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# U.S. MUSLIM COLLEGE STUDENTS' SPATIALIZATION OF THEIR MUSLIMNESS: AN EXPLORATION OF MUSLIM LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL IDENTITIES ACROSS SOCIAL SPACES

Ibrahim Demir  
*University of New Mexico*

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**Ibrahim Demir**

*Candidate*

---

**Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies**

*Department*

---

This dissertation is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication:

*Approved by the Dissertation Committee:*

Dr. Carlos LópezLeiva, Chairperson

---

Dr. Rebecca Blum Martinez

---

Dr. Susana Martínez-Guillem

---

Dr. Mucahit Bilici

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ACROSS SOCIAL SPACES**

By

**IBRAHIM DEMIR**

BA, English Language Teaching, Dokuz Eylul University, 2009  
MA, TESL/TEFL, Northeastern Illinois University, 2013

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy  
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The University of New Mexico  
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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this multiple-case study was to explore how four US-born Muslim college students spatialized their linguistic and cultural identities within and across their social, academic, and religious spaces. The data were collected through detailed and in-depth data collection methods involving multiple sources of information: observations in the above-mentioned spaces, focus group interviews, autobiographies, drawings, images, and narratives. The data were analyzed through spatial analytical perspectives.

This study was drawn on Lefebvre's (1991) Spatial triad of *perceived*, *conceived*, and *lived* spaces, Soja's (1996) interpretation of spatiality and Thirdspace, and Bhabha's (2004) concept of Hybridity. This study presented how the US-born Muslim college students negotiate their collective and personal identities across these spaces. In the study, their schooling experiences were further analyzed to explore how they have nurtured their Muslimness.

The study findings revealed that US-born Muslim college student participants of this study developed a sense of *belonging* to both Muslimness and Americanness and experienced *otherness* also in both Muslim and American spaces. The participants further developed linguistically and culturally hybrid identities and wholistic self-perception through the enunciation of their differences in both Muslim and American spatial practices. This hybrid and *whole* identity; in other words, the Thirdspace of *Muslimamerican* identity was developed through the process of a constant negotiation of their spatial practices that disrupt norms that were socially and historically imposed across social spaces.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This multiple-case study explored how US-born Muslim college students spatialized their linguistic and cultural identities within and across social spaces such as home, college campus, and Islamic community center through spatial analytical perspectives. This study also aimed to present how the US-born Muslim college students negotiated their collective and personal identities across these spaces. The study's findings suggest that US-born Muslim college students experience sense of *belonging* and *otherness* in Muslim and American spaces, which dialectically leads to the development of a hybrid *Muslimamerican* identity of Muslimness and Americanness.

The subsequent parts of this introduction present who Muslims are in general, and in the United States and what their practices are. The introduction section further includes the statement of problem and the contextual background, the purpose and significance of this study, the research design and relevant the key terminology.

To begin with general demographics of Muslim Americans, they can be categorized into three groups: the American converts into Islam (i.e., a group largely represented by African-Americans and remnants of the Nation of Islam movement (Smith, 1999), the naturalized immigrants (i.e., who moved to the US seeking opportunity and benefiting from changes in immigration legislation initiated in 1965), and the children of immigrants (i.e., a group of young adults, mostly in high-school and college, and who are generally considered first generation of Muslim-Americans (Pew Research Center, 2007; Pipes & Duran, 2002; Smith, 1999)). This study is focused specifically on the identity development of the third group, US-born Muslim young adults who are currently in college or recently graduated.

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 (Pew Research Center, 2007; Pipes & Duran, 2002). 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 Americans, there have been a few studies that have focused on US-born Muslim college students' identities. Some of these studies 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 spatialization of Muslim-Americans. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the dynamics and impact of these dimensions and contextual factors to explore the identity development of Muslim-American young adults. Thus, this study provides an avenue to explore why it is important to understand the negotiation process of Muslim college students' identities.

This multiple case study focused on Muslim college students' linguistic and cultural identities across social spaces in the United States. This study was conducted by drawing upon Lefebvre's (1991) Spatial triad of *perceived*, *conceived*, and *lived* spaces. The representational spaces (Lefebvre, 1991) that Muslim college students interact in include the spaces such as university campus, home, and Islamic community center. The lived experiences of Muslims in these spaces reflect their self-perceptions and self-identifications both linguistically and culturally. How I approached Muslimness stems from this viewpoint. Instead of confining Muslimness into religious identity, I approached the topic as it holds two very important components, linguistic and cultural which provides a broader arena in which Muslimness is better understood because of the possibility of the tangible observations in the presence of practice of linguistic and cultural elements. Also, the approach of selecting the participants regardless their observation of Muslim practices alleviates the tension and questions of who can become Muslim, who is a better Muslim, is it religiosity that determines Muslimness. Thus, this study is not only about observing-practicing Muslims in a sense of religiousness, but also in a cultural mode.

The religion of Islam is a part of this Muslim cultural identity. Jaspal and Coyle (2010) researched how while some participants in the study reported strong religious beliefs, which appeared to underlie their religious attachment to the Liturgical Language; others appeared to

express religion as a cultural identity with the corresponding Liturgical as an aspect of their linguistic identity. According to Jaspal and Coyle (2010), the reason for identifying Muslimness as a cultural identity is that Participants' accounts appeared to suggest a loss of agency in the construction of their religious views and beliefs which in turn encouraged a tendency to express religion as a cultural identity rather than as a personal belief system.

Rosowsky's (2006) concept of liturgical literacy, also termed as liturgical language, emphasizes liturgical literacy as a cultural and linguistic practice that unifies Muslims as a community through a common language. As for Muslim linguistic identities, there is close connection between how Qur'anic language (Arabic) is being used among Muslims which reflect that they use unifying codes, especially in terms of daily use of liturgical language. It's a linguistic manifestation of Muslimness. So, for Muslims living in the United States, two languages become essential parts of linguistic identity: Arabic as liturgical language and English as being the language used in everyday life. English becomes lingua franca of Muslims (Bilici, 2012). As such, this study examines how the participants perceived themselves linguistically in connection to their practice of Arabic as liturgical and English as their native language, and also how they perceived themselves culturally in connection to their Muslimness and Americanness.

As for the collectivity and unification of certain elements in Muslimness are that heavily important areas of the liturgical language they use, Muslim celebrations of festivals, as part of cultural practices; for example, Eid al-Adha and Eid-al-Fitr, fasting during Ramadan, and performing the Tarawih (non-obligatory prayer performed during Ramadan every night collectively at the mosques). Mosques and Islamic Centers become a social space for Muslims where they gather occasionally. One of the major Islamic Centers in the US was one of the sites for this study. The cultural identity of Muslims is reflected through spatial practices, such as

dress styles, music they listen to, social spaces they prefer to be and not be in, inter-personal relationships both among themselves and with non-Muslims. More important questions are the ones about their perceptions, feelings, emotions, attachments, visibility, and non-visibility of their Muslimness in the spaces they navigate and how they negotiate their identities.

The participants of this study were Muslim college students. Thus, understanding their lived experiences on college campus and outside of was due relevant in this study. Islamic center and Home, as representational spaces, provided opportunities for the participants to sustain their Muslimness. In this study, college campus was envisioned as a space where the hosting culture, in this case, American culture would be more prevalent and distinct from the Muslim culture, which participant may practice at other places like home or the Islamic center. Also, Muslim cultural identity is framed as part of a global Muslim culture community. Thus, the participants were purposefully included regardless of what Islamic sects they belong to such as Sunni or Shia, and if they are actively practicing Islam as a religion or not.

What spatial strategies Muslim college students employ strategically in negotiating their Muslimness is significant in understanding how they live in and navigate across social spaces. Spatial perspectives are much needed in the sense that identity is not rigidly static, it is fluid and dynamic. Bilici (2012) observes that Muslim identity and Americanness are compatible and in reconciliation with each other. His observations also reflect that the dichotomizing approaches to the issue of being Muslim and American does not provide sufficient understanding about what Muslims experience on a daily basis as being Muslim citizens of the United States. English becomes part of Muslim linguistic identity in the United States because for some, it is their native language and as Bilici (2012) puts forward that native language is home, if the person is not home, he/she becomes foreign.



The participants of this study, in a way, brings a different dimension to the issue of understanding linguistic and cultural identities by speaking English as their native language. Yes, Qur'anic language (Arabic) can be part of unification and collective identity of Muslims even if their native language or mother tongue is not Arabic. Also, the concept of '*umma*', the "worldwide Muslim community" is part of this collective global cultural or religious identity. However, English is equally, if not more, significant as we observe the frequency of usage in everyday life. The case of the US born Muslim college students, in this study, who are either second or third generation immigrants unravel many subtleties that go unrecognized. Spatial perspectives and propositions of this study help us unfold the complexities of Muslimness in the United States through relying on real-context experiences of individuals who self-identify to be part of this unique community of people.

### **Statement of Problem and the Context of the Study**

Muslims are a minority group in the United States and have faced acculturation struggles either as immigrants or US born. The Muslim identity they hold demands courage and integration in the larger society as they have historically been discriminated and prejudiced (Çakı & Gülada, 2018). Discrimination against Muslim was escalated by post 9/11 and during and after presidential election in November 2016 (Farooqui & Kaushik, 2021). For instance, Susan (2004) stated that "A series of government laws and policies since the 1970's have steadily targeted Arab and Muslim non-citizens for selective interrogation, detention, harassment, presumption of terrorist involvement, and removal from the country" (p. 61). Sheridan (2004) reported a survey on Post 9/11 general discrimination against Muslims: Participants in the study were asked about their experiences of general discrimination via fourteen items which typified the more overt and transparent forms of racial and religious discrimination, such as seeing negative stereotypes of

one's ethnic or religious group in the media, experiencing a racially hostile atmosphere at work or in educational setting, violent or life threatening experiences, and significant racial or religiously fueled tensions in the local community. A minority of respondents (11 %) recorded an overall decrease in their experience of covert racism and religious discrimination after 9/11, and further 6 percent did not report any change. Most respondents however (83 %) did report increases.

Moreover, Haque (2004) defined Islamophobia as an unfounded fear of Islam and its followers. This perception makes practicing Islam difficult in Western societies. Muslim spaces of worship have been attacked in the US, which impacted Muslims attending to the obligatory prayers on Friday at the mosques. Muslim women face ongoing harassment for wearing headscarves and are discriminated against at work. Such attitudes help perpetuate negative stereotypes about Muslims and prevent non-Muslims from appreciating and benefiting from Islam's cultural and intellectual heritage. Liese (2004) categorized the levels of discrimination and prejudice Muslim students face in high school settings in the United States:

- 1- *Verbal Slurs*: " If they are not terrorists themselves, they are probably related to one!" (a high school student)
- 2- *Avoidance*: "It's not that I have anything against her, I don't even know. But I don't feel comfortable talking to her because she seems so different." (a 16-year-old high school student describing why she had not talked with a new Palestinian student who wears a headscarf.
- 3- *Discrimination*: "They were probably just joking around but the boys pulled off my headscarf when I was walking down the hall. Other kids told them they weren't right to do what they did, but I still felt embarrassed." 17-year-old Muslim student.

4- *Violence/Murder* (p, 68).

Many Muslim students feel a general sense of alienation and exclusion, especially since they represent a targeted minority in almost every educational setting. This is especially devastating for Muslims who were born and raised in the US. Liese (2004) furthermore reported that "10% of school personnel teach sameness 10% of school personnel teach differences, and 80% of school personnel are confused, ignorant, tired of the conversation" (p. 69). Perception of Muslims by others as foreign and harmful makes it challenging for Muslims to become visible through their Muslim traits and actions in social spaces, especially in educational settings. Such realities including prejudice may well be marked by the insecurities arising from cultural barriers between Muslims and non-Muslims in a context in which the former might perceive the latter to hold more negative views of them than they do (Banino, 2015). Thus, Muslimness becoming more visible through distinctive body markers such as skin colour, beard, traditional clothes and hijab could position Muslims in a priori stigmatized group.

The categorization of Muslimness as a discredited "Otherness" have been employed by non-Muslims to ghettoize Muslims within a stigmatized ethnoreligious difference, mindful of Muslims' unequal standing in society (Banino, 2015). Muslims when viewed as Others become problematic in intersubjective relationships and interactions in social spaces, especially for those who were born in the United States have been holding American national identity, at least American citizenship, and rights to manifest their linguistic and cultural identities.

The categorization of Muslims as the *other* was worsened by Muslim Travel Ban imposed by President Trump (Contreras, 2017). The travel ban affected Muslim students and their social interactions with their non-Muslims peers on college campuses. For instance, Mohamad Zandian, originally from Iran, is a doctoral student in biochemistry at Ohio State

University. His wife Parisa was detained at the John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York:

[My wife] was not feeling very well at the beginning [of being detained], but we will get through this. I came here thinking that here I will have a life like a dream, but it didn't sort out very well. I didn't think this would happen but now that it's happened, I'm just thinking about somewhere else. If I'm going to be an imprisoned person, I'd rather be imprisoned back home (Lewin, 2017).

