations will help university administrators understand how they are perceived when dealing with hate crimes and speech that involves Islam and Muslims on their campuses and ensure consistent practices when responding to these issues.

Five Stages of Identity Development

As illustrated in Figure 4-2, five stages of identity formation have emerged from the data collected from the interviews and focus group to describe the identity development of Muslim-American college students in the context of their lives on campus. These five stages are: reluctance, identification, immersion, negotiation, and integration. Each one of stages describes the way that Muslim-American college students see themselves and how they relate to the various aspects of their identity, the Muslim community on campus, and the university as a whole. The stages do not represent a linear progression of identity formation. While most Muslim-American college students tend to enter college at the reluctance stage, some may have gone through that stage in earlier years in high school or prior depending on the contextual factors in their environment, and therefore arrive to college at a more advanced stage such as immersion or negotiation, and therefore have no difficulty getting involved with the campus MSA or building relationships with Muslim-American peers. It is also possible for students to stay in one stage only for a long period of time or move back to reluctance after experiencing other stages.

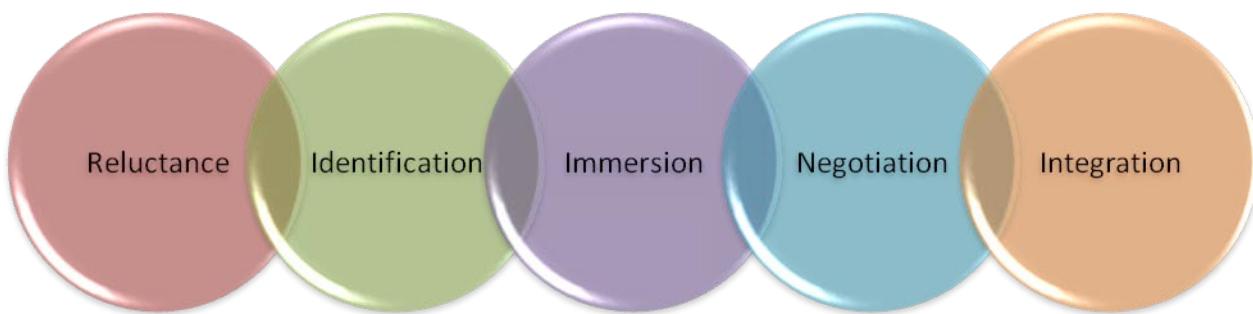


Figure 4-2. Identity development stages for Muslim-American college students

Reluctance

The study revealed that during their first year in college, most Muslim-American college students are typically reluctant from engaging in discussions about Islam, Muslim students or groups, the Muslim community in general, and especially the Muslim Student Association (MSA) on campus. Some may choose to associate with cultural or ethnic groups, such as the Pakistani Student Association or Arab Cultural Association, but most purposefully avoid events, activities, MSA informational booths, and conversations associated with Islam. AB shared her experience in her freshman year by saying: "I decided that I will never get involved with MSA. They are all wack." This sentiment was common among the majority of participants. Although a few of the participants reported actually seeking out the MSA when they first arrived to college, they also reported having experienced a similar phase of reluctance earlier in their lifetime, usually in high school.

There are several reasons that may explain the motivation behind this reluctance phenomenon. Some Muslim-American students entering college are not very religious or do not strongly identify with the religious aspect of the Muslim community, and therefore are fearful of being judged by their peers for their lack of practice or knowledge about Islam. This level of reasoning was apparent in many of the interviews conducted in this study. For example, EG said: "Muslim people are very judgmental. Just because I don't wear the Hijab, they assume things about me, so I just don't want to deal with it...and keep to myself." These sentiments were common among women who did not wear the Hijab and feared not being accepted by Muslims who do observe religious practices.

The fear of being judged by fellow Muslims is a running theme that transcends the reluctance stage. It is a factor in the identity formation process, particularly in the inter-gender dynamics, which is discussed in Chapter 4. This phenomenon is even more prevalent among female Muslim-American college students, especially those who do not wear the Hijab or do not adhere to more conservative practices of Islam. UR, a female student who doesn't wear Hijab said: "other Muslims see us sometimes as loose women and make assumptions about our character." This type of perception among many Muslim-American college students drives their reluctance tendencies and their decision to avoid Muslim groups on campus.

Furthermore, many Muslim-American college students may choose to avoid their association with Islam and the Muslim community during their first year in college due to the fear of harassment and discrimination from non-Muslims. Many of the students interviewed in this study cited incidents of bullying and teasing in high school, middle school, and even elementary school. Although they feel more able to handle such situations as young adults, they may have a desire to have a more positive experience in college, free of discrimination and prejudice. Therefore, they are reluctant of being associated with Islam or Muslim groups to avoid being the target of more harassment in college. These sentiments were expressed by several participants, including SB who shared her reluctance experience within the context of her decision to not wear the Hijab during her first year in college. She said: "it was just a feeling of embarrassment of being who you are, especially after 911...wearing the Hijab was such a big deal...you're telling people you're Muslim, you're a target, you are a symbol of Islam. Some people don't want to see that symbol."

While most participants who were not very religious emphasized that they did not violate core Islamic values and guidelines, some reported living what they referred to as the American lifestyle. RZ, for example, explained his reluctance experience and lifestyle choice. Other participants shared similar sentiments and recognized that Islamic values were still within them during this reluctance phase. Although they were not religious during this phase, some elements of faith, such as the awareness of the presence of God, have had an impact on their moral and ethical conduct.

RZ When I got to college, I was living the normal life like an American, in first and second year...drinking and partying and all of that. I was going out every weekend and even every day, going out with friends, drinking, and smoking. I didn't make a lot of Muslim friends during the first two years. The only thing that kinda held me back from doing more was knowing that God was judging me. It's not like I completely forgot about it. It was instilled in me in high school. It was still in the back of my head, but not enough to influence me not to do anything about it.

The experience of fearing judgment from both sides, Muslims and non-Muslims, can be felt quite intensely by some Muslim-American young adults and may cause the reluctance phase to last for a very long time, possibly the entire four years of college and beyond. The combination of feeling inadequate around Muslims and discriminated against by non-Muslims due to one's association with Islam, which sometimes can be the result of something as simple as one's first name, can be damaging to a person's self-esteem, growth, and identity formation. In the following dialogue, BN presents a strong case of how these factors can cause a severe case of reluctance that may prevent a student from ever moving forward in his or her identity formation process.

BN I didn't interact with Muslim students on campus. It was on purpose. I feel bad, I feel like they are all proud of being Muslims and they know so much about Islam, and I know nothing about it. I fear being judged, so I stay in my bubble. I like my bubble. It's where I feel comfortable.

- FD The fear of being judged must be intense to want to stay in your bubble. Tell me more about this.
- BN I feel bad because I know nothing about Islam and I can't get involved, so I stay in my bubble. I feel guilty because I am sure it would make my dad happy. May be if I knew it more, I would be able to connect with them [parents].

FD Have you tried to go to any MSA activities?

BN I wouldn't even go to an MSA meeting because I don't want to be judged, by both Muslims and non Muslims. I don't know how to connect with Pakistanis, Indians, Middle Eastern. It's hard to feel being judged by both sides, so I hide in my bubble.

FD I see. What else made you stay in your bubble?

BN I didn't want it to be known that I am a Muslim because of 9/11. I started using the name BN, because I hated all the questions about my name. I stopped doing prayers. I started distancing myself from it. I thought that if I would hide it, no one would see it. Sometimes I would get curious, then something happens and I would go back into my shell again...I would come to school and I would see 'Burn the Quran Day.' That made me really uncomfortable. In physics class, the guy would show the story of burning Quran on CNN, and I felt really uncomfortable...One time I tried to go to MSA, two guys explained it to me, and for a split second, I like it and remembered what it was like when I was a kid. Then I went to lunch with my friend and saw a sign about 'Stop the Quran Day,' then I said 'Nooo,' and went back to my bubble.

The bubble referred to in BN's statements represents the safe space that the reluctance phase provides to Muslim-American college students during their early years in college from what they perceive as negative experiences of judgment and discrimination that are the result of their association with Islam and Muslim groups. Similar to other ethnic and racial identity development models (Cross, 1971, 1991, 1995; Helms, 1990, 1994, 1995; & Phinney, 1990, 1992), Muslim-American college students eventually move beyond this first foreclosed identity stage into other stages, in which they experience more conflict and tension, and eventually reach an achieved identity state. Chapter 5 provides recommendations for university administrators and

student affairs professionals to assist students like BN who may suffer psychological damage from being trapped in a foreclosed identity phase for so long due to issues of bullying, discrimination, or harassment.

The timing of this study in 2010 and 2011 coincided with the increase in anti-Islam rhetoric in the news media at the national and local level, such as the Quran burning controversy that took place near one of the campuses where this study was conducted, and the national conversation about the New York City mosque project near the 9/11 Ground Zero. These conversations may have heightened the reported feelings of uneasiness, fear for one's safety, and ultimately avoidance of anything associated with Islam, especially among first-year Muslim-American college students. Some of the students interviewed in this study even reported considering the surrounding community's attitudes towards diverse backgrounds, especially Muslims, when making their college decision.

Although this reluctance phase is usually precipitated by previous negative experiences with both Muslims and non-Muslims, they are based on what may be considered stereotypes against both groups. These stereotypes are usually challenged through an experience of cognitive dissonance that occurs when the reluctant Muslim – American student meets with a peer who is engaged and possibly immersed in the campus Muslim community. Through this newly found relationship, the reluctant student begins to enter the identification stage, in which he or she identifies elements of the Muslim culture and traditions that are quite comfortable and bring back pleasant memories.