These have just been a few of the stories of how Muslims have been affected by the travel ban. Both Muslims and non-Muslims, who live in the US, protested this travel ban until it was lifted. Attorneys who spent their nights at the airports to assist Muslims to be able to enter to the US were volunteer Muslim and non-Muslim Americans (Lewin, 2017). Muslims became at the forefront of the issue due to terrorist attacks and atrocities of ISIS (so called Islamic State) overseas. However, Muslims also received a lot of support by non-Muslim Americans who even wore hijab to show solidarity with Muslims.

Narrowing down the context to the sites of this multiple-case study, there have still been significant numbers of discriminatory acts and even violence against Muslims who reside in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Before giving those incidents as examples, I provide more contextual information on the sites that this research took place for data collection.

There are approximately 4,000 Muslims living in New Mexico according to recent the US Religion Census figures. Muslims' originating countries are India, Pakistan, Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Indonesia, Palestine, etc. The first site selected for this study was the Islamic center of New Mexico (ICNM) where Muslims attend Jumaa prayers (obligatory Friday prayers performed midday), perform five daily prayers either as collectively (Jumaa) or individually. The

center is both a worshipping space and a social space that includes a basketball court and a playground for kids outside the main building. The main building is divided into a man and a woman section with a glass window through which only women can see the other side. There is also a library room in this building and main gathering area with a kitchen and Imam room (Prayer leader and Center director). The gathering area is segregated from the worshipping room, because it is mainly used for celebrations such as Eid-al-Fitr and Eid-al-Adha (two main annual religious holidays), and also for Ramadan *iftars* (dinner eaten when Muslims break their Ramadan fast at the sunset during the month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the lunar Islamic calendar). Moreover, it is used as a classroom on Sundays where Muslim youth from elementary school to high school attend this supplementary school (to their regular public school they attend five days a week) in which they learn how to read Qur'an, practice Arabic literacy, cultural norms of Muslimness (or etiquette of Islam), and digital literacy (elementary and middle school age Muslim youth learn programming). The center administration added two mobile classrooms adjacent to main building across the basketball court due to the high demand for Sunday school. On Fridays when most of the Muslims living in Albuquerque join for prayer spend extra time after the prayer to see each other and engage in social gatherings. This is both the prayer and the social interaction they hold are spatial practices (Lefebvre, 1991) that specially occur at this time of the week.

This center has been attacked with a Molotov cocktail on October 24, 2014 (Armijo, 2014). Thankfully, nobody was injured but there was smoke damage on the main building. Islamic Center president Abdl Rahman shared his feelings to the news channel: "I don't feel safe after I've seen this scene because this is not the first time it happened," (Armijo, 2014, p. 1). Andy Brooks is a volunteer at the mosque, and he says he understands the rise of ISIS and other

events around the world may give people the wrong impression of the Islamic community as a whole: "You can't associate the viewpoints of a few extremists with a whole group. And that's the result of that kind of thinking," (Armijo, 2014, p.1).

Another site of this case study research included the campus of the University of New Mexico (UNM), where many Muslims attend for their education either as undergraduate or graduate students. UNM, as their integration and ethical policies, embraces students from all over the world and emphasizes inclusion of them regardless of their ethnicities, religion, and race, nationalities. UNM faculty and students supported Muslim students who were exposed to the travel ban in early 2017 through meetings with them in person and public letters stating the students and faculty from those countries (in the travel ban list) are supported and empathized. UNM is research university where there are Muslim scholars and successful and intelligent Muslim students. The Muslim students vary in terms of their ethnicity, nationalities, legal and immigration status. But one thing unifies them as Muslims: their Islamic practice either as a religion or culture. Considering that they are the minority group on campus demands a collectivity through sharing many commonalities even though they have internal diversity. There is a Muslim Student Association (MSA) at UNM like in many other universities in the US. The MSA room is in the Student Union building. Student Union Building (SUB) is three story-building (see Appendix II for the images of this space).

The first floor includes Graduate and Professional Students Association (GPSA) room, Theater, Barber Shop, a canteen, a bank branch, LoboCard office, Billiards room, a wide area in the middle of this floor where meetings/talks/presentations are hold, restrooms, and a section where there many organization rooms of which one of them is Muslim Student Association room. This room is used both as meeting, prayer (Salat), and a mini-Islamic library. This room is

very small that approximately maximum 10 people can be present together. Second floor of SUB is like a food court, with coffee shops and fast-food shops, where most of the students eat their breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

On the second floor, there are also ballrooms (where one of the iftars was organized by Islamic Center of New Mexico (ICNM), open to public during the month of Ramadan in 2015) and many armchairs where students study or just hang around. Third floor has many conference rooms and area where there are many armchairs for students' use. SUB is a significant part of the campus in the sense that a lot of social activities happen in this and surrounding of this building. It is part of the entire social space of campus. In November 2016, UNM provided a mini exhibition of Qur'an on the second floor of the Student Union Building (See the Appendix II for images of Qur'an standing in cubical glass). All the other buildings on campus include some the shops/facilities of SUB, but this is the space where there are a lot of interactions occur. The campus is open to public, and it is not rare to see many incidents occurring due to openness of the campus (some incidents are theft, sexual harassment, verbal and physical attacks, etc.).

However, the incidents occurred did not come only from outsiders of the campus, but also from very students of UNM. In November 2016, a UNM freshman said a fellow student wearing a Donald Trump shirt attempted to remove the hijab from her head and implied she was a terrorist while she was in Zimmerman Library on Election Day (Quintana, 2016). She became target due to her dress style that reflects her Muslimness. The Muslim student said that "The Muslim community is just as patriotic as the next Trump supporter, or even more so because we believe in the American beliefs of freedom of religion, freedom of speech. *We're just as American as you are*" (Quintana, 2016, p.18). She openly states that "I am not trying to expose anyone or get revenge. I want to show people this is real" (Quintana, 2016. p.19). This Muslim

student is aware of her identity both as an American and Muslim and she is assertive of what she has experienced on the campus. She considers both larger American space and educational space, as in this case, to be more inclusive and providing freedom for practicing her religion.

Another incident occurred in April 2015 due to a misconception about a panel UNM Muslim students organized. The panel aimed to present that Islam or Muslims in the US has no correlation with ISIS. Another UNM student who was not a Muslim posted a video clip of the Muslim Student Association's discussion panel as if they were promoting ISIS, the so-called Islamic State extremist group, went viral. Panel organizers said the point of the panel was to educate and dispel myths; his video, they said, has done the opposite (Jensen, 2015). In the video, the student narrates in his video that: "I am not okay with this as an American. I think we as a people should be scared this is the University of New Mexico." Referring to the panel held for the purposes of far away from what he thought (Jensen, 2015).

Even though Muslim students have experienced these kinds of hate messages, physical and verbal attacks on campus, they still use this space for the representation of their cultural identities by organizing Muslim festivities (diverse Muslim groups' activities), Ramadan iftars, Friday prayers at the MSA, and Muslim days. In February 2017, Muslim students at UNM honored "World Hijab Day" amid protests over President Donald Trump's travel ban on seven Muslim-majority countries (Contreras, 2017).

Although there has been extensive research focused on social challenges faced by Muslims in the US, the current literature has inadequately explored how US-born Muslim college students spatialize their linguistic and cultural identities within and across their social spaces such as home, college campus, and Islamic community center. This study is also aimed to present how the US-born Muslim college students negotiate their collective and personal



identities across these spaces. In the study, their schooling experiences were further analyzed to explore how they have nurtured their Muslimness.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore how US-born Muslim college students spatialized their linguistic and cultural identities within and across their social spaces such as home, college campus, and Islamic community center. This study also aimed to present how the US-born Muslim college students negotiated their collective and personal identities across these spaces. Muslim college students' schooling experiences were further analyzed to explore how they have nurtured their Muslimness. The study findings may provide in-depth understanding of how the Muslim college students perceive, conceive, and live their Muslimness in these spaces (Saktanber, 2007). The use of Qur'anic language as liturgical language and English as their native language was part of observation and analysis of their linguistic identity. English has become the language of Muslims, especially in this case of US born Muslims. The language they use in these spaces and with whom do they interact with in their liturgical language and English are important part of Muslim linguistic identity. Whether they translate or anglicize (for instance, do they say Assalamu alaikum or Peace or just Hello, hi, how are you doing, etc.) those liturgical terms when navigated in these spaces interacting with Muslims and non-Muslims is important in the self-reflexivity (Saktanber, 2007) of their linguistic identity.

Their cultural identities as part of Muslimness was analyzed through certain markers such as body markers, dress, music, personally important artifacts. Furthermore, their cultural identities were explored through, things they do in their daily life in general such as what they do in representational spaces, whom do they interact with in these spaces mostly, what kinds of events they attend to, what worldviews they hold, conception of lifeworld (Adamson, 1980;

Gramsci, 1957) and other things they do will reflect as part of their cultural identity as Muslims. The participants' lived experiences of schooling helped me understand to what extent they made their Muslimness visible on campus and more importantly whether schooling in general was nurturing to their Muslimness, both linguistically and culturally. Their collective identities as Muslims (which is composed of their culture [includes religious activities and etiquette]) and language practices—even if they are not from same ethnicities and their personal identities (gender, personal choices/preferences) as Muslims which are still part of their Muslimness—were also part of what this study explored.

### **Research Questions**

Main Question: *How do Muslim college students spatialize their Muslimness within and across in- and out-of-school spaces?*

Sub Questions:

1. How do college Muslim students negotiate their collective and personal identities across spaces (social, academic and religious)?
2. How are Muslim students' linguistic and cultural identities dialogically spatialized within and across social spaces?
3. How do their schooling experiences (both as a social and academic space) nurture or hinder their Muslimness?

### **Rationale and Significance of the Study**

This multiple case study findings may contribute to the fields of sociolinguistics, educational linguistics, and anthropological linguistics in terms of providing spatial perspectives to the case of US born Muslim students in the United States, especially regarding how US-born Muslim college students spatialize their linguistic and cultural identities within and across social spaces such as home, college campus, and Islamic community center in an urban city in Southwestern

U.S., in which literature was currently limited. Lefebvre's (1991) theory of Spatiality was utilized to unfold the complexities of the identities of Muslims that were not fixated. Identity is negotiated and shifts in linguistic and cultural practices depending on the spaces the participants navigated in and experienced by people (Lefebvre, 2014). Individuals employed spatial strategies both linguistically and culturally to be part of larger American society. Identity was constructed and is reconstructed every day based on the experiences encountered in the environment (Lefebvre, 2014). Identity and space have a dialectical relation and thus when we perceive, conceive, and live the spaces, we produce the space through our identities and our identities are produced by the spaces. This study presents a multidimensional approach to understand of how Muslims college students made sense of and lived their everyday life in these three representational spaces: Home, Campus, and Islamic center, wherein literature is currently limited.

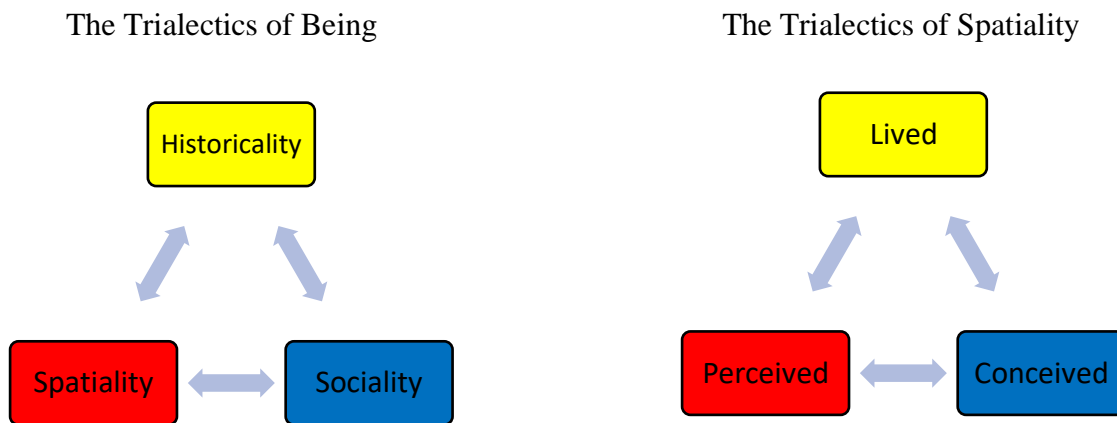
The study findings may be valuable for Muslims and non-Muslims to better understand what Spatiality of Muslimness means and how Muslims negotiate their Muslim cultural and linguistic identities in different spaces. This multiple case study is of significance in terms of providing a response to the growing public interest to know who Muslims are, what they do in public spaces and their community spaces (Goodwin, 2020). Through a Spatial perspective, this study also provides valuable insights to understand that Muslimness is not necessarily un-American and Americanness is not anti-Muslimness. Further, this study also contributes to the literature on Muslims by proposing a more dialogical space among Muslims and between Muslims and non-Muslims in understanding the struggles of being minority in the United States, especially in educational settings.

### **Theoretical Framework Overview**

Spatial theory of Henri Lefebvre (1991) was the framework used in analyzing the complexity of linguistic and cultural identity which does not hold a stagnant character due to the ongoing effect of each aspect of the spatial triad. These components of Spatiality are neither separate nor static, which means that their dynamic existence in the way they impact our self-identification and self-perceptions and our language and culture practices in a dialectical pattern as shown in figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*Trialectics of Being, Trialectics of Spatiality* (adapted and revamped from Soja, 1996).



The *perceived-conceived-lived* triad (in spatial terms: spatial practice-representations of space-representational spaces/spaces of representations) loses all force if it is treated as an abstract model (Soja, 1996). If it does not reflect the concrete, then its conversion to social world is extremely limited, also otherwise it becomes ideological mediation among others. That the *lived*, *conceived*, and *perceived* realms should be interconnected and dialectically or in Soja's (1996) terms trialectally, so that the 'subject' the individual member of a given social group, may move from one to another without confusion which is a logical necessity. Their coherence lies in their ability to be coded or to have a common language. Their existence is inter-dependent unless we are asserting as if the natural space was pre-given. All three spaces: *perceived*, *conceived*, *lived*

contribute to the production of space in different ways according to their qualities, attributes, according to the society or mode of production. They are neither simple nor stable, negative nor positive. They are conscious and unconscious at the same time. It is contingent upon the individuals' spatial strategies that they employ in this mode of production of these spaces.

Representational space is always alive: it has its own discourse. This excerpt describes: It has an affective kernel or center: Ego, bed, bedroom, dwelling, house; or: square, church, graveyard. It embraces the loci of passion, of action and of *lived* situations, and thus immediately implies time. Consequently, it may be qualified in various ways: it may be directional, situational or relational, because it is essentially qualitative, fluid and dynamic (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 42).

Then, representational spaces with their historicity and sociality comprise the lived experiences of everyday life, it has connections between the subject and the material or materials.

A spatial code is a means of *living* in that space, of understanding it, and of producing it, thus it brings together "verbal signs (words and sentences, along with the meaning invested in them by a signifying process) and non-verbal signs (music, sounds, evocations, architectural constructions" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 48). Spatial code plays role in creating the common discourse in a social space. All the spatial codes are material in the sense of a correspondence for what they represent. Among non-verbal signifying sets are in music, painting, sculpture, architecture, and certainly theatre, which in addition to a text or pretext embraces gesture, masks, costume, a stage, in short, a *space*. Non-verbal signifiers need to be characterized by a *spatiality* that is irreducible to the mental realm. Non-verbal signs themselves are space and have spatial effects in discourse, social relations of everyday life. Both language used and cultural practices become

part of these spatial codes which will part of the observation in analyzing the codes that signify linguistic and cultural elements actively present.

Lefebvre (1991) provided the example of the body and its parts for the Social and Spatial Practice that presupposes the use of the body: the use of the hands, members and sensory organs, and gestures of work as of activity unrelated to work. This is the realm of *perceived* (p. 40). Another example is for the bodily *lived* experiences which is both highly complex and highly significant, because 'culture' intervenes here, with its illusory immediacy, via symbolisms. Symbolisms, as part of culture as well, when collectively practiced indicating a common discourse for it becomes everyday life (lived) experience, rather than simply the symbols with no associated semantic significations. Symbols and signs in this sense becomes part of the spatial practice of a people, as in the case of Muslims.

### **Research Design Overview**

This is a multiple case study research (Yin, 2014). The research was about the case of US college Muslim students' linguistic and cultural identities. This case was bounded by the participants being all born in the United States and attended the same university, and self-identified Muslims. Since they belonged to same minority group, they experienced similar issues on campus and outside the campus in relation to their Muslimness. This multiple case study provided a real-world context of these young Muslims by collecting the data through observations in the spaces they frequently navigated: Home, school campus, and Islamic center. Focus group interviews, Drawings (as representations of the Self in each specific space), and autobiographies on schooling experiences were part of data collection methods. As a theoretical proposition, Spatial theory was utilized to understand how these Muslim individuals negotiated their Muslimness. Being born in the United States, they were distinct because this country was

home to them, and English was their native language. How they practiced and navigated their Muslimness spatially was what aspect that this research unfolded.

In each space, I was a participant observer, I met with each participant at least 3 times. The home visits and observations were at each of participants' house. In school spaces such as SUB or the choice of participants within the campus, and in Islamic center, we met as a group. I observed and took notes as part of data recording technique. After each space visit/meeting was complete, we had focus group interviews in the same space (except for the home). Focus group interview was the fourth meeting at that space (again, except for the home). In this way, I not only relied on what I observed, but also how and what they expressed about their thoughts and feelings about the interactions in the specific space that we visited. This process was very important because it helped me learn more about their Spatialities. The focus group interviews were all audio-recorded. Before having the focus group interviews, participants developed their drawings reflecting on and representing their selves in each of the specific spaces where we met. The discussion of each drawing was conducted for and at each specific physical space. The participants shared their drawings during the focus group interview. At the end of the study there was a final focus group interview to discuss with the participants their overall experience in these different social spaces in relation to their linguistic and cultural identities. The last focus group interview (Fourth one) was recorded audio-visually to capture their verbal and non-verbal expressions and emotions. They also wrote an autobiography on their schooling experiences as Muslims, they especially reflected on their time before and after attending the university. They all typed and shared their autobiographies with me via email and in person.

An *interpretive-spatial analysis* (Pugalis, 2009) was implemented as a main analytical process to code the data regarding participants' Muslimness and Americanness. The data

interpretive-spatial analysis focused on what the participants shared, the discourses and the verbal and non-verbal expressions that participants shared to describe their linguistic and cultural identities. For the establishment trustworthiness and validation, a triangulation process across multiple data were conducted.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

This study focused on US born Muslim college students' linguistic and cultural identities in the specific settings that had unique spatial experiences for the participants' identities. Through analytic generalizations (Yin, 2014), initial theoretical concepts referenced in the research design may rise after the completion of this case study:

An analytic generalization consists of a carefully posed theoretical statement, theory, or theoretical proposition. The generalization can take the form of a lesson learned, working hypothesis, or other principle that is believed to be applicable to other situations (Yin, 2014, p. 68).

The study presents an analytic generalization of the conceptual understanding of what Muslimness, as linguistic and cultural identity, is and is not. This study neither answers theological questions nor provides a full framework for Arabic and English Linguistics.

### **Definitions of Key Terminology**

*Islam*: Abrahamic monotheistic religion teaching oneness (unity) of God.

*Muslim*: A follower of the religion of Islam either religiously or culturally, regardless of the sect.

*Muslimness*: The quality or fact of being Muslim (Oxford Dictionary). The qualities of being Muslim comprise of shared linguistic and cultural practices as part of this identity.

*Islamophobia*: An unfounded fear of and prejudice against Islam and Muslims (Haque, 2004).

*Linguistic identity*: An identity associated with a language, including language elements



reflective of the identity that are from a social or cultural group (Andrews, 2010)

*Cultural identity*: An identity of belonging to a cultural group and part of an individual's self-perception and self-conception in relation to that group, sharing distinct cultural elements

*Spatiality*: An ongoing social and cultural processes of perceived, conceived, and lived experiences in a space.

*Qur'an*: Muslim holy book

*Tawheed*: Concept of oneness of God in monotheism

*Umma*: The worldwide Muslim community

*Hijab*: A headscarf worn by Muslim women

*Masjid*: A place of worship for Muslims. Interchangeably used with 'mosque'

*Salah*: Obligatory (five times a day) and non-obligatory prayers Muslims perform

*Wudu*: An obligatory ritual washing of certain body parts (depends on the sect) before every prayer

*Du'ā*: An act of supplication and invocation

*Sawm*: Fasting

*Kaaba*: The building at the center of Al-Masjid Al-Haram (sacred mosque) in Mecca

*Qibla*: The direction Muslims face during the cycle of five daily prayers, and constituting the focus of the pilgrimage (hajj)

*Hajj*: An obligatory pilgrimage all Muslims, health and financial status permitting, are enjoined to undertake at least once in their lifetime.

*Ramadan*: The ninth month of the lunar Islamic calendar during when Muslims fast from sunrise until sunset (without drinking or eating anything) every day.

*Iftar*: Dinner eaten when Muslims break their Ramadan fast at the sunset during

*Eid al-Fitr*: A religious (or cultural) holiday celebrated by Muslims worldwide that marks the end of Ramadan

*Eid al-Adha*: The Sacrifice Feast, the second of two Muslim holidays celebrated worldwide each year

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

I reviewed related literature gathered through databases related to fields such as: Cultural Studies, American Studies, Education, English, Linguistics, Sociology, Philosophy/Religious Studies, Anthropology. In the searches I used key terms such as: *spatiality, spatiality of language/linguistic and cultural identities, spatiality of Muslims, spatiality of Muslims in the United States, spatiality of Muslims' language/linguistic and cultural identities, spatiality of Muslims' language/linguistic identities of Muslims in the United States*. Different combinations of the key words were applied.

The scarcity of studies on Muslim identities from spatial perspectives was evident through this process. I diversified this review by making links to studies based on constructs of linguistic and cultural identities of Muslims, and spatialities. This literature review consists of four sections: 1. Influence of Social and Cultural Interactions on Muslim Identity, 2. Linguistic Identity: Liturgical Language and English, 3. Muslimness as a Cultural and Collective Identity, 4. Previous Research Studies on Spatiality and Muslim Identities.

### **Influence of Social and Cultural interactions on Muslim Identity**

Anti-Muslim racism has been a problem among Muslim communities living in the United States and may be linked to social and cultural interaction with non-Muslims. For example, Goodwin (2020) conducted a case study on unmasking Islamophobia: Anti-Muslim Hostility and white supremacy in the United States. Data were collected from Georgia's Anti-Masking Act as a confluence site for American white supremacy and American anti-Muslim hostility records through a systematic review. Data were analyzed, and study findings revealed that contemporary American white supremacy might best be understood as a religion-racial force, evidenced in part through law enforcement. The laws instituted to deter religion-racial terror now also work to

publicly discipline non-white, non-Christian bodies as well as any who would challenge the supremacy of American whiteness. These negative racial acts have prompted the United States Muslim population to fear exposing their identity, especially black American Muslims.

In another study, Tabhi & Khayr (2021) conducted a qualitative study on Anti-Muslim Racism and U.S Schools: Recommendation for practice, policy, and advocacy in the US. Data were collected through interviews with 10 Muslim students from 10 schools. The study findings demonstrated that white supremacists exclude Muslims from important national agendas. Also, eight out of ten students, including Muslims, Black, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer, and immigrants, reported increased anxiety. In addition, four out of ten students experienced verbal abuse from non-Muslim whites. Such an increase in discrimination negatively affects Muslim identity and cultural interaction with non-Muslims. Overall, anti-Muslim racism may be linked to Muslim identity and cultural exchange with non-Muslims. In the next paragraph, a discussion of how respect and fair treatment may be related to Muslim identity and cultural interaction with non-Muslim is presented.

Respect and fair treatment of Muslims has been a challenge in the United States and may be linked to Muslim identity and cultural interaction with non-Muslims. For instance, Sekerka and Yacobian (2018) conducted a qualitative study on fostering workplace respect in an era of anti-Muslim and Islamophobic United States. Data collection was done through a systematic review of the extant literature and a sample of anti-Muslim discrimination cases records. The research findings demonstrated that the marginalization of Muslims could foster anxiety, anger, or fear in the workplace. Such adverse reactions may cause incivility among coworkers, denigrating thoughtful regard for others. Although legal protections are intended to promote fairness, mandates do not always prevent discrimination of Muslim communities in the United

States. In another study, Savani et al. (2020) conducted a qualitative exploratory study on confronting Islamophobia through social work education: Cohort study in the United States. Data were collected through questionnaires with 88 students. Study findings revealed that there was a significant increase in knowledge and positive change in certain attitudes post-intervention. Implication includes the addition of a teaching component about Islamophobia to support social justice-specific competency, respect, and fairness in the treatment of Muslims at large in the United States.

In a different study, Caki and Gulada (2018) conducted qualitative research on the representation of Muslims in public Spot advertisements against Islamophobia: the case of breakdown of USA, Canada, and the Netherlands. Data were collected through systematic review and examination of 3 public spot advertisements against Islamophobia. Study findings reviewed demonstrated that Muslims had been discriminated against in the societies where they live with Islamophobia in public advertisements.

Negative media representation of Muslim faith and culture has been a big challenge to those who identified themselves with the Muslim faith in the past and may be linked to Muslim identity and cultural interaction with non-Muslims. For example, Pal & Wellman (2020) conducted a quantitative study on threat, fundamentalism, and Islamophobia: assessing the factors associated with negative attitudes towards Muslims in the United States. Data were collected through questionnaires with 267 Christian participants. Study findings revealed that prejudice is motivated by a perceived threat and realistic threat. There is a significant relation between threats and Islamophobia among US Christians towards Muslims. This indicates that high religious fundamentalism predicts Islamophobia, most strongly when a real danger is

salient. Negative perceived information relayed to the public regarding Muslims through media affects Muslims' social and cultural interaction with non-Muslims.