Identification

Similar to some of the identity development models described in Chapter 2 (Cross, 1971, 1991, 1995; Helms, 1990, 1994, 1995; & Phinney, 1990, 1992), which suggest that the early foreclosed stage is interrupted by a crisis event or an encounter with a person or situation that causes dissonance, the reluctance stage for Muslim-American college students is typically interrupted by a new relationship or friendship developed with a peer who is involved and immersed in the Muslim community on campus, usually through MSA, and who displays behaviors or statements that are incongruent with the reluctant student's stereotypes and fears. In this new phase, reluctant students identify a new community on campus and aspects of their identity that may have been suppressed in the past.

During this phase, cognitive dissonance occurs and causes students to realize that some of their fears were based on unfounded assumptions. As they begin to build more trust in the new relationships they develop with other Muslims, reluctant students begin to feel a certain level of comfort that they have not experienced before. For instance, AB shared her dissonance experience by saying: "I met two sisters [*Muslim women*], and they had the most influence on me. They were really nice, it was the first time I felt not judged for asking questions, or if I make a mistake. We became really close. They really brought me into the organization [*MSA*]."

In this stage, Muslim-American students begin to gain a deeper and better understanding of Islam as a religion and culture, and develop an appreciation for the diversity within the Muslim community. Sometimes they bond with the Muslim person they meet with over similar experiences of prejudice or discrimination, as described by BN who said: "one time, they had that wall of hatred [*a campus program to allow*

students to express their thoughts about hatred], and I was looking at it and someone else was looking at it, and it had terrorist written on it. She asked if I am Muslim. I said ‘Yeah,’ and asked her if she is Muslim, and she said ‘yeah.’ She asked ‘so you got the terrorist comment?’ I said ‘yeah.’ She said ‘me too.’ I said ‘I got told Osama Bin Laden is my uncle.’ She said ‘oh, I got told he’s my cousin...’[laughter]...so we bonded over that, and that was good.”

Other times, the relationship develops naturally into a friendship that results in making Muslim gatherings on and off campus one’s new social circles, as described by EG who said: “first year was kinda difficult because it was the first time on my own...I didn’t know a lot of Muslims. I knew about one other Muslim girl, but I never got really close to her, I just knew who she was and met her once. In sophomore year, I got closer to her, we met and hang out a little more. She was involved in MSA. She introduced me to other Muslims, and that’s how I got involved. I also had some Muslim people from back home transfer to the university and I started hanging out with them. That’s how I got involved and started going this year to events.”

Through these newly found friendships, Muslim-American college students begin to discover a new type of relationship with Muslim peers through what is described as brotherhood and sisterhood within MSA circles. They begin to invest in new relationships with peers who have similar experiences and who can relate to the challenges they face every day. As described in Chapter 2, Baxter-Magolda (2001) referred to this process as transitional knowing, in which the individual encounters thought-provoking events and begins to realize that not all knowledge is certain. Through the newly developed relationships with other Muslim students, Muslim-

American college students begin to construct new meaning about the true experience of other Muslims on campus (Baxter-Magolda, 2007). SB illustrated this experience by saying: "becoming more active and seeing other girls who wear Hijab and are able to still have a voice and be a part of the community...for me, I thought that the Hijab would stop me from being who I wanted to be, but when I saw other girls are still doing everything with the Hijab, I thought I could do that too. It made me strong."

The experience of identification can be quite powerful for some of these students. As some of their assumptions are challenged, they begin to realize that the world that they have avoided so intensely during their first year in college can actually provide comfort and safety. As described by MH, the feelings of fear are slowly replaced with a sentiment of pride in being Muslim and confidence in one's identity: "I started researching things about religion and Islam and found a lot of comfort in Islam." AB also illustrated this point when she said: "for some reason, the Muslims here are awesome. They are just different. Before, you meet with Muslims, and guys would shake your hand, give you a hug. Here people have stronger values."

While the safety of this newly found environment provides comfort for Muslim-American college students, it may collide with the safety and security that the reluctance stage ensures. BN, who often referred to this safety as "the bubble," described the conflict she was experiencing by saying: "I wanna know more about Islam. If I had kids, I want to be able to say 'here is the religion I came from.' But in order to do that, I have to get out of my bubble...but I like my bubble...It's a nice and safe bubble., No one makes comments at me anymore." She finished her statement with uncomfortable giggles, which illustrates the tension between her desire to connect with the Muslim

community and fear of letting go of the safe environment she has created for herself for so long by being reluctant of the world she is so curious about.

This process of identification tends to occur over a short period of time, usually at the end of the freshmen year or beginning of sophomore year. Most participants seemed to have transitioned fairly quickly through this stage into the next stage by beginning to completely immerse themselves into MSA events and activities, prayer groups, Halaqas, and eventually committee and board positions within MSA. The next phase in their identity formation process is immersion.

Immersion

The immersion phase can last from one to three years, and usually ends around the student's junior year. During this period of time, Muslim-American college students experience their identity and affiliation with Islam and the Muslim community more intensely than they have previously. Their involvement with MSA becomes central to their experience in college, impacting their friendship circles, extra-curricular activities, and eventually values, beliefs, behaviors, and even external appearance. SB shared her immersion experience and said: "in my spring semester of freshman year I started wearing the Hijab and became more religious...I joined MSA board the next year, so it helped me be more active in a way, do something for my religion as well, to be a student at the university and do something for my studies and career, but also my spiritual and active engagement as well."

Based on the participants' accounts of how they evolved through the immersion stage, they start by completely committing to learning about the history of Islam, its guidelines, and the way to practice it. As described by RZ and MH, students use a

variety of resources to gain this knowledge, including books and online lectures by popular scholars. RZ said: “I started praying five times a day, started listening to lectures online, reading Quran, reading books. I became more religious, restricted myself to only things that the Prophet PBH did, his Sunna and stuff.” MH shared similar sentiments when he said: “I started listening to lectures online, I learned the meaning of prayer, I learned how to do Khoushou, I used to do supplication after Isha every day....I liked that, it helped me a lot.”

The intense learning process, which often occurs without the guidance or support of qualified mentors who are experienced and knowledgeable about Islam, tends to cause rapid change in the student’s values, beliefs, behavior, attire, and decision making process. AB shared the effects of her change when she said: “I really changed from my freshman year to my sophomore year; I am a very outgoing person and would talk to anyone, but going out as much with the opposite gender stopped, unless it’s an MSA thing to do...I just would rather hang-out at the Masjid.”

The change in the participants’ demeanor, behavior, and attire was not met by the same level of enthusiasm by some participants’ non-Muslim friends at times. AB described this tension as a rift that developed between her and her friends and said: “...some people started asking why I was trying to be someone I am not. They say ‘you don’t talk to us anymore, you don’t do this anymore’...you feel like a rift, but they don’t understand that rift.” RZ also shared the same experience with a rift that grew wider between him and his non-Muslim friends.

RZ At some point in my sophomore or junior year, I grew a beard, I became more religious, and stopped talking to my American friends. I started praying five times a day, going to mosque more often, becoming more friends with Muslim people. But I couldn’t find Muslim people at my level, so that was difficult. My friends were mad

at me because I dissed them. I grew a long beard, and stopped going to parties and hanging out with them. I had to defend why I was growing my beard out, and why I was praying and stuff.

Many of the students interviewed reported difficulties in maintaining friendships in “both worlds” at the same time, and eventually had to choose their relationships within the Muslim community over their friendships with non-Muslims. To some, friendships with non-Muslims represented a threat to the growth of their faith, and therefore, they began distancing themselves from non-Muslims. AB shared her experience and the difficulties she experienced when she began distancing herself from her former friends.

AB Ever since I started knowing my religion more, between my freshman and sophomore year, I kinda cut back on how much I hang out with non-Muslim guys. I used to have a couple of guy friends, but I told them ‘religiously, I should not be interacting with you as much as I do...’ They were like ‘ahhh, you’re kinda weird,’ and I said ‘ok, you’re weird too.’ Some of the guys, I don’t talk to anymore, but those who understand what I am trying to do, they still respect me the same. What’s hard for them is not to give someone hugs and high fives, it’s so natural for them.

These changes were not only noticed by the participants and their friends, but also by their parents. AB explained how happy her parents were to see the change in her and shared: “going home after a year, my parents were really happy to see the change. I told my dad that I wanted to start wearing the Abaya, and he was very happy and supportive.” Similarly, EG was surprised by her father’s reaction to see the change in her. She shared: “...I started asking about different stories of prophets and refresh my memory, and would go on YouTube and hear Sheikhs talks. My dad caught me and he was like ‘WOW,’ he was so proud.”

This process of immersion mirrors the process that occurs in the religion-as-declared identity phase, which is the third stage in the religious identity development

model for Muslim-Americans proposed by Peek (2005) and described in Chapter 2. Peek (2005) considers this stage the achieved identity stage, in which the individual takes action to commit to his or her chosen religious identity. However, my study proposes that individuals in this stage of intense immersion are far from reaching achieved identity.

Although they may be able to ignore elements of their American identity while they explore their newly found Muslim identity, reconciling the two soon emerges as a major concern for them as they begin to pose questions about how to manage expectations from both environments without appearing rigid or violating one's values, how to manage inter-gender dynamics with Muslims and non-Muslims, and how to integrate parts of both identities for maximum benefits. The next stage in the identity development process for Muslim-American college students is negotiation.

Negotiation

Balancing two worlds with distinct cultures and expectations is a difficult task for many Muslim-American college students because of the clash between some of the activities that most college students partake in and Islamic values and principles. SB explained this point when she said: "in college, it's hard because as a Muslim I don't drink or party...in college, that's what people do. It's part of college life. A lot of American kids do that, so it's hard to get closer to them, to be friends with them...when it comes to hanging with friends, I would go back to my Muslim friends because we have more in common, and we all can't do what American kids do, so it makes us have something in common." EG expressed similar sentiments when she said: EG "non-Muslims view me as more conservative than other Muslims do because they know I won't go clubbing or go drinking or go out...they would say 'oh loosen-up, it's ok.'"