Hague et al. (2019) also conducted a mixed study on Microaggressions and Islamophobia: Experiences of Muslims across the United States and clinical implications. Data were collected using questionnaires with 314 adult Muslims across the United States. Research findings revealed that Muslim stress levels are comparable to the stress levels of other marginalized groups in the United States. Therefore, Muslims tend to feel marginalized and misrepresented by the media in both their faith and socio-cultural lives.

Furthermore, the media representation tainted the perceptions and knowledge about their culture and interaction with non-Muslims based on unbiased and unrealistic claims regarding their Muslim faith. Overall, negative media representation regarding Muslims may be linked to Muslim social and cultural exchanges with non-Muslims. In the next paragraph, a discussion of how religious discrimination may be related to Muslim social and cultural interaction is presented.

Religious discrimination of the Muslim faith has been on the rise and may be linked to Muslim social and cultural interaction with non-Muslims. For instance, Samari et al. (2018) conducted a qualitative study on Islamophobia, *Health, and Public Health: A systematic literature review in the United States*. Data were collected by a systematic review of 111 unique peer-reviewed articles. Study findings revealed that Islamophobia's effects result in religious discrimination of the Muslim faith. The study showed an association between Islamophobia, health, and socio-ecological determinants of health among Muslims. Religious discrimination plays a significantly negative role in positive spiritual health among Muslims and non-Muslims.

Farooqui and Kaushik (2021) conducted qualitative research on understanding Islamophobia through the eyes of American Muslim children: Religious bullying and school social work interventions in the United States. Data were collected using child participatory methodology with 26 Muslim children studying in grades 5-8 at Islamic schools in the United States. Study findings demonstrated that children's perception of Islamophobia often becomes a projection of parental influences on religion, and it may influence the overall perception of religious discrimination among non-Muslims. Religious discrimination between Muslims and non-Muslims may be linked to Muslim social and cultural interaction.

### **Linguistic Identity: Liturgical Language and English**

Linguistic identity is an identity associated with a language, including language elements reflective of the identity that are from a social or cultural group (Andrews, 2010) Muslims in America use two languages as part of their linguistic identity and these languages become the common language especially between diasporic Muslims (Sayyid, 2010) and Muslims in other parts of the world. Arabic and English are universal languages for Muslims that united them (Bilici, 2012). Liturgical language (LL) which is Qur'anic language (Arabic) and English are the languages that are mostly used in everyday life of Muslims in the United States, besides their mother language if other than Arabic or English. The use of liturgical language are the spatial codes through which Muslims build a sense of collectivity and community as symbols of Muslimness. The Muslim identity of the community is also partially determined by its common use of the liturgical language. It is one of the unifying elements which this community shares with the Islamic world (Rosowsky, 2006). Also, they use it as part of their daily prayers, reading Qur'an, greeting each other, and also during the Friday khutba (sermon) either partially or

completely, and also translated to English. However, English became the common language both among Muslims and between Muslims and non-Muslims.

They use English in their everyday life both as part of communication with wider society, but also as their native language if they were born in the United States. Liturgical language also has become part of English either through transliteration (Romanization) or translation which nevertheless is unique to Muslim language as only Muslims understand each other in the liturgical use. Liturgical literacy or liturgical language involves exclusively ritual and devotional practices in connection to words, texts, and scripts (Rosowsky, 2006). Liturgical literacy of Islam is Qur'anic Arabic.

Liturgy often is derived from the central scripture of the religion involved. The liturgy of Islam is derived from Qur'an (Rosowsky, 2006). In Jaspal and Coyle's study (2010), for some Muslim participants, greater identification with Arabic as their liturgical language, with this language being constructed as pure and homogeneous, and the systematic denial of the importance of heritage languages (HL) among Muslims perhaps afforded them a stronger sense of collective identity. This collective identity was seen as important, both numerically, encompassing Muslims from a variety of ethnic groups who share the same LL, and ideologically, since this language was constructed as inherently superior to the HLs (Jaspal & Coyle, 2010). However, Heritage languages were constantly being negotiated by participants, both cognitively and discursively (Jaspal & Coyle, 2010). Language becomes a symbol of group identification and distinctiveness. to the LL and why religious groups have come to prioritize use of the LL in religious settings. Chapters and verses of Qur'an are used regularly in congregational and individual prayers as part of liturgical language. Majority of Muslims, compulsorily, pray reading the first chapter of the Qur'an in their five daily prayers individually



and during collective prayer (Jamaat) is read aloud. It is also read in times of joy and distress. In Rosowsky's (2006) study, the community who were the subjects do not speak or understand Arabic, the language of the Qur'an. When they pray, they use their liturgical language which is Arabic. They know a few common interjections and sayings in Arabic which they will use regularly in conversation such as 'al hamdu lillah' (thanks be to God), 'subhan Allah' (glory to God) and 'astaghfirullah' (May God forgive us). These sayings used in conversations can be extended to many more such as 'salam alaikum' (Peace be upon you), and as a response '(wa) alaikum salam', when someone sneezes usually expresses thanks to God by saying 'al hamdu lillah' (thanks be to God) and if someone around, they wish him mercy from God for him or her: 'yarhamuk Allah' (God bless you or God's mercy be upon you), 'Jumaa Mubarak' (May you have bountiful Friday or Happy Friday!), 'Eid Mubarak' (Happy Eid[for both of the holy festivities of Muslims]), etc. In this way, liturgical language, used as spatial codes, becomes the language of the Muslim community.

In the case of mosques, with a majority of members coming from non-Arabic speaking countries, Muslims often organize Arabic classes that are attended by many Muslims' willing to learn the language of the Qur'an (Marranci, 2003). Jaspal and Coyle (2010) also called the use of liturgical language as 'the sanctification of language', the process through which Arabic is conceptualized as the most desirable linguistic code for Muslims that reflect religio-linguistic identity. Rosowsky (2006)'s findings showed that it was the Qur'anic Arabic that was the most closely preserved and nurtured even though the participants spoke Urdu and Punjabi and he connects this to the importance of a cultural practice of a community which "is overwhelmingly evident that liturgical literacy is its most important cultural practice" (p. 317). It is so widely used that Muslimness in the US is assumed to be synonymous to Arabness/ Arab identity.

Rosowsky (2006) also asserted that as a form of community education, liturgical language had provoked little research, either in terms of community culture and identity or in terms of its relationship with other, including schooled, literacies. it may be employed as a tool to strengthen the sense of community and 'oneness.'

English has become a *Muslim language* because a significant number Muslims in the United States and worldwide speak it as their native language while practicing Islam as their religion/culture (Bilici, 2012). It helped build a collective identity among Muslims through the extensive usage of English in the US. In a way, they have surpassed the issue what language should represent Muslimness due to their internal diversity. Also, use of English, either as a native language or second language allow Muslims to be member of larger society of the US linguistically (Bilici, 2012). Language in this sense becomes a symbol of membership in and belonging to a group or to a religion beyond its function as a communication tool (Bilici, 2012; Marranci, 2003). One of the findings of Marranci's (2003) study showed that none of the informants ever mentioned Arabic as the ummah's language. Instead, the ummah-Arabic relation shifted to that between ummah and English. The significance of English as Muslim language also because US born Muslims, especially, use as their native language: "A native language is home. The native speaker feels at home in the world because the world is *in* him, in the form of habitus. But when we speak another (foreign) language, we are in a foreign world" (Bilici, 2012, p. 66). This perspective has been challenged by Muslims to emphasize the necessity of use of liturgical language or Arabic language as the Muslim Language in order the maintain the purity of concepts in Islam. Thus, some considered the translation of liturgical terms into English as the distortion of meaning intended. Some even considered that Qur'an cannot and should not be translated into English (Jaspel & Coyle, 2010). English has Roman orthography which is

completely different than Arabic orthography. This difference caused disagreements on the correct transliteration of liturgical terms because there is no standard for transliteration of Arabic words into English (Bilici, 2012; Rosowsky 2006). Knowledge in liturgical literacy is bound up, not with understanding, but with accurate and precise pronunciation and melodious and correct recitation (Rosowsky, 2006). The following is the list present as the differences in transliterations and translations:

Samples:

Transliterations (Romanization):

Hajj vs hadj  
 Jumma, jummah, juma  
 Mecca, meccah  
 Kaaba, kaabah, ka'ba, ka'bah,  
 Qibla, qiblah  
 Umma, ummah  
 Moslim, Muslim  
 Qur'an vs Koran  
 Momin vs Mu'min  
 Mohammed vs Muhammed, Muhammad  
 Jannat, Jannah, Janna  
 Da'wah, dawah, da'wa  
 Hijra vs hijrah  
 Inshallah vs InshaAllah, etc.

Translation differences:

dua (supplication) vs prayer(salat)  
 insha'allah (God willing) vs good luck  
 almsgiving(zakat) vs charity (sadaqah)  
 God vs Allah, khuda or Khoda  
 religion vs deen  
 al-Islam vs Islam  
 mosque vs Masjid  
 Dunya vs World  
 Hereafter, Akhira(t)  
 Jannah vs heaven (paradise)  
 Islamiyah (Islami) vs Islamic, etc.

The nonstandard forms of both transliteration and translations stems from the influence of the native or heritage languages Muslims speak. Conceptualization of certain elements in Islam is shaped how they interpret the meanings according to how different meanings are emerged because of the need of the space they live in. In American space (Bilici, 2012) for instance, Islam, culturally speaking, finds different meanings because of distinct social needs and worldview, in general. Linguistic identity in this sense merges with cultural identity through which Muslims also conceptualize certain meanings of the Qur'an depending on the space they navigate in.

Despite calls for the use of English in mosques, it has been observed that language shift in religious contexts can be viewed as a threat to the true expression of ethno-religious identity (Jasper & Coyle, 2010). If we take it further, it is assumed that using English causes adoption of Western beliefs and it is not uncommon that some Americans (either converted to Islam or adopted it from their families) move to or live in Arabic-speaking countries, especially Saudi Arabia, to advance their Arabic language. Once they see English as a Western language, they even try to abandon it due to misconceptions that English cannot convey as accurately as Arabic does. This impacts how they perceive their identity as a Muslim, and they voluntarily abandon their previous identity totally by embracing language of Arabic totally as part of their Muslimness. How, where and when Muslims use liturgical language and English demands more comprehensive research due to the complexity of how individuals perceive them, especially considering the case of Muslims in the US as being so stigmatized and targeted.

### **Muslimness as a Cultural and Collective Identity**

Identity is a category, a social positioning, and an affect and the statement "I am" always carries its history, traces, and recognition. It is only through relations with others that identity can be known (Skeggs, 2008). Spaces and spatialities that individuals experience dynamically define who they are and who they are not: "Being-for-the-self and identity-for-the-other" (Lin, 2008). People who find themselves in subordinate positions, as in some cases of Muslims, can attempt to construct positive identities for themselves in their struggles to gain recognition (Lin, 2008). Cultural identity becomes spatial in times where individuals negotiate their identities to maintain positivity and inter-cultural relationships. Cultural identity is an identity of belonging to a cultural group and part of an individual's self-perception and self-conception in relation to that group, sharing distinct cultural elements. Britto and Amer (2007) defined cultural identity as a

multidimensional construct referring to a developing sense of self as a member of one or more groups. The term as used in the past captures the interplay between religion, culture, ethnicity, and national identities. In the case of Muslims, religious practices, dress styles, body markers (e.g., beard), Muslim festivities and celebrations, after-*Jumaah* meetings/social interactions at the mosque, shared universal beliefs and conceptions about lifeworld make up the cultural identity of Muslims. These cultural elements and cultural practices are spatialized distinctly again due to the internal diversity among Muslims. Even though they differ in forms and functions, they belong to Muslimness, and they become spatial codes and symbols of Muslimness.

When analyzed as a cultural/religious group, Muslims identify themselves with cultural group of Muslims, specifically through the concept of *ummah*, the worldwide Muslim community. Religion plays a major role in this group identification based on concept of *tawheed*, the fundamental concept of oneness of God and ultimately unity of *umma* (Bilici, 2012). This concept is so much emphasized so that Muslims even build and maintain inter-faith relationships with other communities of monotheistic belief (This is also my optimistic introspection). For some, religious identity might refer to a system of religious beliefs and to religious/spiritual experience whereas for others, it could be akin to a form of cultural identity (Jaspal & Coyle, 2010). In Jaspal and Coyle's (2010) study, participants' accounts appeared to suggest a loss of agency in the construction of their religious views and beliefs which in turn encouraged a tendency to express religion as a cultural identity rather than as a personal belief system. Curtis' (2009) findings also showed that first-generation immigrants said that although they were culturally Muslim, they were not practitioners of the religion. Some secularly minded Muslims wanted nothing to do with Islam (Curtis, 2009). But, a large number of Muslims, of various

racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds, saw new meaning in their religious identity in the late twentieth century (Curtis, 2009).

Although linguistic identity and cultural identity is sectioned separately in this review, previous research suggest intertwinement of both and overlaps between the two. For instance, while some participants reported strong religious beliefs which appeared to underlie their religious attachment to the liturgical language, others appeared to express religion as a cultural identity with the corresponding liturgical language as an aspect of this identity (Jaspal & Coyle, 2010). The problem is that it is assumed that American and Muslim identities are opposing and distant to each other (Bilici, 2012). Thus, Muslims with a distinct cultural identity has been as cultural aliens even if they were American citizens (Bilici, 2012). They either feel or they actually don't fit in larger so called "American culture". The dilemmas and/or reconciliations Muslims have between their Americanness and Muslimness have become the subjective reality in the United States: "Translation of Islam into American context requires both spatial and temporal boundary work, where immigrants and converts alike engage in cultural fine-tuning and seek convergence between their practices" (Bilici, 2012, p. 62). The spatial experiences are not the same for all Muslims, they differ according to how they conceive and perceive Americanness, and dialectically their spatial practices linguistically and culturally lived through. Britto and Amer (2007) stated that "One of the critical tasks in cultural identity formation is navigating between the immigrant home culture and the more mainstream culture". But what happens when home culture and mainstream culture exists in the same space: United States, especially for those who are born to families who are from mainstream culture (A fuzzy word that doesn't look into complexities of culture) or even if they were born to families who are immigrants it should not mean they somehow automatically internalize family culture as we

observe that immigrant families strive for maintenance of home culture. It is much more complex than just dichotomizing in such a way that as if the individual makes a drastic shift between the two cultures.

What is home for Muslims, then? Bonino (2015) proposes that for diasporic Muslims who don't identify with nationality Muslimness becomes the condition of homelessness. I propose that Muslimness, for some, is universal and does not have borders. Britto & Amer (2007) suggest further understanding cultural identity in Arab Muslim young adults, the next sets of work should examine the function of religion, the role of parental characteristics (such as their acculturation strategies and parenting norms and behaviors) on the development of the young adults' cultural identity. Home space where cultural identities are manifested (and formed) demand more research to understand how individuals' cultural identities flows among different spaces, from home to school and outer world. Cultural identity is negotiated, dynamic, fluid, can be both instrumental and intrinsic, practiced spatially because perceptions and conceptions effect how we live/enact identities. Examining the spatiality of Muslim beliefs focuses on the politics of space that arise from the negotiations and conflicts that have often ensued from the attempts of Muslims to produce or stake a claim upon a designated 'Muslim space' (Gale, 2007). In the study Bonino (2015) conducted in Edinburgh, consistent pattern observed related to the ways in which distinctive body markers and visible 'signs of Muslimness' (such as skin colour, beard, traditional clothes, and hijab) could position Muslims in an a priori stigmatized group. The study (Bonino, 2015) also found that visibly displaying a Muslim identity might negatively impact on relations with a small number of non-Muslims who target Muslimness with a variety of discriminatory weapons, from cultural prejudice to physical violence.

The essentialization of Muslimness precludes the use of the front-stage techniques of self-presentation that might otherwise help Muslims to negotiate their multiple identities positively in different sociocultural spaces, to ease interactions with non-Muslims and to define their own social positioning on a more equal level (Bonino, 2015). "Most Muslim community leaders and clerics seek to promote two often contradictory imperatives. They want new generations to interact with the majority culture and be fluent in it, but they also want them to maintain their Muslim identity" (Bilici, 2012, p. 39). Once they spatialize their identities strategically, the contradictions turn into solutions to be able to live as a Muslim in American space. Contradictions stem from seeing Muslimness in conflict with the culture of majority instead of seeing it part of their total identity. However, we cannot deny that prior categorizations of Muslimness as a discredited Otherness have been employed by non-Muslims to ghettoize Muslims within a stigmatized ethnoreligious difference, mindful of Muslims' unequal standing in society (Bonino, 2015, p. 390).

The concept of *umma* or *Muslim umma* is the core conception that unifies Muslims in the United States and worldwide (Bilici, 2012; Curtis, 2009; Gale, 2007; Marranci, 2003; Mohammad, 2013; Sayyid, 2010). The theological meaning of *umma* is 'the worldwide Muslim community'. Within mosques (as social spaces) and prayer rooms, Muslims have to accept the existence of different Islamic traditions and to reconstruct the ummah from an Islamic, rather than a national or ethnic, viewpoint (Marranci, 2003). Thus, many Muslims practically utilize concept of ummah through the hardship and displacement that act of migration involves. Although they come from different countries, which may even be hostile to each other, Muslim immigrants often feel part of "one family". They form a collective identity through this symbolic unity that their spatiality is not confined to physical spaces. Wherever they live, their association



to *umma* stays with them as part of their Muslimness. The concept of *tawheed* is the source that brings them together as *Muslim umma*. Spatial practices such as *salat* (prayer) (Akeel Bilgrami, 1992; Bilici, 2012; Chiodelli, 2015, Gale, 2007; Mohammad, 2013) when performed collectively also becomes part of Muslim collective identity, especially during the congregational gathering for *Jumaa* (Friday prayer). *Wudu* (Gale, 2007), although not collective act, it becomes part of cultural practice that is conducted before prayers by every Muslim worldwide. The *Kaaba*, which is metaphorical and also a symbolic unification of Muslims, forms the keystone of other forms of interlocking spatiality, in Islam, providing the *qibla*, direction in which Muslims face during the cycle of five daily prayers and other non-obligatory prayers (Bilici, 2012; Curtis, 2009; Gale, 2007). *Qibla*, as an abstract space, finds its concreteness through the *Kaaba*, the representational space unites Muslims that is racially, ethnically, culturally, and even linguistically diverse (Bilici, 2012).

Dress styles of Muslims, although holds diversity, manifest Muslim cultural identity. Even though the styles may change, they follow the etiquette of Islam such as women covering their hair and body, men covering the knees and sometimes hair, both men and women wearing loose-fitting clothes, etc. Practiced spatially among Muslims, some wear certain styles (following Islamic etiquette) during *salat* (or *salah*) or entering the mosque or reciting/listening to the Qur'an, and some wear same clothes regardless of the purpose. In both cases, the dress as spatial code reflects their cultural identities. The following is the list of samples of dress types:

Head cover: kufi, a skullcap made of African kent cloth

Tarboosh: a cylindrical and often red.

Kuffiyah: an Arab headdress secured by a band around the head.

Thobe: an ankle-length, often white garment

Jellaba: woolen cloak (African American)

Shalwar kameez (South Asian): a combination of loose pants and a tunic.

Hijab: a head scarf (often silk or cotton). Some women wear hats or bandanas

Jilbab: loose-fitting, full-length garment

Niqab: covering every part of body but the eyes

Burqah/burqa: outer garment covering the whole body from head to toe

A wondering question is that what US born Muslims (especially if their family is not immigrant) prefer in dress style. They either adopt the other ethnic group's dress style or they Islamize their American way of dressing. Also, due to visibility as a Muslim in public, Muslim women especially experience hardships representing a Muslim identity. For some, it becomes an internalized part of the identity and does not reflect any challenge for being in public in *hijab*. Both for men and women, this is specifically significant in understanding how they spatialize their Muslim cultural identity through dress styles. In school spaces, this escalates issue of Muslim visibility and adopting or abandoning the mainstream culture. Curtis' (2009) states that in the United States some families believe that sending their children to public school was a good preparation for "real life." Others saw mainstream culture as dangerous and unsafe, asserting that Muslim schools were needed precisely to shield their children from violence, unhealthy sexuality, and drugs. Curtis (2009) also presented that Muslims participate in American cultural practices by adding their Muslimness such as in the case of "Muslim Girls Scouts and Muslim Boy Scout".

### **Previous Research Studies on Spatiality and Muslim Identities**

Sirin and Fine's (2008) book, *"Muslim American Youth: Understanding Hyphenated Identities through Multiple Methods"* is a rich study on how first- and second-generation youth construct their identities as both Muslim and American. The metaphor of the hyphen works powerfully throughout to represent the "psychological hinge where identities cast 'in tension' are at once joined and separated" (p. 195). Sirin and Fine (2008) used mixed methods to produce a deeply layered view of young people busily engaged in the "psychological labor of 'working the hyphen'" (p. 115). The study foregrounds the voices of youth. Focus groups and open-ended

survey responses are interwoven with quantitative results. Six interludes between chapters introduce Aisha, Sahar, Yeliz, Ayyad, Taliya, and Masood—young people diverse in age, gender, country of origin, and personality, sharing their in-depth life histories in this study. Visual images through identity maps the youth draw in response to the question of how they see themselves as Muslim Americans. Patrice, a twenty-two-year-old African American, builds the word *Muslim* from tiny American flags and *American* from Islamic crescent moons and stars. Muhammad, a fourteen-year-old Arab American, draws a large face split down its center with the word *American* on one side and *Muslim* on the other: the American side cries "tears for racism" (84). The study itself is an attempt to "work the methodological hyphen" (p. 200) between quantitative and qualitative ways of knowing. Redefining triangulation, the authors seek not just validation but places where "data sets diverge". In their *case, focus groups* uncovered patterned gender differences not evident in the survey findings.

Sirin and Fine (2008) reported that while young Muslim American women tend to respond to discrimination by "engaging" and "educating," men more often "recoil" and "retreat." They note that the current political context, which casts Muslim women as oppressed and men as terrorists to be feared, offers each sex different possible responses to discriminatory treatment. Still, the authors find that youth of both sexes use a variety of coping strategies in response to stress and racism—most often relying heavily on spirituality, supportive friendships, and engagement in political action. Sirin and Fine (2008) further found that the youth most actively engaged in the Muslim community are also those most engaged in mainstream U.S. society. With a small number of exceptions, youth do not perceive inherent conflict between Muslim and American identities; rather, they generally see "the current conflict as induced by political leaders rather than inherent in religious or cultural practices" (Sirin & Fine, 2008, p. 130).

Overwhelmingly, most youth in the study seem to desire and develop *integrated selves* (fusing facets of each culture), with a smaller, mostly male group developing *parallel selves* (treating *Muslim* and *American* as separate, but not mutually exclusive, domains of identity). The authors draw from various disciplines—history, sociology, anthropology, political science—to inform the primarily psychological study.

Critical race, feminist, and postcolonial theories support their analyses. They bring a current and historic lens, foregrounding the impact of 9/11 on the “moral exclusion” of Muslim Americans while situating it in the historic “American tradition” of denying full citizenship rights. They attend to "*culture and identity, surveillance and discrimination, coping and resilience, community and individual, gender roles and family roles, local and global politics*" (Sirin & Fine, 2008, p. 15). This more-is-more approach sometimes leaves the reader wishing for less. Provocative findings are sometimes glossed over, including, for example, the question of why more males than females develop parallel selves, or how these young people negotiate their highly critical, yet deeply patriotic, approaches to civic engagement.

Gale (2007) focused on four areas in which geographical research on Islam has been most pronounced: Muslim residential segregation and ‘community cohesion’; the relationship between Islamic dress codes and spatial context in the articulation of Muslim gender identities; the contestation of space that has attended the architectural expression of Muslim identity in urban landscapes and the spatial politics embedded in the construction of Muslim identities at simultaneously national and transnational scales. While the predominant focus is therefore geographical, the article also establishes linkages to other writings on the spatiality of Islam where relevant to the specific themes under discussion. The article presents a heavy load of concepts of space and how it relates to Muslim identity. Even though it does not follow

qualitative research method, except for thick descriptions of the spaces Muslims live through, it provides us a significant amount of data on the conceptualization of lived spaces of representations (or representational spaces).

There are two distinct yet overlapping ways in which the relationship between Islam and space has been approached in this study (Gale, 2007). The first of these focuses on the ways in which *texts, sites and ritual practices interrelate* to give rise to forms of sacred geography and topography in Islam. The notion of 'sacred space' refers to the worshipping places of Muslims. However, it is also the case that certain sites are imbued with particular significance, lending an important spatiality to Muslim beliefs and practices. The Ka'ba, for instance, forms the keystone of other forms of interlocking spatiality in Islam, providing the direction (qibla) toward which believers face during the cycle of five daily prayers, and constituting the focus of the pilgrimage (hajj) that all Muslims, health and financial status permitting, are enjoined to undertake at least once in their lifetime. Furthermore, there are ways in which space and place gain significance for Muslims through repeated, ritual use. Thus, while mosques are not consecrated in the manner of churches or synagogues, their use for prayers, always preceded by ritual washing (*wudu*), as part of spatial practice before the prayer, gives them an important status as religious sites.

Gale (2007), like many other authors on Islamic/Muslim cultural and collective identity, refers to a specific concept in Islam which is '*ummah*', the worldwide Muslim 'community'.