Some participants explained the process of negotiating both identities as “toning down” one of them to allow for the other to emerge for the sake of fitting-in and making others comfortable. This was a remarkable transition from the immersion stage, in which the need to make non-Muslims comfortable was not a priority and thus many relationships with them were severed. In the negotiation stage, however, Muslim-American young adults make considerable efforts to maintaining their relationships with non-Muslims, even if it means “toning down” some of their own identity traits. This was expressed clearly by AB who said: “for the sake of not coming off as a crazy Muslim, you tone down your level of being a Muslim a little bit.” RZ also expressed this point when he said: “With non-Muslims, I try to act American. I try to get a rid of all of that and just focus on religion.”

Based on the participants’ anecdotes, this process of negotiation requires that Muslim-American young adults choose the elements of their identity that best fit the environment they are interacting with. As they advance in this stage, they begin to create a hyphenated identity (Sirin et al., 2008) that allows them to carry two distinct identities, Muslim and American, without necessarily integrating them into their daily life. They become skilled at silencing one of their two identities when they are interacting with the opposite environment. The following dialogue with EG helps provide an illustration of how Muslim-American young adults negotiate their identity dimensions as they attempt to balance the two worlds they live in: the Muslim world and the American world.

EG The way we joke is different from the way you joke with a White person. When I am with American friends, I can’t use the same Muslim jokes, I won’t talk too much about the Muslim way and how we do things, we would joke about very American things, like the Jersey Shore. When I am with Muslim friends, we talk with subjects

that are stupid, typical Arab stuff. It isn't so much about TV shows or fashion, it's just more about joking around, Arabic music, having an all-girls party at someone's house. With Americans, we would talk about what's in the news. It's just different.

FD How are you different when you're with American friends?

EG When I am with my American friends, I won't talk about Arabic music or listen to Arabic music with them, I don't talk about the food. Everything is American, we just go to school, eat American food. I guess you won't see the Arab side of me really when I'm with my American friends. I guess, they don't really see that side of me. The only time when they notice is during Ramadan when I am fasting. Even with praying, I pray in my room. I don't pray in the living room. When I decide to play Arabic music in my room, my roommate would say 'oh, that's cute.'

FD And how are you different when you're with Muslim friends?

EG With my Muslim friends, we would watch old Arabic classic moving, eat Arabic food, and at the same time we can be a little American too. We still talk about American food and movies, so we can talk about more. Muslim-Americans, they know our way of life and they know the American life. We can criticize both ways of life. I feel more comfortable with them.

This process of managing a hyphenated identity and balancing two worlds may seem impossible at times as students tend to see situations in a dualistic manner. RZ illustrated this challenging dilemma when he said: "I don't think it's possible to be in the middle of these two worlds. If you become religious, you have to throw away the other world completely. It's ok to be friendly to non-Muslims, but I don't think it's ok to have close friends who are non-Muslims." For many of the participants who were in this stage of identity development, they saw themselves living between two separate worlds that cannot be "meshed," and therefore, had to find a way to negotiate the way they interact with each world without giving-up the other side completely. This was also explained by EG who described becoming skilled at balancing her two identities.

EG You can't really mesh the two sometimes. There is a divide between the two. I never really noticed it until college, and I've become good at balancing the two.

When you're with a bunch of Muslims and there is one American there, it becomes about trying to include that person in the inside jokes and teaching them about the Muslim way.

Most participants discussed the challenge of maintaining relationships with friends in both worlds and shared how they endured criticism for not spending enough time with them. EG discussed the challenge she experienced in maintaining a positive relationship with her roommate during this period of negotiation and said: "since I've gotten a lot closer to my Muslim friends... there was a little tension between my roommate and me because she felt I was changing, she felt like I was ignoring her...So now I have to balance the two." The main reason that seems to cause this rift between Muslim-American college students and their non-Muslim peers is the difference in values. Since Muslims are prohibited from partaking in activities that involve alcohol, sexual relations outside of marriage, and other activities that could be considered normal among college students, Muslim-American young adults who are in the immersion stage tend to associate these activities with their non-Muslim peers, and therefore trade off their friendships with non-Muslims for new relationships with Muslims. Once they enter the negotiation stage, they begin to look for ways to still have relationships with friends in both cultures without compromising their values. EG, SB, FM, IM, and UR all commented about their experience to avoid social settings where "Haram is present" without severing their relationships with their non-Muslim friends or connection to the American culture.

EG On campus, the way to socialize with people is to drink and party a lot, and I don't really go to these events, but I try to hang out with my friends outside of the settings and try to explain to them that there are things I just don't do. They understand for the most part, but sometimes they say 'oh, come on. You can have a boyfriend, you can drink a little.'

- SB Sometimes, dealing with interests [*usury*] and taxes are engraved in the system [*in America*], and that's kind of a conflict. But, for me, just to be able to practice my religion here without anyone telling me that it's wrong, that's more important for me.
- FM I know that being an American and being a Muslim, in some certain areas, it doesn't mix. I have to know how to draw the line between being an American and being a Muslim. I don't follow the norm, like I don't party, I don't drink, I don't have a boyfriend. I try not to judge others though, because I don't like to be judged. So, I stay friend with my American friends, but I keep a bit of distance.
- IM There are definitely limits to the things that Americans normally do that I choose not to do. Most Americans have boyfriends, they fornicate and stuff. Christianity is against fornication, but it's the norm here. That part, certain parts of being an American that I don't partake in, but that doesn't mean I can't have non-Muslims as friends. I am learning that we can't isolate ourselves.
- UR I've never had a problem balancing being a Muslim and being an American, but certain traditions that Americans do, I definitely opted out of, like prom...It's not a problem for me to give-up these things, it's a tradition here. My dad always told me that there are lots of memories to take from high school, prom doesn't need to be one of them. There is a lot of mixing and dancing at prom...I can still do other stuff with them, just not prom.

However, some Muslim-American young adults may find it too difficult to negotiate these two environments, and eventually surrender to one or the other. RZ shared how he experienced this difficulty, which eventually led him to give-up the “Islamic lifestyle” and fully commit to what he referred to as “being an American.” He said: “I started going back to my old friends, started trimming my beard little by little, then one day I shaved it completely...I went back to the old lifestyle, drinking and stuff.”

RZ also shared that he wants to go back to his “Islamic lifestyle,” but feels that the environment on campus was just too tempting and made it too difficult to balance both worlds. He said: “my goal is to go back to the Islamic lifestyle. I would need to cut off ties with non-Muslim friends, put more effort to having a support group of people like

myself...I see myself doing it at the end of the school year, or next year, definitely by the time I get married, or before I get married. I am just waiting to get out of this environment to start all over. As long as I am here, it's too easy to fall back in the old lifestyle."

Although RZ's reaction was not common, it was worth noting as a contrast to the experiences of others who either chose to stay immersed in the Islamic culture and environment or those who are successful at negotiating both environments and eventually integrating them for the benefit of themselves, their community, and the greater good. Those who are successful at achieving the next stage in their identity development, which is called integration, begin to show signs of fluidity between both cultures and ease in their interactions with members of both environments. As a result, they earn the respect of their peers in both worlds and are seen as leaders who can be trusted with counsel and issues that impact MSA and the campus community. These elements of negotiation are illustrated in Figure 4-3, which shows a process of balancing the two identities. EG explained how she experiences this process.

EG As a Muslim-American, I feel like we're not really recognized in a way, we're kinda like walking between two worlds, you have the American, you have the Arab, you can't fit in totally with the Muslim world because you've adopted some of the American values, and you can't fit in totally with the American world because you've adopted Muslim values also, so it's kinda a balancing act.

This balancing act illustrated in Figure 4-3 is a culmination of the salient identity dimensions and contextual factors described in Chapter 4. The student's level of religiosity, culture, gender, family background and involvement, and the peer support that is typical provided by MSA and its members all have an impact on their salience of the student's Muslim identity. Likewise, the student's past and current experiences with

prejudice, his or her desire for academic and career success, affiliation with American citizenship, and the level of support and guidance received from the university administration and faculty ultimately impact the salience of the American identity.



Figure 4-3. Model of Identity negotiation for Muslim-American college students

Integration

While Muslim-American young adults initially commit to their Muslim identity and struggle with the process of negotiating and balancing both cultures and environments, they eventually begin to contemplate the idea of integrating both worlds without compromising their values or relationships. This tends to occur closer to the students' senior year when they realize that it is possible to live in both worlds. The epiphany of being able to integrate both identities typically occurs as they observe other students, usually role models, who were able to achieve what seemed to be an impossible task. IS learned that he could integrate both identities from observing his friend and past MSA president. He explained this when he said: "it wasn't until I saw last year's MSA president that I realized that you can do both, and that's actually good for the Muslim community because then non-Muslims respect us more and relate to us better." As was

inferred by IS' comment, students in this stage also justify this integration process with the impact it has on the greater good for the entire community, and the Muslim community specifically.

The integration stage is characterized by a sense of acceptance and appreciation of the unique affiliation with two cultures. Participants who were in their senior year discussed how they have finally reached a point in which they enjoy the fluidity between the two cultures. EG compared her experience with her roommate who seemingly affiliates with one culture only.

EG I just like the fact that I hang-out with friends, that I have them and joke around with them, and also having two cultures. I like the fact that I can be flexible...like, my roommate, she's American and that's all she has, so I feel like they don't really have fun the way we do. She's very involved in her church, she would talk about her church activities, Christian camp, it's fun for them, but I feel like they're not really colorful. I like the fact that I can mix and go with each, the whole flexibility, different tastes with different cultures.

As described in Chapter 3, while Muslim-American young adults are often anxious about achieving balance between their religious values and American values, and constantly have to negotiate their dual identities (Sirin et al., 2008), they were found to have the capacity to craft integrated and parallel identities. This was illustrated in the following comments by SB: "I see myself as a Muslim-American who is trying to fit into both worlds...you realize that they can actually go together and that it's not too difficult to be both at the same time." In fact, Muslim-American young adults overwhelmingly prefer being engaged in social and cultural activities with both communities (Sirin et al., 2008).

In the integration stage, Muslim-American young adults realize that in a post 9/11 world where hostility towards Islam and Muslims continues to grow, their identification

with both identities, Muslim and American, can serve as the bridge that facilitates the dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims in America. As a result, they become skilled at managing their hyphenated self and balancing both identities and maintaining healthy relationships with members of both worlds.

Summary

As illustrated in Figure 4-4, the identity development process for Muslim-American college students is a juxtaposition of the five identity stages they go through while in college and the balancing act they have to experience between the two worlds they live in. As described in Chapter 3, Muslim-American young adults identify with both their Muslim and American identity, a concept labeled “hyphenated self” by Sirin and Fine (2008) in their recent study about identity negotiation for Muslim American youth (Sirin et al., 2008).

The model illustrates two principle findings relative to the identity development of Muslim-American college students: 1) contextual factors act as a filter for the identity dimensions that impact their development through the stages of identity formation, and 2) they go through stages of development that may involve reluctance from being associated with Muslims, identification with Muslims through a new friendship, immersion into the Muslim community and alienating non-Muslim friends, negotiation between their two identities, and normalizing their experience by successfully integrating their two identities.

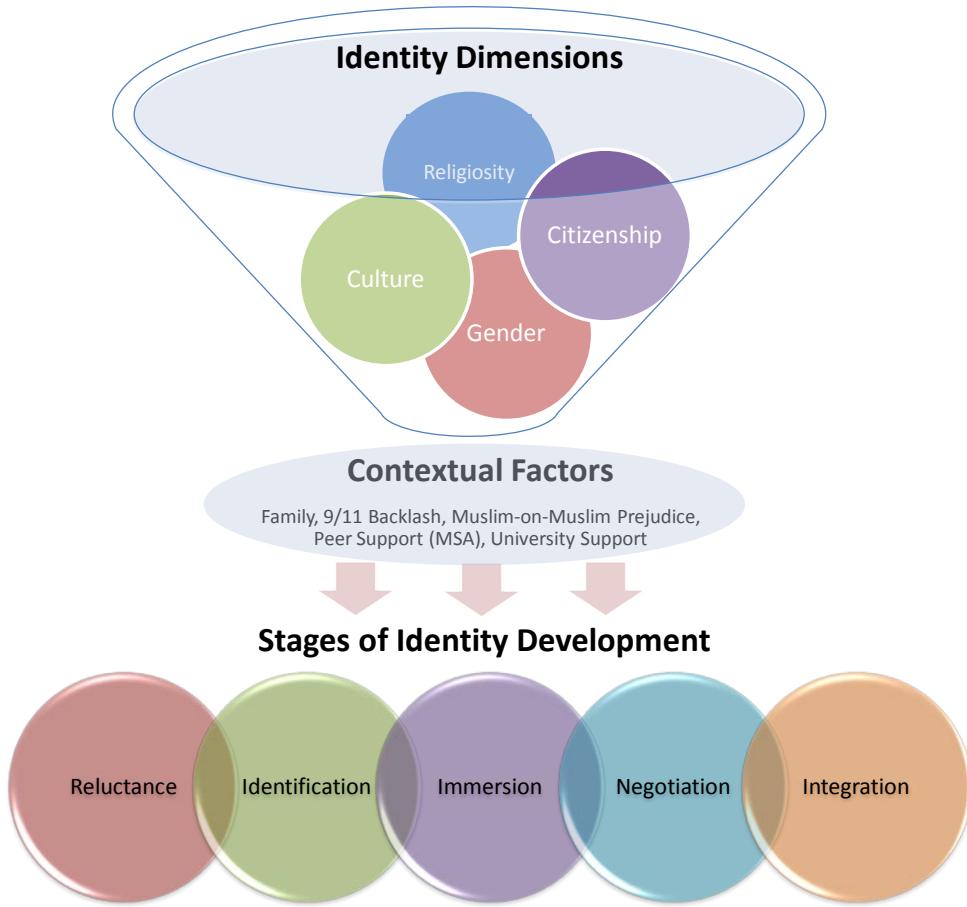


Figure 4-4. Model of Identity development for Muslim-American college students

The model also illustrates that the identity formation process for Muslim-American college students is heavily influenced by 1) the Muslim Student Association (MSA), which offers support through friendships and a community and affirms students' religious values, culture, family background, and gender affiliation, and 2) the university administration, student affairs in particular, which affirms students' status as American citizens and ensures their academic, personal, and professional success through advocacy, guidance, resources, and support.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore the identity formation of Muslim-American college students relative to their experience in college. The need for this contribution to the field of college student development is crucial given the gap in research about Muslim-American young adults, a populations that has been subject to increased scrutiny and prejudice since 9/11 and its aftermath (Britto & Amer, 2007; Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; L. Peek, 2005; Sirin et al., 2008; Williams & Vashi, 2007).

This qualitative study was conducted using grounded theory methodology to allow for a new theory to emerge from the data (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser et al., 1967). Findings revealed the salience of four identity dimensions for Muslim-American college students: religiosity, citizenship, culture, and gender, which are influenced by various contextual factors: family, 9/11 backlash, Muslim-on-Muslim prejudice, peer support via MSA, and university support. A new theoretical model has emerged from this study to describe five stages of identity formation for Muslim-American college students: reluctance, identification, immersion, negotiation, and integration.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of these findings, a discussion about the various elements of these findings in the context of other theoretical models, and implications of the newly proposed model on theory, research, policy, and practice. Chapter 5 closes with the major conclusions derived from this study as well as my personal reflections, as the principle investigator, about this study and the process I went through to complete it.

Summary of Findings

Using Jones and McEwen model of multiple dimensions of identity (2007) as a backdrop, four major identity dimensions seemed most salient for Muslim-American

young adults: religiosity, citizenship, culture, and gender. The intersections of these dimensions were found to have an impact on their degree of salience based on a variety of contextual factors: family's influence on values and decision making, role of the Muslim and non-Muslim community, prejudice and discrimination incidents that resulted from the 9/11 backlash on the Muslim-American community, internal Muslim-on-Muslim prejudice that is often displayed in judgment of others, peer support that is provided through the campus MSA, and university support and accommodations to facilitate a healthy and safe environment for Muslim students to have a positive experience in college.

The study also revealed five stages of identity development that Muslim-American college students tend to go through while in college: reluctance, identification, immersion, integration, and negotiation. Although the anecdotes of some participants indicated that some Muslim-American young adults may experience a few, some, or all of these stages at different points of their lives rather than in college mainly, depending on the contextual influences in their environment, the majority of participants seemed to begin their freshman year in college at the reluctance stage and graduate at the integration stage. Throughout their four years in college, Muslim-American college students seem to transition from a foreclosed identity, in which they avoid their association with Islam and Muslims, to an integrated identity, in which they develop a hyphenated identity that integrates various elements of their Muslim and American identities.

Discussion

Through identity integration, Muslim-American college students achieve self-authorship, a process by which they reach maturity in all three domains: interpersonal,

intrapersonal, and cognitive (Baxter-Magolda, 1999). Achieving self-authorship is necessary for them to be able to make mature decisions, build relationships independent of external influences, and become effective citizens (Baxter-Magolda, 2007). Similar to other ethnic and underrepresented groups, this study revealed that Muslim-American college students need to be exposed to various complexities, crisis events, or new relationships in order for dissonance to occur and movement through the psychological stages of exploration and commitment is achieved, as described by Marcia (1966, 1980).

Each one of the underrepresented groups that have been studied in past decades have their own unique contextual influences that impact their identity formation process. Similarly, unique historical, sociopolitical, environmental, and cultural circumstances were found to have created contextual factors that have impacted the identity development for Muslim-American college students. For example, the events of 9/11 and their aftermath, which have resulted in an entire decade of intense negative rhetoric that may have caused many Muslims to question their worth and position in American society, were found in this study to have resulted in Muslim-American young adults having developed foreclosed identities in various dimensions, especially religiosity and citizenship.

We already know that Muslim-American young adults have the capacity to craft integrated and parallel identities (Sirin et al., 2008), but we did not know how they achieved this integrated identity. This study revealed the five stages of identity formation that Muslim-American young adults tend to move through to achieve commitment which results in an integrated identity and a sense of hyphenated self. These stages are

defined as: reluctance, identification, immersion, negotiation, and integration. This important discovery and new knowledge about the salient identity dimensions and contextual factors that influence these stages will lead to further investigation on what university administrators can do to help Muslim-American college students achieve self-authorship through identity integration.

This study confirmed that the newly found and socially constructed integrated identity allows Muslim-American young adults to assert both their religious and national identities, which results in the creation of a new label that they proudly use to define themselves: Muslim-American, just as did other marginalized and oppressed minority groups before them, such as African-Americans, Jewish-Americans, and Asian-Americans (Grewal, 2009; Sirin et al., 2008). More importantly, the socially constructed identity allows them to develop relationships, knowledge, and decision making abilities independent of contextual influences, a process known as self-authorship (Baxter-Magolda, 2007).

Implications

The major contribution of this study is in the new knowledge that environmental, cultural, and sociopolitical conditions have created contextual factors that influence the salience of various dimensions, resulting in foreclosed identities for Muslim-American young adults when they enter college. The Muslim Student Association (MSA), the student organization that Muslim students on campus are involved in, was found to play a critical role in sparking a change for Muslim-American students to move through various stages of identity formation and eventually reach an integrated stage of identity.