Mohammad's (2013) study drew on a *case study* of youthful British Pakistani Muslim women located in one of the largest Pakistani Muslim communities in the UK, in the city of Birmingham, to examine their *narratives of urban space*. These narratives illuminate the performance of gendered, Muslim, public spatialities, a term that the author refers to the *spatial practices* and personal geographies of the body and territory. Mohammad (2013) explored the

ways in which the *everyday life world* that cuts across South Asian Muslim society and a public realm encoded with secular liberal democratic values configures the spatial ranges, practices, and personal geographies of youthful Pakistani Muslim women. He identifies the ideological, material, and affective modalities through which these are given form at the intersection of place, 'race', gender, and religion. He illustrates the ways in which the dynamic multiethnic, multicultural milieu of Birmingham's 'Little Pakistan' localities offer youthful Pakistani Muslim women alternative repertoires for remaking the self, promoting cultural change and a greater sense of inclusiveness and belonging. In doing so he foregrounds the fluidity and dynamic character of British South Asian Muslim cultures, contesting their representations as fixed and bounded.

Mohammed's (2013) study is based on twenty *in-depth, semi-structured interviews* with British-born and/ or British-raised, and second and subsequent generation women aged between 16 and 35 years. *Questions to the informants* covers biographical details about their family background, history of migration, education and employment, and marital information, and then moves on to explore their experiences of the localities, the sites within these where they spent their time and how they felt about these, their perceptions of the city and the locality, and the places where they would live given a choice and why. They all asserted a *religious* rather than a *religiocultural identity* and in keeping with this, the majority wore a headscarf. This study also draws on *informal conversations* with members of the community and observations of community life, social interactions, and street life in and around Sparkbrook, Sparkhill, Balsall Heath, Small Heath, Alum Rock, and Aston: localities. The greater visibility of Muslim identity has been facilitated by and in turn supports the expansion and mainstreaming of Muslim religious spaces in Britain's large urban cities. The emergence of (gender-segregated) prayer

rooms in public sites offers opportunities for encounter under the rubric of the global *ummah* where other *differences* are ‘faded’ out because: “being a Muslim is more a way of life than the colour of your skin or where you are from which shifts” (Salma).

Chiodelli's (2015) study focused on the *spatial impacts and characteristics of the Muslim presence in Italy*. The centrality of religion for many migrants has significant consequences on the morphology of the Italian cities. This is especially *the case of Islam*, which is now the second most important religion in Italy – and the prevalent religion among immigrants. After examining *facts and figures* (Documents and observations of physical spaces) about the Muslim presence in Italy, the paper focuses on two aspects of the Muslim urban presence. First, it analyses the residential patterns of Muslims, with reference to *the case of Milan*. The tendency towards a sprawled pattern is highlighted. The paper then analyses four main ‘landmarks’ of the urban presence of Muslims in Italy: places of worship, halal butcheries, burial-places, and forms of public life. A discussion of the evolutionary prospects of *Muslim spatiality* in Italian cities over the next few decades follows these analyses. Islamic burial-places, Halal Butcheries are reflective of spaces of representations.

*Musallayat*: These are simple prayer rooms, usually small, sometimes temporary. They are usually located in former apartments, shops or warehouses. They often have no recognizable external signs of their function; consequently, their presence may not be perceived by non-Muslims. They act as *neighborhood-based places of worship*.

*Purpose-built mosques*: These are usually characterized by iconography traditionally associated with mosques: domes, minarets and Arabic script or symbols. In some cases, they are established through the financial and diplomatic support of international organizations or Muslim countries (in Italy, this is the case of Rome’s Mosque).

*Islamic centers:* These are places created with declared functions other than prayer (cultural, recreational, and social functions, including meetings, Koran courses, Arabic language classes). Prayer is performed alongside these functions. Islamic centers, traditionally, considered to be solely for the purposes of prayers, but the author describes it as a cultural and *social space* in which Muslim identity manifests both spatially and socially.

Demir's (2007) qualitative study is on students' *perceptions* about school through their *lived* experiences. Students' *perceptions*, significantly, differ from each other based on their culture. The participants of this study consist of 18 American and 24 Turkish middle school students. The students were *interviewed* to find out what metaphors they use for school and schooling. While some American participants perceived school as a wild, crowded, chaotic, boring, painful, regulated environment in which students must learn to survive, others see it as a place of joy, caring, involvement, and learning. The study also indicates that metaphors are useful tools in understanding how students as real actors of school make sense of schooling and their experiences in school. This study is especially important to look from spatial perspectives, which was not present in the analyses. Rather, the author uses *interpretive* approach in analyzing the responses of students, which is still part of qualitative study method, but not necessarily a case study. However, he uses data that were gathered through *semi structured interviews*, which is also a data collection method of case studies. The themes categorized by the researcher and her interpretations of the metaphors put forth were examined by one American and one Turkish colleague to check *inter-coder reliability*. The study is qualitative and thus reflects the unique perspectives of the individual participants and is *not generalizable*. Below are some of the metaphors students call for school and schooling experience:

*Metaphor of school as a bird's nest (kus, yuvası), School as "okumak" (source of*



*knowledge*), *School as a wild animal*, *School as pets*, *School as chaos*, *School as prison*, *School as park* (School is a place you can get away because you are not disturbed by your brothers and sisters, and you're doing your own thing).

Vadeboncoeur (2007) based on the concept of Thirdspace (Soja 1996) and extended sociocultural theorizations of space in relation to alternative educational programs: programs designed to re-engage youth who have been pushed out of mainstream schools. Snapshots of educational programs, provided by *ethnographic research* gathered in the United States, Australia, and Canada, foreground the contradictions inherent in these alternative spaces: on one hand, the possibilities obtained for youth through participation, and on the other, the production of these programs through displacement. Alternative educational programs expose the tensions between a democratic ideal of engaging all young people in excellent and equitable public schools and a neo-liberal economic rationality that currently fuels the “sorting machine” function of compulsory schooling. The author theorizes *space* from a sociocultural perspective instead of spatial perspectives, that space is 1- mediated by people, and therefore inherently relational; 2) mediated by cultural semiotic systems, and therefore inherently discursive and semiotic, and; 3) mediated by layers of history, including historical identities, relations, knowledge, and ideologies. Discourse analysis is conducted in the study of the strategic plans of two universities, one from the global South and the other from the global North, to understand how the constitution of space and place reconfigures human experience in the two institutions. The study draws on *feminist geographers* to elaborate how these universities' discourses of internationalization reify a division of higher education as local 'place' and globalization as *abstract global space*. This imaginary spatiality obscures the work of the 'local' in producing the 'global' with important implications for the redefinition of the student-citizen, useful knowledge,

and managerial practices. "The universities' alignments with nation-building perpetuate ideas of specificities and fixed identities, consequently ignoring the meanings and implications of 'throwntogetherness' in the constitution of places and subjects" (p. 522). The Universities, in other words, through spatial practices, produces fixated identities who obey the norms and goals of dominating spaces of these universities.

In a case study, Tsolidis (2008) used contemporary understandings of space, the author reflects on two studies to explore the (im)possibility of poststructuralist ethnography. The first study was undertaken in a 'real' school utilizing a multi-method approach over a long period of time. The other was conducted in community-based schools where minority language and culture are taught. The almost transient nature of 'after hours' schools reinforce *temporal spatial* instabilities as critical to understanding site as social rather than fixed. The study was a multi-method ethnography. This is a two-year study during which the researcher conducts *interviews* and *scrutinized documentation* related to the school. The researcher was a participant observer of the *everyday life of the school* through attendance at special events and just 'milling around'. The portfolios, the researcher gathers form cultural self-representations, which became are the data for the study.

Mulcahy (2006) examined the significance of *space for pedagogy and identity* in teacher education. Drawing on topological approaches to the study of pedagogy, it explores the potential of a problem-based approach to teacher education to link the professional knowledge produced through teacher education programs in the academy to professional practice in schools. It promotes a theoretical and empirical imperative to look to the *pedagogic spaces* created by students (here, student teachers) to challenge established hierarchies of theory and practice. Essentially interrogatory, these spaces open up the possibility of the negotiation of professional

identity across differences of school and academy. Overall, the argument of the paper is the co-constitutive character of pedagogy, spatiality, and identity. Pedagogy emerges as a threshold practice that involves a constant weaving to and from between spaces and selves.

The data of this study consisted of *individual interviews* conducted with 10 volunteer students and 3 schoolteachers, and a group interview with 3 university staff. The average length of interviews was 45 minutes. Based on prepared protocols, they were *audiotaped* and later *transcribed*. The author constructs accounts of the learning experiences of three student teachers as *case examples*. The student teachers are selected to show the *spaces* in and through which *selves are formed*. The main goal of the study is to present *identity formation* and the appropriation of *pedagogic spaces* through empirical data.

Pahl and Kelly (2005) presented the relationship between literacy practices and *spatiality* is explored in the context of *family literacy*. The article draws on fieldwork in family literacy classrooms as part of two evaluations in Croydon and Derbyshire of family learning provision. Methods of evaluation included *classroom observations* in rural and suburban locations. In addition, teachers and parents are *interviewed*. In this instance, family learning included literacy and language activities with parents and children in school and nursery settings. These are *learning spaces* where parents and children collaborate on joint projects including *book making, storytelling, the making of visual artefacts and reading and writing activities*. The research finds how family literacy classrooms could be understood as '*third spaces*', between home and school, offering parents and children discursive opportunities drawing on both domains.

Thomas (2009) explored the processes through which teen girls attending a multi-racial high school in Los Angeles, California, USA, contend with racial territories and segregation on campus. They express discomfort and pain when their racialized bodies enter into the 'wrong'

segregated territory and are met with stares, racial epithets, or silence. The narratives of participants' point to the ways their racial identifications are fundamentally social and intersubjective, or made in relations to other bodies/subjects, and spatial, articulated through struggles over *territory and space at school*. The researcher interviews 26 young women (who self-reference as 'girls', which I therefore favor here): 12 Hispanic/Latina (Hispanic was most commonly used self-identifier), seven Armenian, three Filipina, two African American, and two Anglo/white who are all fluent in English. Almost all the girls are 15 or 16 years old and were interviewed for 75–90 minutes. The researcher meets the girls off campus at a local coffee shop and pays each girl \$20 (as an incentive for their participation) for their time.

The participants have chosen their own pseudonyms. Two of the girls also took *photographs*, which was a suggestion by the researcher, to document their *social lives/spaces*, but I did not do a systematic *autophotography* project. The great majority of the students at this school are categorized as lower income, given high rates of participation in the federal free lunch program. All the girls who participated in the research were in lower income brackets, as determined by parental occupation and housing type.<sup>6</sup> The girls referred to their ethnicity as their 'race', e.g., 'Mexican race', 'Armenian race', 'white race'. Though the researcher follows their use of 'race', rather than insist that they should say 'ethnicity'. The researcher relies on participants' self-identification from their social/lived spaces to race versus ethnicity categorization.

Pike's (2008) study focused on recent debates within Children's Geographies as to the 'usefulness' of theory and its application to school dining rooms. The paper argues that, in particular, Foucault's notions of governmentality have the potential to advance theoretical understandings of the *spatiality of school dining rooms* (as part of spatial practices), the *social*

*relationships* that occur within them and that in addition this can have relevant practical and policy implications that could impact upon the everyday lives of children that are both constituted by and constitutive of this space. The author considers the ways in which spatial practices are deployed as governmental techniques by limiting children's field of action. In all four of the dining rooms studied (in the observation of the researcher), tables and seating were organized to maximize throughput and minimize the potential for children's social interaction.

Juelskjaer (2013) investigated enactments of human subjectivities with a focus on how subjectivities may be studied if *spatiality* and *temporality* are taken up as constituting forces in the *production of subjectivities*. The author relies on poststructuralist feminist theories, re-situating *gendered subjectivity* to be of spacetime-mattering rather than something occurring in *space* and *time*. This study presents an *in-depth case study* of Mary. By following Mary's transition and how she is complexly enacted through her past and present *school lives*, the researcher investigates how *spatiality* and *temporality* co-existed as forces in her becoming.

Some of the students had been bullied in their previous school, some had conflicts with teachers, and some were simply bored and curious about what another school would be like. The study is a *longitudinal* one and involves observations and interviews with students over a year with a focus on the constitution of 'new' gendered subjectivities, considering time, space and materialities as constitutive forces. Students were interviewed before they left one school and several times after changing to a new school. Students were asked to reflect in interviews on their *movements* and on *processes* through which they became a student in their new school.

Isakjee, (2015) investigated if there was an identity conflict between *Britishness* and *Muslim-ness*. According to the author, British spaces comprise ethnically diverse towns and cities, shaping and creating new dynamics of *identification*. This study drew upon extensive

*ethnographic research* and *mobile interviews* (also referred as *walking interviews*) to provide a comprehensive study of these evolving *spatial identities of British young Muslim men*. It used Birmingham as a case study area, a city in which more than a fifth of the population describe themselves as holding a Muslim faith. The study contrasted how the *everyday experiences* that underpin *Muslim identity* stand in stark contrast to less tangible notions of Britishness. The article concluded by positing that young Muslim male identities are characterized by a *dissonance* between the *emotional place-belongingness* that evokes for them a sense of inclusion, and the politics of belonging that marks out their exclusion.