Achieving integrated identity is important for minority college students, including Muslim-American students, because it ensures their social integration, academic

success, and ultimately retention in college. While there are no indications of college attrition among Muslim-American college students, experiences of discrimination and prejudice have been found to be contributing factors to college attrition among minority college students (Swail et al., 2003). We know that prejudice based on religious practice and cultural differences has a negative impact on the educational experience of Muslim students (Cole & Ahmadi, 2003). We also know that the majority of Muslim-American young adults (over 53 %) report that it has become difficult to be a Muslim in America (Pew Research Center, 2007). Thus, theorists, researchers, and practitioners have the responsibility and duty to build upon these findings to identify the complexities and accommodations in order to promote the movement towards identity integration and self-authorship for Muslim-American college students.

Theory

The new five-stage theoretical model proposed in this study adds a new application for the self-authorship model, a concept that has been adapted for several other minority groups (Baxter-Magolda, 2007), but never on Muslim-American young adults before this study. The model also complements the string of other identity development models that have come before, including cognitive (Baxter-Magolda, 1992; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberg, & Tarule's, 1986; Kitchener & King, 1981, 1990; Perry, 1968; Piaget, 1952), racial (Cross, 1995; Helms, 1990, 1992, 1995), ethnic (Phinney, 1990, 1992), sexual (Cass, 1979; D'Augelli, 1994; Evans & Wall, 1991; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996), moral (Kohlberg, 1958, 1976; Rest, 1979, 1986), and gender (Ossan, Helms, Leonard, 1992; Josselson 1973, 1987, 1996; O'Neil, Egan, Owen, Murry, 1993). Similar to these models, my proposed theoretical identity model for Muslim-American college students touches on two major aspects of identity formation: 1) sense of self

and relations with others (Stryker, 1968, 1980; Turner, 1978), and 2) on-going construction, selection, and negotiation between identity dimensions (Cahill, 1989; Nagel, 1995, 1994; Waters, 1990; West & Zimmerman, 1987).

This theoretical model gives validation to the premise that dissonance is often the catalyst for individuals to transform from an identity-diffused state to a state of foreclosed identity and onto a state of identity-achieved (Marcia, 1966, 1980). In prior theories, this dissonance is usually caused by a crisis event or incident that causes shock and stress to the individual. In my proposed model of identity development for Muslim-American college students, this dissonance is usually sparked by a new relationship, which makes the experience much more pleasant and positive for the individual. This new concept of dissonance through a relationship may inspire other theories and models to emerge in the future.

Furthermore, this contribution to theory may open the door for not only other studies to be conducted on Muslim-Americans, but also for new theories to emerge or be adapted for subgroups of the Muslim-American population, such as women, working adults, and teenagers. It is conceivable that the theoretical model may also be adapted for other misunderstood and marginalized religious minorities with overlapping themes and dimensions of identity, such as Sikhs, Mormons, and Jewish-Americans.

For Research

Conducting this study using a qualitative method reinforced the usefulness and credibility of qualitative research, especially when studying areas that represent a gap in literature. Grounded theory proved to also be an effective methodology for this study as it allowed for a new theory to emerge from the voices of participants. In addition to providing new knowledge to the field of college student development, this contribution to

the literature will also provide an additional model of 1) how to approach a study about a population that may not have been previously explored, 2) how to conduct a qualitative study using grounded theory and ensure validity and reliability, and 3) a new theoretical model for researchers to reference when reviewing literature about ethnic, cultural, and religious groups in future studies.

Given that findings of this study may not be generalized to the general Muslim-American young adult population, the next step in exploring this population would be to create or adapt an identity formation scale that can be used in a quantitative study nationwide to generate a revised identity development model that would be generalizable to the Muslim-American college student population.

The five stages of identity development that have emerged in this study should be explored further through longitudinal studies that follow Muslim-American college students from acceptance into college to graduation. It would be interesting to have these students write reflective journals throughout their four years in college and participate in videotaped interviews at least once a year, which will allow for their progress and development to be followed and documented thoroughly within the context of their experience.

Further research about the psychological impact of some of the contextual factors discussed in Chapter 4, such as family pressures, Muslim-on-Muslim prejudice, and the post 9/11 bullying and prejudice against Islam, is necessary to understand the experiences of Muslim-American young adults and develop the appropriate interventions, support systems, and resources to promote identity formation process for

them and facilitate their social integration, academic success, and personal and professional development.

Future research about Muslim-American young adults may include further exploration of inter-gender dynamics, experiences of Muslim-Americans in the workplace, or issues of post 9/11 bullying against Muslim-American children. In any of these potential studies, it is critical for the researcher to understand the importance of building trust and rapport between the principle investigator and the group of participants as well as the larger Muslim community. Therefore, I recommend conducting some of these explorations using ethnography methods, which would help researchers integrate into the Muslim community, build relationships, and gain trust before beginning the study. Being immersed in the community would also help researchers observe transitions as they occur while building strong relationships with the community members and gaining their trust.

For Policy

Although participants have expressed gratitude for their university's support in response to acts of prejudice, stereotyping, and at times bullying, some of them wished for a stronger stance and response from university officials and have cited examples of when the university has done so when other groups were victims of incidents of hate. Based on the participants' stories, it seems that some Muslim-American students are concerned about a double standard in handling cases of Islamophobia in comparison to other cases, although they understand the difficult position their university administrators are in due to the current political environment in the United States.

One of the major revelations of this study is that some Muslim-American college students feel that university administrators may not always have consistent standards

and policies when dealing with acts of hate and prejudice towards Muslims. As indicated by some students' statements in Chapter 4, some Muslim-American college students may feel at times that university administrators are more careful and less responsive to acts and speech of hate that target Muslims compared to other minority groups, such as African-Americans and Jewish-Americans. While university administrators often refer to free speech and academic freedom to explain the dilemma they have when dealing with incidents that involve Muslims on campus, Muslim-American college students may perceive that the real reason for what is seen as a weak response is that university administrators are afraid of the political backlash against them and the university if they stand for Muslims on campus, often in the name of freedom of expression.

Institutions of higher education have the difficult task of striking a balance between maintaining civility on campus and protecting as well as promoting the freedom of speech as a central ingredient to citizenship and academic freedom, while striving to create a vibrant, inclusive, and safe multicultural community for all constituents (Fenske, Hoffman, & Schuh, 1998; Swail, Perna, & Redd, 2003). This has become a bigger challenge when dealing with incidents against Muslim college students, especially since the Muslim community has become the "acceptable" target of bigotry and hate speech since 9/11 and its aftermath (Abdo, 2005). Nonetheless, this issue is about more than just legal rights, politics, or diversity. It transcends all core areas of an institution of higher education, including institutional mission, learning, wellness and safety, campus resources, students' rights and responsibilities, law enforcement, civility, and multiculturalism.

Hate speech is defined as any verbal and written words or actions, often communicated through slurs, insults, and threats, that portray a person or group negatively based on their race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or disability (Fenske et al., 1998). Many campuses have explicit policies and codes about appropriate and inappropriate forms of speech to promote civility on campus and insure physical and emotional safety for all constituents (Fenske et al., 1998). While these policies provide general guidelines for appropriate civil behavior on campus, they are often written in general and ambiguous terms to allow institutions to adhere to constitutional laws that protect free speech under the first amendment (Swail et al., 2003). Freedom of expression has been recognized, under the protection of the first Amendment, as a central ingredient to academia by the Supreme Court, in *Sweeny v. New Hampshire*, 354 US. 234 (1957).

College campuses are still coming to grips with accommodations and response plans to acts of hate, prejudice, and micro-aggressions against Muslim students (Adams, 2000). This is especially true during a time filled with politically polarized discussions around issues of freedom of speech, terrorism, national security, and patriotism. The major contribution of this study in relation to policy is in helping institutions of higher education 1) understand the perceptions that Muslim-American college students have about universities' commitment to diversity and their students' safety, and 2) develop appropriate, effective, and consistent response plans that can be deployed when dealing with incidents of hate that target all marginalized groups on their campuses.

For Practice

Intentional interventions and accommodations by university faculty and administrators, especially student affairs, are crucial in creating a safe environment that fosters the development and growth of students, especially those of marginalized groups such as Muslim-American college students. University support and accommodations were found to play a critical role in the growth and identity development of Muslim-American college students in this study. The voices of Muslim-American students represented in this study suggest several interventions and accommodations that universities can implement to facilitate a positive experience for these students.

Many studies have been conducted in past decades to determine the types of complexities that should be introduced to promote self-authorship for various minority student groups (Baxter-Magolda, 2007). Yet, due to the lack of research about Muslim-American college students, knowledge about how college impacts them and the types of complexities that should be introduced to promote self-authorship for them is limited. This study provides a platform to begin the conversation about how Muslim-American young adults experience college and how university administrators can facilitate their growth and development through support, guidance, accommodations, resources, and programming.

This study helps provide a context for the challenges that Muslim-American college students experience while in college, and emphasizes the importance of creating and maintaining a safe campus climate that promotes their growth and development. Campus climate has been found to have a major impact on students' social and academic integration on campus (Swail et al., 2003). In addition to the known

and expected stressors that students from all groups may endure during their transition in college, such as personal wellness and transition to a new environment, minority students, including Muslim students, who are in predominantly white campuses are subject to additional stressors, including achievement expectations, within-group stressors, interracial stressors, racism, discrimination, and racial micro-aggressions (Sue, Capodilupo, Nadal, & Torino, 2008; Swail et al., 2003).

Understanding the background of these students and the challenges they face is the first step for higher education practitioners to take to help them with their identity development. Universities may be able to do so by hosting training seminars and immersion programs to help their faculty and staff learn about Islam and the Muslim population, particularly the Muslim-American community, in order to best support their students and create an environment conducive to their development and growth.

This study confirms the effectiveness of student organizations as a positive intervention that helps minority students cope with the challenges they face and navigate the various complexities related to their identity in an environment that is most familiar to them on a college campus. Research indicates that the culture shock that results from the stressors minority students face juxtaposed with their inability to see their culture represented throughout their institution causes great harm to their academic achievement and social integration (Swail et al., 2003).

Tinto (1975) suggests that students' social and academic integration in college is instrumental to their persistence and graduation. Integration in college occurs in two principle ways: 1) by developing meaningfully relationships with peers, a process that often takes place in living communities such as residence halls, fraternities and

sororities, and student organizations such as MSA; and 2) by developing meaningfully relationships with mentors and role models, a factor that is even more significant for minorities and continues to be hindered by the lack of minority representation among faculty and staff on colleges campuses (Swail et al., 2003).

As discussed in Chapter 4, student organizations play a larger role in not only providing a network of support for minority students, but also facilitating the mentoring relationships with upper-class students and advisors, and minimizing the effects of isolation and alienation that they experience on predominantly white campuses, which has a greater effect on their persistence in college (Swail et al., 2003). For university administrators, providing support and a strong advisory system to the campus MSA may just be the most important intervention they could implement to promote Muslim-American students' identity development in a safe environment.

The Muslim Student Association (MSA) clearly plays an important role in facilitating Muslim students' transition into college and providing them with a safe environment in which they can be themselves, build long lasting relationships, and grow spiritually, emotionally, academically, and professionally. The need for continued support for MSA, financially and symbolically, was emphasized by most participants in this study. Universities may assist with early introduction of MSA to Muslim students during orientation or freshman programs to help expose them to resources and support systems as early as possible.

Universities may also be able to assist with helping MSAs build strong connections and collaborations with other student organizations. Many participants have expressed concern about MSA members mainly focusing on internal dynamics and programs only

and neglecting key relationships with other student organizations. The opportunity to collaborate with other organizations, especially religious and ethnic ones, may foster further learning and development that is currently missing among MSA members.

Attending to students' religiosity, the most salient identity dimension for Muslim-American college students, is of most importance and can be achieved by providing a permanent prayer space on campus outfitted with proper washrooms and foot baths to allow students to conduct Wudhu (ablution) without feeling embarrassed or fearing criticism by non-Muslims. This request was mentioned by every participant I interviewed, even those that do not adhere to religious practices. Providing such a facility will send a clear signal to the Muslim-American student population that the university not only accepts them, but also celebrates them and supports them as members of its community. A number of college campuses such as the University of Michigan have built such facilities for their Muslim students (Adams, 2000). Accommodations for religious holidays already exist on college campuses to accommodate all religious groups, but some universities are now noting Islamic religious holidays on their academic calendars in effort to be more inclusive and accommodating.

These signs of progress are met with their share of criticism by various groups, which creates further tension and hatred towards Muslim-American college students who are often anxious about the stressful task of balancing their cultural and religious values with the western culture they live in (Sirin, 2007). Recent discussions about Islam in America and the impact on Muslim students on college campus present an opportunity for society and institutions of higher education to better understand Islam

and Muslims in America and learn about their faith, culture, world views, traditions, values, beliefs, challenges, and opportunities to contribute to society. As the increased attention on the Muslim community has created more incidents of prejudice, racism, and hate crimes on American college campuses, it has become crucial for higher education faculty and administrators to gain a better understanding of the religion of Islam and Muslims. Further research in this area will help increase the level of support and accommodations that college campuses, employers, and society can offer to facilitate a positive and successful experience for Muslim-American college students.

Conclusions

A common theme in the study was in the desire of the participants to assert that they are “just like everyone else.” AB, one of the more outspoken participants in this study, said: “it’s really important for people to understand that we are just like everyone else.” Similar sentiments by other participants sparked several questions for me as the principle investigator of this study: 1) are Muslim-American college students just like everyone else?, 2) do they want to be just like everyone else?, and 3) should they be just like everyone else?

As the study progressed, it became clear to me that the participants meant to say something else with their statement “just like everyone else.” As I became more familiar with the participants, I learned that most of them did not have the desire, nor the intent to be like other non-Muslims, although those who were in a foreclosed identity state may have desired to not be identified as Muslims. The many hours of interviews with these students made it clear that what they really meant to say was: “we are normal and not strange,” which could be a common reaction by people from marginalized groups.

Although Muslim-American college students may insist that they are “just like everyone else,” the discovery from this study is that the way they experience college is different due to various identity dimensions and contextual factors they experience. This study revealed that the dimension of religiosity, citizenship, gender, and culture play a critical role in the identity formation of Muslim-American college students and the way they experience college. These dimensions are unique to this student population, and so are the contextual factors that were found to impact them: family, 9/11 backlash, Muslim-on-Muslim prejudice, peer support via MSA, and university support.

Some of these contextual factors were found to create a state of foreclosed identity for Muslim-American young adults, in which they are reluctant of identifying or associating with Islam and Muslims. Thus, many tend to enter college as freshmen in the reluctance stage, as described by the proposed identity development model for Muslim-American college students in Chapter 4. Campus climates that offer a variety of support mechanisms and complexities may be able to help students move beyond this first stage into an identification stage, in which they identify with elements of their faith and culture, then an immersion stage, in which they completely immerse themselves in the Muslim community and culture on campus and begin separating from old non-Muslim friends, then a negotiation stage, in which they attempt to balance the two worlds they associate with, and finally an integration stage, in which they are successful at infusing and integrating elements of the two cultures they live in and adopt a hyphenated identity: Muslim-American.

Consistent with the shift in how colleges impact students’ development, from a general effect, representing a similar impact of given experiences on all students, to a

conditional effect, representing a wider gap between how differently students benefit from the same experiences (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), the need to provide further accommodations and support to Muslim-American college students, especially during the current sociopolitical environment, must be a priority for universities in the United States.

Reflections

As described in Chapter 3, the principles of grounded theory that allow for the emergence of theory from systematically generated data and the reliance on data rather than literature to develop a theoretical model have made this methodology ideal for this study (Charmaz, 2006; Charmaz, 2006; Emerson, 1983; Emerson, 1983). As a researcher, I enjoyed the autonomy and freedom to create a theory that emerged from data that I collected, transcribed, and analyzed myself rather than poor data into someone else's theory (Charmaz, 2006; Emerson, 1983).

Charmaz's model of simultaneous data collection and analysis (2006) was an effective strategy that allowed me to begin formulating themes as I was interviewing participants and make decisions about future probing questions to ask and students to interview. The flexible nature of grounded theory allowed for new questions to be asked and new themes that may not have been addressed in the literature review to be explored. For example, many students mentioned dealing with bullying in elementary and middle school, which may have affected their transition to college, at least initially. This was an area that I had not explored in the literature review and did not plan to ask questions about. Using coding, theoretical memo writing, and theoretical comparisons, I

was able to identify the theme quickly and add relevant questions in future interviews to explore it further with participants (Charmaz, 2006).

Most importantly, I genuinely appreciated the relationships I developed with the participants throughout the research process. As a counselor by training, and a natural listener, I found that conducting a qualitative study played into my strengths. Resisting the temptation to give advice to some participants when they described their own challenges was challenging at times, but I reminded myself throughout the process of my researcher role and that my job was to ask questions, probe, listen, and take notes. A year has passed since I met with the participants; I often wonder how they are doing now. I know that some of them have already graduated and have moved on to their professional lives. My hope is to launch a new study in the future and conduct a one year follow-up with each participant to track their progress and identity evolution.

APPENDIX A
RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Assalamu Allaikum (Peace be Upon You),

My name is Farouk Dey, and I am a graduate student in the College of Education at the University of Florida. I am conducting a qualitative study exploring identity development of young adult Muslim-American college students. I am seeking to interview Muslim-American college students between the age 18 and 23, who have been raised in the United States, consider themselves to be practicing Muslims, currently enrolled in an undergraduate degree in a four-year university, and are either juniors or seniors. Each participant will participate in two one-hour individual interviews and one final focus group that will last 90 minutes.

If you are interested in participating in an interview, please reply to: Farouk Dey;
xxxxxx@hotmail.com; 352-xxx-xxxx

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Farouk Dey

APPENDIX B CONSENT FORM

Purpose of the research study:

The purpose of this study is to examine the process of identity formation of Muslim-American college students in the United States of America.

What you will be asked to do in the study:

You will be asked to provide your demographic information in a one page form and participate in the following activities: one two-hour interview and one focus group with other participants of this study. The interview and focus group will be audio-taped to insure accuracy of the information provided.

Time required:

- Interview will last about 120 minutes.
- Focus group with other participants of this study will last 90 minutes.

Risks and Benefits:

There are no risks involved with this study. This study will help university faculty and administrators increase their knowledge about identity formation of Muslim-American college students, and possibly lead to increase in support and accommodations to Muslims on college campuses.

Compensation:

There is a compensation involved with this study: gift card of \$25 value.

Confidentiality:

Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your identity will be kept confidential in all transcribed materials to the extent provided by law. All digital recording files of interviews will be kept on my private hard-drive and under password protection. The final results will be presented in an anonymous manner in a dissertation paper and future research article.

Voluntary participation:

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating.

Right to withdraw from the study:

You have the right to withdraw from the study at anytime without consequence.

Whom to contact if you have questions about the study:

Pilar Mendoza, Ed.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of Educational Administration & Policy
College of Education
University of Florida
P.O. Box 117049
Gainesville, FL 32611-7049
<http://education.ufl.edu/Leadership/contact/Pilar/Pilar.html>
Email: pilar.mendoza@ufl.edu
Tel: (352) 273-4309
Fax: (352) 846-2697

Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:

IRB02 Office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250; phone 392-0433.

Agreement:

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and I have received a copy of this description.

Participant: _____ Date: _____

Principal Investigator: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION PROTOCOL

SEX: FEMALE MALE

AGE: (IN YEARS) _____

ETHNIC BACKGROUND: _____

AMERICAN CITIZEN: YES NO

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN THE UNITED STATES? _____

DEGREE SOUGHT: BACHELOR MASTER
 PHD/EDD PROFESSIONAL

MAJOR: _____

CHOSEN CAREER: _____

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF A STUDENT ASSOCIATION? IF SO, WHICH ONE?