The methods used for this study were a combination of *ethnography* and *participatory walked interviews* with Muslim men aged between 18 and 30. All interviews were recorded on a Dictaphone; in walked interviews these were attached to a lanyard and worn by interviewees. The interviews were transcribed, and all participants were given pseudonyms to protect their identity. All interview transcripts and ethnographic field notes were coded manually, using an inductive approach to draw out important themes from the data.

Walked interview method was utilized alongside the ethnographic research, whereby participants would choose to walk through parts of Birmingham which held meaning for them, while discussing broader national and global issues around belonging and identity. These *semi-structured interviews* were designed to explore the identity of participants and their feelings of belonging in relation to their *nationality* and *religion*, and in relation to the local, national, and global communities that they might see themselves as being part of. The interviews also gave opportunity for participants to talk about their *biography* and the *history of their lives* to draw these out these themes. All but one of the walking interviewees chose to conduct the walks in their immediate local neighborhoods. The routes were chosen by the participant as a

‘participatory walking interview’. Through this method, participants directed the interview, they became more confident as well as comfortable in articulating themselves, even if expressing difficult or *emotional sentiments*. This method also allowed a performative element to the study as the researcher and participants were able to engage in some everyday social practices, bringing the researcher closer to lived experiences that shaped the identities of participants. Also, it was particularly important in terms of the intertwining of participants’ movements, their memories, histories, and imaginations.

Forsberg and Srandell (2007) discussed cultural conceptions and use of home as a specific space for children by comparing two different sets of empirical data: children’s accounts of their after-school spaces and media debate on the same topic. For the children, home is an ideal place for spending after-school time, while the public debate portrays the home as empty and children as lonely and unsafe. In this paper, children’s accounts of their after-school homes were approached as *everyday spaces*. The analysis focused on the ways children use, experience and value space, in other words on those *every day after-school spaces* in and through which *children’s identities and lives are made and remade*.

This study (Forsberg & Srandell, 2007) drew from two different sorts of empirical data produced separately in different contexts but addressing the same issue of the hours after school. The first set of data consisted of the accounts of 8-year-old second graders of their everyday after-school activities and spaces. The data were gathered from urban children who were recruited randomly through two city center schools in one of the largest Finnish cities during the term 2004–2005. The data collection methods of this *qualitative research* were *fill-in diaries about their after-school hours, photography, maps of social networks, and interviews*, through which is to shed light on the *chronological, spatial, social, and experiential structure* of the

children's after-school hours. The second set of data consisted of public discussion on school children's after-school hours over the last 15 years. This article focused on items discussing children's home in after-school time, *the properties of that home and its meanings for the children*.

The media discussions of home as a place were often related to opinions about activities regarded either as appropriate or inappropriate for children, thus defining the boundaries of childhood. "Definitions of home determine children's spatial and temporal boundaries: where it is seen as appropriate for children to be and what to do in those places" (p. 396). The authors also argued that "*home* is a political conception of social space", defined by different parties in society (p. 397). The authors referred, through their findings of this empirical study, to *Home as a Physical Space for After-school Hours, Home as a Theatre of Social Interaction, home as a Mental Experience—Particularly in the Light of Being on One's Own*.

In this chapter, I presented a relevant literature review in four sections: 1. Influence of Social and Cultural Interactions on Muslim Identity, 2. Linguistic Identity: Liturgical Language and English, 3. Muslimness as a Cultural and Collective Identity, 4. Previous Research Studies on Spatiality and Muslim Identities.



## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

#### Research Questions

Main Question: *How do Muslim college students spatialize their Muslimness within and across in- and out-of-school spaces?*

Sub Questions:

1. How do college Muslim students negotiate their collective and personal identities across spaces (social, academic, and religious)?
2. How are Muslim students' linguistic and cultural identities dialogically spatialized within and across social spaces?
3. How do their schooling (both as a social and academic space) experiences nurture or hinder their Muslimness?

With the purpose of answering these research questions and guided by the Spatial theoretical framework, and qualitative approaches, a case study research method was conducted in which I aimed to explore the cases of Muslim college students' (who are born in the US) linguistic and cultural identities within and across multiple spaces. These spaces included, Home, School campus (UNM), and Islamic Center of New Mexico (ICNM). Interactions and perspectives on and within these were captured through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information such as observations in the spaces, focus group interviews, autobiographies, drawings, images, and narratives (Yin, 2014; Simon, 2009; Merriam, 2009; Creswell, 2007). As a multiple case study (Yin, 2014; Simon, 2009) the boundaries were drawn by focusing on a group of college students who were born in the US and self-identify as Muslims, regardless of what Islamic sect they belong to. It is a study of multiple cases that aimed

to unfold in detail the complex, subtle characters in the space the participants navigate most of the time in their life (Simons, 2009). The qualitative analysis aimed at understanding the cases themselves rather than to generalizing them to the Muslims population (Yin, 2014; Simons, 2009).

The in-depth research focus group (open-ended) interviews had four major purposes, one to document the interviewees' perspectives on a specific topic. Second was to document the active engagement and learning that could promote for the interviewer and the interviewee in identifying and analyzing issues. Third was the inherent flexibility that offered changes of direction to pursue emergent issues, to probe a topic or deepen a response, and to engage in dialogue with participants. And fourth was the potential for uncovering and learning about unobserved feelings and events that cannot be observed (Simons, 2009).

Another set of data collection included the autobiographies, which aspired to capture the experience as it was 'lived' in a particular context through rich description, observation, and interpretation and to retain this connection in the telling of the story (Simons, 2009). Participants' lived experiences in representational spaces, in this case university campus, were captured in this type of data because the participants are reflecting through writing which allows them time to think deeper and to be less anxious unlike focus groups. Participants' stories through their autobiographies helped me analyze how they experience(d) their Muslimness before entering the university and after they entered. Their stories became the core data to understand how they perceived themselves in the situations they were (in)voluntarily exposed to.

In case studies, as it is qualitative, lived experiences (lived spaces of representation, social and spatial practices) of individuals were certainly an integral part of the study, which impacted on how the participants coped with those experiences and how this can help us better

understand the issue dealt with in this study. In other words, how one can come to make sense of a case by determining its underlying structure and meaning (Simons, 2009). The underlying structure of this study paid close attention to the social construct of participants dealing "instances in action" (Simons, 2009), which needed to be investigated qualitatively to keep the momentous experiences revealed and recorded. Case studies related to theories dealing with personality, individual perception, and interpersonal interactions (Yin, 2014). In this sense, it was highly important to conduct this research in a way to explore how the participants self-conception, *conceived space*, perception, *perceived space*, and lived experiences through interactions with others in the process of making their Muslim linguistic and cultural identities.

The framework of this multiple case study research drew from concepts of linguistic identity and cultural identity as part of Muslimness from Spatial perspectives, and theories based on Spatialities and Muslim identities. However, the components of this research study resemble to the systematic patterns in making a rug, making sure that even though they are not always symmetrical in the process or in the final product, they should complete each pattern's gap to form a meaningful outcome (Merriam, 2009). Since it is a multiple-case study, the findings in Chapter 4 were analyzed and presented based on emerging themes across cases.

## **Settings and Participants**

### **Participant Selection**

The participants of this study were US born Muslims who were attending or had attended UNM. Their families were only Muslim, which means this study did not include convert Muslims (conventionally known as individuals who are not Muslims as inheritance from their families or 'from birth'), regardless of their sect or school of thought in Islamic jurisprudence (Madhhab) they follow. Participants were particularly selected only as Muslims who fall into

category of acquiring Muslimness as inheritance from family or 'from birth'. The debate of this portion will not be the focus of this study in the sense that participants themselves reveal how they conceive and perceive of Muslimness, neither it was 'from birth' nor by self-selection. The participants speak English either as their native language or mother tongue (if the family is first generation immigrants). They were 4 participants, 2 females and 2 males. At the time of the study, one of the female participants, Farida was a graduate student. The other female participant, Dunya was an undergraduate student. Mahmud and Muaz had recently graduated from UNM as undergraduate students. All participants were older than 18. The participants were purposefully chosen from individuals who self-identify Muslim, regardless of their observation of Muslim practices.

Also, there was no distinction of participants regarding their Islamic sect (Madhhab). Further, the study did not identify being a Muslim based on religion, rather Muslimness was linked to a culture. The ethnicities and nationalities of participants were dependent on how participants identified themselves, e.g., Pakistani American Muslim or just American Muslim. The consent form, that was UNM-IRB approved is included in the Appendix 1.

In order to gather diverse and richer data, participants were also purposefully chosen based on participants' family's different national and cultural backgrounds, that is: Pakistani, Palestinian, and European descent. This is also detailed in the section on Brief Introduction to the Participants' Cases. Table 1 below summarizes the participants' information.

**Table 1***Participant Demographics*

Participant Names	Gender	Ethnicity	Languages	Education	Islamic Sect	Birthplace
Dunya	Female	Palestinian Arab	Arabic and English	Bachelors	Sunni	New Mexico
Farida	Female	Dutch American Father from Netherlands convert Muslim from Christianity, Mother from California and convert Muslim from Judaism	English and Arabic	Doctorate	Shia	New Mexico
Muaz	Male	Pakistani	Urdu and English	Bachelors	Sunni	New Mexico
Mahmud	Male	Palestinian Arab	Arabic and English	Bachelors	Sunni	Louisiana

**Brief Introduction to the Participants' Cases***Dunya's Case*

Dunya was born and raised in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She studies Biochemistry at UNM and is about to graduate. She works as a Teaching Assistant at the Chemistry laboratory of UNM. Her parents are both from Palestine. They own a grocery store in Albuquerque. She helps them at the store on the weekends when she doesn't have to go to school or study. Dunya lives with her parents with her other 2 sisters at home 2 of her sisters are married and they don't live in the same house. She speaks both Arabic and English fluently. She always wears her hijab wherever she goes. She is very connected to her religion and the Muslim community. As part of her linguistic identity, she considers both English and Arabic as her native languages. For, cultural identity, she self-identifies Palestinian-Muslim-American. Dunya attended the Islamic school during elementary and middle school years. For high school, she attended a charter school

run by Turkish people. She took elective Turkish classes and she learned Turkish at beginner level. Dunya is the sister of the Muslim woman whose hijab was pulled off by another UNM student who was wearing Trump shirt in 2016 on the day Trump was elected president. I presented the incident as the contextual background of the study and struggle of Muslim students on campuses in the United States. So, Dunya's case is unique as she is the first-hand victim of Islamophobia and experiencing *otherness/alienation* on a college campus.

During the data collection, I visited Dunya at her home along with my wife, as part of the protocol. Dunya's family welcomed me and wife at their house warmly. They offered us a very nice Palestinian traditional dinner. The whole family was very kind to us. My wife was only involved in the greeting part of the visit. She accompanied me in case Dunya was uncomfortable with me alone in another room while having the conversation. While my wife was with her family chatting in the kitchen, Dunya and I had informal conversations in the living room about her life at home and outside in connection to her language and culture practices. As part of the conversation, Dunya presented some of the artifacts, objects, things that are important to her.

First, most important one for her is the *Qur'an*, because to her, "it answers her questions and she reads it, she feels in peace". Next one is her *hijab*, she states that "It is my *identity*. If I was not wearing it, I would feel like a completely different person. By wearing it, I *represent* a large community". The next is a picture of Palestine as she says it where it is where she is from. Even though she was born and raised here, in her own words, "her heart is always there". When she goes back for visit, she never wants to come back. The last thing she presented is her Biochemistry book and it represents her studies as it is bug part of her life at school. Her religious attachments through the holy text *Qur'an* and *hijab* reflects her strong religious identity and her emphasis on Palestine reflects her connections to her ethnic ties and homeland even

though she has been there only a couple times. One important point to make for Dunya's case is that she did not share any artifacts or symbol that represents her Americanness.

Dunya went to a charter school which is run by Turks, and she had 7 classmates 4 of them whom were Muslims. She never went to a public school nor a mainstream American school. Even the charter school she attended was kind of a Muslim Ethics-centered. Dunya, as growing up, she was taught by her parents that celebrating Christmas is *haram*; and they never celebrated. Also, she never went out for Halloween, her mother always turned off the light so that the neighbors knew they did not celebrate or participating in the Halloween. They preferred going to masjid and doing activities with other kids on those American holidays.

### ***Muaz's Case***

Muaz's parents are immigrants from Pakistan to the United States. He was born and raised in Albuquerque and now he is 24 years old. He graduated from UNM 2 years ago and got his degree in Business Administration. Now, he owns a company in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Muaz speaks Urdu and English fluently and he considers them both as his native languages. He is also competent in Arabic liturgically. Muaz's mother passed away when he was a child, and he has a stepmother who is also from Pakistan. Muaz still lives with his parents and his grandfather in the same house. He likes to sing mostly in Urdu and loves to play cards and smokes Hookah occasionally. He is very interested in learning about other cultures, religions, and people. He also studied Religious Studies when he was getting his degree in Business Administration. He self-identifies as *Muslim-Pakistani-American*. I visited him at his house to have informal conversations on what home means to him and how he practices his cultures.