ARE YOU ACTIVE WITH A MOSQUE? IF SO, WHICH ONE?

APPENDIX D INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. Again, the purpose of this interview is to help me understand how Muslim-American college students see themselves and form their identity which in college and how they reconcile the various parts of their identity.

General Questions

1. How do you see yourself in the context of your current life in college?
2. What factors influence how you see yourself?
3. How are you perceived by others (Muslims and non-Muslims)?
4. Tell me about your experience as a Muslim-American student in college.
5. How has your experience as a Muslim-American student changed since you first entered college?
6. Discuss some of the challenges you experience or have experienced as a Muslim-American student in college so far.
7. Describe some of the positive experiences you have had as a Muslim-American student in college so far.
8. What does being a Muslim mean to you?
9. What does being an American mean to you?
10. How do you reconcile being an American with being a Muslim?
11. Describe your relationship with other Muslims.
12. Describe your relationship with other non-Muslims.

13. How does being a Muslim-American impact your academic success in college?

14. How does being a Muslim-American impact your career path?

a. How did you choose your academic major?

b. How did you choose your career path?

15. What could the university do to improve your experience as a Muslim-American college student?

APPENDIX E
FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

1. Describe your level of religiosity.
2. How does your religion impact your life as a college student?
3. What cultural group(s) do you affiliate with the most?
 - a. How do they influence your daily life as a college student?
 - b. How do they impact others' interactions with you?
4. How does your race impact your daily life as a Muslim-American college student?
 - a. How does your race impact others' interactions with you?
5. Describe your relationship with people of other racial groups.
6. How does your gender impact your daily life as a Muslim-American college student?
 - a. How does your gender impact others' interactions with you?
7. Describe your relationship with Muslim members of the opposite gender.
8. Describe your relationship with non-Muslim members of the opposite gender.
9. Tell me about your family background.
10. How does your family background impact your daily life as a Muslim-American college student?
11. How does your family background impact others' interactions with you?

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Abdo, G. (2005). Islam in america: Separate but unequal. *Washington Quarterly*, 28(4), 7-17.
- Abes, E. S., Jones, S. R., & McEwen, M. K. (2007). Reconceptualizing the model of multiple dimensions of identity: The role of meaning-making capacity in the construction of multiple identities. *Journal of College Student Development*, 48(1), 1-22.
- Abu-Laban, B., & Suleiman, M. W. (Eds.) (1989). *Arab americans: Continuity and change*. Belmont, MA: Association of Arab-American University Graduates.
- Adams, M. (2000). Showing good faith toward muslims. *HRMagazine*, 45(11), 52.
- Barazangi, N. H. (1989). Arab muslim identity transmission: *Parents and youth*. *Arab Studies Quarterly* 1, 1(2), 65-82.
- Bartkowski, J. P., & Read, J. (2003). Veiled submission: Gender, power, and identity among evangelical and muslim women in the united states. *Qualitative Sociology*, 26(1), 71.
- Bassey, M. (1981). Pedagogic research: on the relative merits of search for generalisation and study of single events. *Oxford Review of Education*, 7, 73-93.
- Baxter-Magolda, M. B. (1992). *Knowing and reasoning in college : Gender-related patterns in students' intellectual development* (1st ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Baxter-Magolda, M. B. (1998). Developing self-authorship in young adult life. *Journal of College Student Development*, 39(2), 143-156.
- Baxter-Magolda, M. (1999). Learning-centered practice is harder than it looks. *About Campus*, 4(4), 2.
- Baxter-Magolda, M. B. (2001). *Making their own way : Narratives for transforming higher education to promote self-development* (1st ed.). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Baxter-Magolda, M. B. (2007). Self-authorship: The foundation for twenty-first-century education. *New Directions for Teaching & Learning*, 109, 69-83.
- Belenky, M. F., Clinchy, B. M., Goldberg, N. R., & Tarule, J. M. (1986). *Women's ways of knowing: The development of self, voice, and mind*. New York: Basic Books.

- Berry, J. W. (1984). Cultural relations in plural societies: Alternatives to segregation and their socio-psychological implications. In N. Miller, & M. B. Brewer (Eds.), *Groups in contact: The psychology of desegregation*, 11-27. Orlando, FL: Academic Press.
- Berry, J. W., Phinney, J. S., Sam, D. L., & Vedder, P. (2006). Immigrant Youth: Acculturation, Identity, and Adaptation. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 55(3), 303-332.
- Britto, P. R., & Amer, M. M. (2007). An exploration of cultural identity patterns and the family context among arab muslim young adults in america. *Applied Developmental Science*, 11(3), 137-150.
- Cahill, S. E. (1989). Fashioning males and females: Appearance management and the social reproduction of gender. *Symbolic Interaction*, 12(2), 281-298.
- Carlson, J.A. (2010). Avoiding traps in member checking. *Qualitative Report*, 15(5), 1102-1103.
- Cass, V. (1979). Homosexual identity formation: A theoretical model. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 4, 219-235.
- Charmaz, K. (2000). Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.), 509-535. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Charmaz, K. (2009). Shifting the grounds: Constructivist grounded theory methods. In J. M. Morse, P. N. Stern, J. M Corbin, B. Bowers, & A. E. Clarke, (Eds.). *Development grounded theory: the second generation*, 127-154.
- Cole, D., & Ahmadi, S. (2003). Perspectives and experiences of muslim women who veil on college campuses. *Journal of College Student Development*, 44(1), 47-66.
- Connell, A., & Farrington, D.P. (2000). Bullying at school-an indicator of adolescents at risk for mental disorders. *Journal of Adolescence*, 23, 661-674.
- Cordin, A; & Sainsbury, R. (2006). *Using verbatim quotations in reporting qualitative social research: researchers' views*. Heslington, York, UK: The University of York.
- Coyne, I., & Cowley, S. (2006). Using grounded theory to research parent participation. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 11(6), 501-515.

- Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational research : Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson/Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Cross, W. E. (1971). The negro-to-black conversion experience: Toward a psychology of black liberation. *Black World*, 20, 13-27.
- Cross, W. E. (1991). *Shades of black: Diversity in african american identity*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Cross, W. E. (1995). The psychology of nigrescence: Revising the cross model. In J. G. Ponterotto, J. M. Casas, L. A. Suzuki & C. M. Alexander (Eds.), *Handbook of multicultural counseling*, 93-122. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- D'Augelli, A. R. (1994). Identity development and sexual orientation: Toward a model of lesbian, gay and bisexual development. In E. J. Trickett, R. J. Watts & D. Birman (Eds.), *Human diversity: Perspectives on people in context*, 312-333. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Denscombe, M. (1998). *The good research guide for small-scale social research projects*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Doyle, S. (2007). Member checking with older women: A framework for negotiating meaning. *Healthier Care for Women International*, 8(10), 888-908.
- Emerson, R. M. (1983). *Contemporary field research : A collection of readings*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Evans, N. J., Forney, D. S., & Guido DiBrito, F. (1998). *Student development in college : Theory, research, and practice* (1st ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Evans, N. J., & Wall, V. A. (1991). *Beyond tolerance: Gays, lesbians and bisexuals on campus*. Alexandria, VA: American College Personnel Association.
- Fenske, R. H., Hoffman, A. M., & Schuh, J. H. (1998). *Violence on campus : Defining the problems, strategies for action*. Gaithersburg, Md.: Aspen Publishers.
- Fine, M. (1995). *Building successful multicultural organizations*. Westport, CT: Quorum Books.
- Firestone, W. A. (1993). Alternative arguments for generalizing from data as applied to qualitative research. *Educational Researcher*, 22(1993), 16-23.
- Glaser, B. G., Strauss, A. L., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory; strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co.

- Grewal, Z. A. (2009). Marriage in color: Race, religion and spouse selection in four american mosques. *Ethnic & Racial Studies*, 32(2), 323-345.
- Haddad, Y. Y. (1996). Islamic values among american muslims. In B. C. Aswad, & B. Bilge (Eds.), *Family and gender among american muslims*, 19-40. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Haddad, Y. Y. (2000). The dynamics of islamic identity in north america. In *Muslims on the Americanization Path?* Edited by Y. Y. Haddad and J. L. Esposito, 1, 9-46. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Haddad, Y. Y., Esposito, J. L. (2000). *Muslims on the americanization path?* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Haddad, Y. Y. (2004). *Not quite american? The shaping of arab and muslim identity in the united states*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press.
- Haddad, Y. Y., Smith, J. I., & Moore, K. M. (2006). *Muslim women in america: The challenge of islamic identity today*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Haddad, Y., Y. (2007). The post-9/11 hijab as icon. *Sociology of Religion* 68(3): 252–67.
- Helms, J. E. (1990). *Black and white racial identity: Theory, research, and practice*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Helms, J. E. (1992). *A race is a nice thing to have: A guide to being a white person or understanding white persons in your life*. Topeka, KS: Content Communications.
- Helms, J. E. (1995). An update of helms' white people of color racial identity models. In J. G. Ponterotto, J. M. Casas, L. A. Suzuki & C. M. Alexander (Eds.), *Handbook of multicultural counseling* (pp. 181-198). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hermansen, M. (2000). Hybrid identity formations in muslim america. *Muslim World*, 90(1/2), 158.
- Huws, J., Jones, R. S., & Ingledew, D. K. (2001). Parents of children with autism using an email group: A grounded theory study. *J Health Psychol*, 6(5), 569-584.
- Jones, S. R., & McEwen, M. K. (2000). A conceptual model of multiple dimensions of identity. *Journal of College Student Development*, 41(4), 405-414.
- Josselson, R. (1973). Psychodynamic aspects of identity formation in college women. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 2, 3-52.
- Josselson, R. (1987). *Finding herself: Pathways to identity development in women*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Josselson, R. (1996). *Revising herself: The story of women's identity from college to midlife*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Khan, M. A. M (2000). Muslims and identity politics in america. In *muslims on the americanization path?* edited by Y. Y. Haddad and J. L. Esposito, 8, 7-101. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Kitchener, K., & King, P. (1981). Reflective judgment: Concepts of justification and their relationship to age and education. *Journal of Applied Development Psychology*, 2, 89-116.
- Kitchener, K., & King, P. (1990). The reflective judgment model: Transforming assumptions about knowing. In J. Mezirow & Associates (Eds.), *Fostering critical reflection in adulthood: a guide to transformative and emancipatory learning*, 159-179. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kurien, P. (1997). Books. *Identities*, 3(3), 444.
- Kvale, S. (1995). The social construct of validity. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 1, 19-40.
- Kwon, V. H. (2000). Houston korean ethnic church: An ethnic enclave. In *religion and the new immigrants: Continuities and adaptations in immigrant congregations*. Edited by H. R. Ebaugh and J. S. Chafetz, 109-123. Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press.
- Liebkind, K. (1992). *Ethnic identity: Challenging the boundaries of social psychology*. In G. Breakwell (Ed.), Social psychology and identity of the self-concept, 147-148. London: Academic Press.
- Liebkind, K. (1995). Bilingual identity. *European Education*, 27(3), 80.
- Lincoln, Y.S. (1995). Emerging criteria for quality in qualitative and interpretive research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 1, 275-289.
- Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2000). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In Y. S. Lincoln, & E. G. Guba (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.), 163-188. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. C. (2002). *Qualitative communication research methods*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.
- Marcia, J. (1966). Development and validation of ego-identity status. *Journal of Personality and social Psychology*, 3(5), 551-558.
- Marcia, J. (1980). Identity in adolescence. In J. Adelson (Ed.), *Handbook of adolescent psychology* (pp. 159-187). New York: Wiley.

- Marshall, S. E., & Read, J. (2003). Identity politics among arab-american women. *Social Science Quarterly*, 84(4), 875-891.
- McCarn, S. R., & Fassinger, R. E. (1996). Revisioning sexual minority identity formation: A new model of lesbian identity and its implications of counseling and research. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 24, 508-534.
- Miles, M., & Huberman, M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Moore, R., L. (1986). Religious outsiders and the making of americans. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Moye, M.; Palmer, B.; Pierson, C.; Pascarella, E. (2001). Do diversity experiences influence the development of critical thinking? *Journal of College Student Development*, 42(3).
- Muedini, F. (2009). Muslim american college youth: Attitudes and responses five years after 9/11. *Muslim World*, 99(1), 39-59.
- Nagel, J. (1994). Constructing ethnicity: Creating and recreating ethnic identity and culture. *Social Problems*, 41(1), 152-176.
- Nagel, J. (1995). American Indian ethnic renewal: Politics and the resurgence of identity. *American Sociological Review*, 60(0), 947-965.
- O'Neil, J. M., Egan, J., Owen, S. V., & Murry, V. M. (1993). The gender role journey measure: Scale development and psychometric evaluation. *Sex Roles*, 28(3-4), 167-185.
- Ossana, S., Helms, J., & Leonard, M. (1992). Do "womanist" identity attitudes influence college women's self-esteem and perceptions of environmental bias? *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 70, 402-408.
- Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (2005-). *How college affects students : A third decade of research* (1st ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Peck, E., & Secker, J. (1999). Quality criteria for qualitative research: Does context make a difference? *Qualitative Health Research*, 9(4), 552.
- Peek, L. A. (2003). Reactions and response: Muslim students' experiences on new york city campuses post 9/11. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 23(2), 271-283.
- Peek, L. A. (2005). Becoming muslim: The development of a religious identity. *Sociology of Religion*, 66(3), 215-242.

- Perry, W. G., Jr. (1968). *Forms of intellectual and ethical development in the college years: A scheme*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Pew Research Center. (2011). *Muslim americans: No signs of growth in alienation or support for extremism*. Washington, DC: The Author.
- Pew Research Center. (2007). *Muslim americans: Middle class and mostly mainstream*. Washington, DC: The Author.
- Phinney, J., S. (1989). Stages of ethnic identity development in minority group adolescents. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 1-2, 34-39.
- Phinney, J. S. (1990). Ethnic identity in adolescents and adults: Review of research. *Psychological Bulletin*, 108, 499-514.
- Phinney, J. S. (1992). The multigroup ethnic identity measure: A new scale for use with diverse groups. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 7, 156-176.
- Phinney, J. S., Berry, J. W, Vedder, P., & Liebkind, K. (2006). The acculturation experience: Attitudes, identities, and behaviors of immigrant youth. In J. W. Berry, J. S. Phinney, D. L. Sam, & P. Vedder (Eds.), *immigrant youth in cultural transition: Acculturation, identity and adaptation across national contexts*, 71-116. New Jersey, NJ: Lea INC.
- Piaget, J. (1952). *The origins of intelligence in children*. New York, NY: International Universities Press.
- Pipes, D., & Duran, K. (2002). Faces of american islam. *Policy Review*, (114), 49.
- Pitney, W. A. (2004). Strategies for establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Athletic Therapy Today*, 9(1), 45-47.
- Rayaprol, A. (1997). *Negotiating identities: Women in the indian diaspora*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Read, J. G. (2003). The sources of gender role attitudes among christian and muslim arab-american women. *Sociology of Religion*, 64(2), 207-222.
- Read, J. G., & Bartkowski (2000). To veil or not to veil? A case study of identity negotiation among muslim women in Austin, Texas. *Gender & Society*, 14(3), 395-417.
- Rest, J. (1979). *Development in judging moral issues*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

- Rest, J. (1986). *Moral development: Advances in research and theory*. New York, NY: Praeger.
- Rolfe, G. (2006). Validity, trustworthiness, and rigour: Quality and the idea of qualitative research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 53(3), 304-310.
- Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, 22(2), 63-75.
- Sirin, S. R., & Balsano, A. (2007). Pathways to identity and positive development among Muslim youth in the west. *Applied Developmental Science*, 11(3), 109-111.
- Sirin, S. R., & Fine, M. (2007). Hyphenated selves: Muslim american youth negotiating their identities across the fault lines of global conflict. *Applied developmental science*, 11(3), 151-163.
- Sirin, S. R., Bikmen, N., Mir, M., Fine, M., Zaal, M., & Katsiaficas, D. (2008). Exploring dual identification among muslim-american emerging adults: A mixed methods study. *Journal of Adolescence*, 31(2), 259-279.
- Smith, J. I., & NetLibrary, I. (1999). *Islam in america* [electronic resource]. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Starke, R. E. (1994). Case studies. In *handbook of qualitative research*, N.K. Denzin and Y.S . Lincoln, eds., 236-247. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stryker, S. (1968). Identity salience and role performance: The relevance of symbolic interaction theory for family research. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 30, 558-564.
- Stryker, S. (1980). *Symbolic interactionism: A social structural version*. Menco Park, CA: Benjamin/Cummings.
- Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Nadal, K. L., & Torino, G. C. (2008). Racial microaggressions and the power to define reality. *American Psychologist*, 63(4), 277-279.
- Swail, W. S., Perna, L. W., & Redd, K. E. (2003). *Retaining minority students in higher education : A framework for success*. An ASHE-ERIC Reader. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Ting-Toomey, S. (1985). *Toward a theory of conflict and culture*. In W. Gudykunst, L. Stewart, & S. Ting-Toomey (Eds.), Communication, culture, and organizational processes (pp. 71-86). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

- Tinto, V. (1975). Dropout from higher education: A theoretical synthesis of recent research, *Review of Higher Education*, 45(1), 89-125.
- Tobin, G. A., & Begley, C. M. (2004). Methodological rigour within a qualitative framework. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 48(4), 388-396.
- Turner, R. H. (1978). The role and the person. *American Journal of Sociology*, 84, 1-23.
- Walker, D., & Myrick, F. (2006). Grounded theory: An exploration of process and procedure. *Qualitative Health Research*, 16(4):547-559.
- Walton, J., & Sullivan, N. (2004). Men of prayer: Spirituality of men with prostate cancer: A grounded theory study. *Journal of Holistic Nursing*, 22(2), 133-151.
- Waters, M. C. (1990). *Ethnic options: Choosing identities in america*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (1987). *Doing gender*. *Gender & Society*, 1(2), 125-151.
- Whittemore, R., Chase, S. K., & Mandle, C. L. (2001). Validity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 11(4), 522-537.
- Williams, R. B. (1988). Religions of immigrants from india and pakistan: New threads in the american tapestry. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Williams, R. H., & Vashi, G. (2007). Hijab and american muslim women: Creating the space for autonomous selves. *Sociology of Religion*, 68(3), 269-287.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Farouk Dey was born in Algiers, Algeria in June of 1975. He received a PhD in Higher Education Administration and a Specialist in Education (Ed.S) in Higher Education Administration from the University of Florida, a Master of Business Administration (MBA) and a Master of Education in Counseling Psychology (M.Ed) from Washington State University, and a Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

While pursuing his doctorate in Higher Education Administration, Farouk has served in various leadership positions in higher education, including Director of the Career and Professional Development Center at Carnegie Mellon University, Chair of the Commission for Career Development with the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), Senior Association Director for the Career Resource Center at the University of Florida, and Residence Hall Director at Washington State University.

Throughout his professional career, Farouk has received numerous awards and recognitions, including the Superior Accomplishment Award by the University of Florida, the Dr. James E. Scott Fellowship at the University of Florida, the Rising Star Award by the National Association for College and Employers (NACE), Excellent in Innovation Award by NACE for his research on career services paradigms, and Distinguished Service Award by the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) for his many years of service to the association and profession.

Farouk conducted a PhD dissertation study that explored identity development of Muslim-American college students. Prior to that, he conducted other pilot studies that related to the experiences of Muslim-American college students and career services, and published a study that explored the emerging trends in college career services.