### ***Farida's Case***

I visited Farida at her house with my wife because, in Islamic culture a female cannot be by themselves in the same room. Farida was born in Espanola, New Mexico and now she lives with her husband in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She is a graduate student at UNM. She travels to Albuquerque to attend her classes. Her father is from Netherlands and her mother is from California. Her father immigrated to the US when he was young. Her mother's whole family is Jewish. Farida's parents are both Sunnis, but she herself is a Shi'i. Her mother is a convert Muslim, and she became Muslim in her 20s. Her mother came right before WWII and some of them after. Her mother's conversion was problematic within the family, and they had not been very happy with her decision. Her father became Muslim in Jerusalem, in Palestine. Farida is very outspoken about Muslim women issues and rights, and she is part of a non-profit organization in New Mexico. In her graduate studies, she is interested in researching on Muslim women identities.

### ***Mahmud' Case***

Mahmud was born in Louisiana and when he was little kid, his family moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico. Since then, he still lives in Albuquerque with his family. Mahmud went to public school during her high school years, and during middle school years, he went to an Islamic school in Albuquerque for a year. After finishing middle school, for high school, he went back to a public high school. Mahmud lives in a very crowded household where he has to take care of many things such as taking care of his mother who is old. Mahmud recently graduated from the UNM majoring in Biomedical Engineering. He got a job as soon as he finished the college. Mahmud, unlike other cases, he grew up in a family which had a lower socioeconomic status. He could not afford to continue the Islamic school, because it was a private school. Mahmud's family is from Palestine, and he speaks Arabic as his ethnic language



and liturgically. He is fluent in Arabic. he When I visited him at his house, the family welcomed me very well.

### **Reflection on the Participant Recruitment Process**

Given the scarcity of US-born Muslim college students in Albuquerque, the recruitment of the participants took longer than I expected. It took approximately 4 months to recruit the actual participants. There were different reasons why the potential participants did not want to participate in the study, which were also a reflective of why this study is significant to conduct and present to the readers' findings. One of the main reasons I heard or communicated with the individuals were the suspicion of their private information about them and their families to be collected towards "profiling" for surveilling purposes. The individuals I contacted openly asserted that they fear if I was an FBI agent. This is a common fear of young Muslims especially considering the political climate during the Trump administration as some of those individuals' families are from those countries where Travel Ban has been issued. Also, a few individuals were anxious to participate as they were assuming this study was supposedly going to measure their religiosity. This is because when the studies are about Islam or Muslims, most of the studies are geared toward Islamic studies in a more theological approach rather than a cultural one. Individuals who expressed that they are not religious or practicing the religion although they identified as Muslims, they were concerned that this would be revealed to their families or other people they spend time with or interact in their life. One of the individuals states that he is more American than Muslim, through which he was assigning his American identity to be more secular than his Muslim identity to be solely for religious practices. The recruitment process, because of these reasons, was challenging as it was quite revealing to observe what Muslims conceive of themselves in connection to what other perceive of themselves and what experiences

socially both at the official level (legal laws against Muslims such as Travel Ban) and interactional level where there was very high tension toward Muslims and Islamophobic and hateful actions and attitudes towards Muslims before and during current President Trump's election.

### **Settings**

This study included three representational spaces: Home of the participants, School campus, and the Islamic Center of New Mexico (ICNM). Although these were the main sites of the research, there was also a choice for participants to meet at a different space outside the spaces I selected since Spatiality cannot be fixed to specific physical spaces. The participants collectively chose to meet at a local cafeteria. Participants also chose individually a space that they felt they also drew from to spatialize their Muslimness, like a space where they usually go to, or they felt it is important to them. This flexibility allowed a more naturalistic approach to understand their spatialities as Muslims.

### **Home**

As one of the research sites, Home was one of the social spaces. Both linguistic and cultural elements were present and alive in this space. Home is also a private space in which Muslims have more freedom to practice their culture (unless the study shows otherwise). The reasoning behind selection of this space was to observe and analyze possible implications of how this group of Muslims use this space and what evidence they present as part of their linguistic and cultural identities. What spatial differences this space reflected in relation to their Muslimness in contrast to other spaces was an important aspect of this study; for example, School campus vs the Islamic Center of New Mexico. It was not about a contrastive analysis, but rather observing spatial transitions and navigation across these social spaces. Each participant's

home was visited as part of participant observation once for 90-120 minutes long (details are in the section on Data Collection Methods) until reached saturated data in response to the research questions. I had informal conversations with them and asked them to present me artifacts and objects that were personally important to them. I further asked them to draw or represent graphically what 'home' meant to them.

### **UNM and Participant Choice of Space within School Campus**

As detailed in the section on "Context of the Study", the main school campus of the University of New Mexico (UNM) was another space where participant observations and focus groups were conducted. Participants selected to meet at the Fine Arts library as it provided more privacy instead of meeting at the Student Union Building. UNM main campus is a social space that most UNM students need to be physically present for studying, attending classes, panels, conferences, meetings, eating, and/or praying (the Muslim Student Association has a room where a meeting/observation took place). This is the space where college Muslim students often use to interact with not only with other Muslims, but also with their non-Muslim friends/classmates.

I met with participants collectively on campus and we walked around the campus and I asked them to take pictures of a specific place on campus that is/was important to them personally. After having informal conversations while walking, we collectively decided to go to Fine Arts library, where we had the focus group. The focus group took about 90 minutes in total. Firstly, they reflected on the pictures they took, and I further provided them with materials from news journals on the incidents happened on campus in connection to Muslim students before and during the presidential election. After this activity, they drew on a page representing what school campus means to them and they reflected on their drawing both in written and oral narratives.

### **Islamic Center of New Mexico (ICNM)**

Muslims in Albuquerque utilizes Islamic Center of New Mexico (ICNM) both as a social space and a worshipping/religious space, which depends on how they perceive this space and what purposes they use it for. Attending Friday Prayers is obligatory for Muslims, and they use ICNM for this purpose at least once a week. Also, people gather after this prayer and interact with one another. They usually sell food for donating to either to the center or to the Islamic School in Albuquerque. Also, sometimes, free food is distributed as part of charity to everybody after the prayer. All five daily prayers are performed collectively, but not required except for the Friday Prayer. Everybody is welcome for prayers and visits at any time during the day and evenings until closing with performing of Isha Prayer (The fifth of daily prayers, the night-time prayer which use ends latest 10pm during summer). Both Eid prayers and celebrations are held at the campus of this center. I met with participants at ICNM multipurpose hall for approximately 90 minutes and had informal conversations on what this space means to them. I provided materials from news journals as part of discussion. After talking over the materials and the incident occurred at ICNM, they represented in a drawing what this space meant to them. Later, they presented both in written and oral narratives.

### **Collective and Individual Space Choices**

Another choice was given to participant to select a space outside the school, and we met at a local cafeteria as the last space where we had the final focus group. The participants visited a space of their choice on their own before we met at the cafeteria, and they took pictures and wrote a brief narrative on what that specific space is important to them. They brought those images and narratives to the cafeteria. The purpose of meeting at a social space based on their collective choice was to be able to analyze their spatialities at a space that is neither official nor a very intimate space like home. The cafeteria was selected for this meeting to observe and let

them reflect on their lived experiences since as it is a common space for anybody to visit and spend time, eat, and meet with their friends. It was also selected for the purpose of strengthening the natural approach to the data collection and analysis. At the cafeteria, like other spaces, we had informal conversations and I asked them to draw on a page what this space meant to them. Since it was the final meeting with the participants, I asked them to present the images and narratives of their individual choice of space. Then, they presented their autobiographies that they had written before this meeting. Finally, they presented an interpretation all their of drawings across the social spaces. This final meeting was both audio and video recorded. All the previous meetings were only audio recorded and I took observation field notes.

### **Data Collection Methods**

The data were collected through qualitative methods used in case studies: Participant observation, focus groups, drawings and visuals of artifacts, autobiographies, images, and narratives (Yin, 2014; Maxwell, 2013; Merriam, 2009; Simons, 2009; Creswell, 2007; Maxwell).

#### **Participant Observation**

By using Participant observation, the researcher intended to participate in interactions and observe them in the context in real time (Yin, 2014). This provided a more naturalistic approach to the data gathering. Each time we met, we held casual conversations and talked about their drawings (they did at the site), artifacts, and images they took guided by the researcher to hear their thoughts, learn about their feelings in and about that space in connection to their Muslimness or Americanness.

#### **Drawings**

To capture how participants spatialized their Muslimness, specifically how they perceived and conceived each space, participants were asked to draw a representative image that

reflected who they were as a Muslim in each space. This was part of the inquiry on how representations of spaces had connections and/or disconnections to their Muslimness. Drawings were unique to every individual's own meaning-making and representation of a thinking or feeling related to spatial experiences part of their lives.

### **Images and Artifacts**

Every image from the three visited spaces and the participants' chosen space, within school and outside the school, were part of the data collection. This collection included photos they took, artifacts they owned, scriptures they had, etc. from each of the spaces (artifacts that were part of their personal life). Artifacts helped the researcher to let the participants bring and share things that were meaningful to them and representative of who they were. Artifacts carried historical, social, and spatial codes and meanings that related to the individual's personal attachments. Images of the spaces that participants took individually helped the researcher to analyze what was important to the participants and what meanings they gave to those spaces.

### **Autobiography and Narratives**

Participants' sharing of their autobiographies during final focus group was part of self-reflection and interpretation of their own life which potentially has transformed after entering the school campus culture: "The process of autobiographical writing can have a profoundly transformative effect on the spiritual, moral, and emotional domains of a writer's life, and that a life is often changed by such deep introspection" (Garrod, Kilkenny, & Ahmed, 2014, p. xiii).

Autobiographies provided a freer space for individuals to reflect on themselves at personal levels and gave them sufficient time to think and organize what they wanted to say (write).

### **Focus Group**

The purpose of the focus group was to have the participants share all their drawings so that the researcher could gather a cross-case analysis. Focus groups helped participants, who were from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, to talk and share their thoughts and feelings about specific topics, events, issues, and personal lives that influenced their current conceptions, perceptions, and socio-spatial experiences. Focus groups, unlike interviews, had a more informal structure in which participants were less pressured and directed.

#### Focus Group Prompts/Questions:

1. Please summarize your autobiographies
2. What are the relationships among your drawings?
3. How do these drawings describe who you are as a Muslim American in these spaces?
4. Please add anything to your drawings that is important to you or label on your drawings when describing them.

The Procedure for Data Collection and Analysis in Appendix 2 details the structure and sequence of how the data were collected, recording techniques, and timeline. The table in Appendix 2 on page 171 also includes the prompts given at each meeting and activity.

#### **Data Analysis**

In endeavoring to answer the research questions, relying mainly on Spatiality theory of Lefebvre (1991), *perceived, conceived, and lived*, Edward Soja's (1995) Thirdspace theory in connection to Homi Bhabha's hybridity theory, the data collected were analyzed through *interpretive-spatial analysis* (Pugalis, 2009). The analysis and the presentation of findings were conducted across cases rather than in discreet sections for each participant. This cross-case analysis provided a better comparative analysis of how the findings were implicated for each participants' life as a Muslim and American across social spaces, sites which are listed above.

Each triadic element of *perceived-conceived-lived* space can be observed in the everyday flow of life; in action, interaction of people; in their continual dialogue and interaction with one another (Lefebvre, 1991; Pugalis, 2009). In the trialectics of spatiality (Soja, 1996), *perceived* is the real material space of geographic locality and *conceived* as imagined space of representations and the *lived* social space that stems from social interaction, but they have a trialectical relation. Interpretive-spatial analysis examines how particular representations of space provoke how people perceive, think, and act, and produce socio-material transformations (Pugalis, 2009). Discourse is immersed and constitutive of complex social events: historically and spatially contingent, whereby cultural meanings are conditional to change, and discourses are expressed through cultural texts such as written content, utterances, practices, and artifacts which were part of interpretive-spatial analysis in this study. Through interpretive-spatial analysis, the effects of cultural contexts of the study were analyzed.

Representations of space cannot be divorced from spatial practices and vice versa. Hence, their drawings and interpretations were crucial to understand the dialectics of representations of space and spatial practices they do in the representational spaces which are the research sites of this study. The blocs of interpretive-spatial analysis are language, practice, and power/knowledge (Pugalis, 2009). Analyzing where, for what purposes, and with whom they used liturgical language and English were part of reaching conclusive analyses of how they spatialized their Muslim linguistic identities across social spaces. In the data analysis, the content of the data was analyzed through interpretive-spatial analysis that was used for qualitative data collected through focus groups, observations, documents such as autobiographies and drawings (Bengtsson, 2016). Data collected through the methods of participant observations, focus groups, drawings, and autobiographies were analyzed separately and manually. The data were analyzed



after all the data were gathered, so that the constant comparative analysis of the data was possible during the interpretive-spatial analysis (Merriam, 2009). All the data were stored in my personal computer with a secured passcode (I only had access to the passcode).

For the analysis of the transcriptions gathered through observations and focus groups, open and holistic coding, and later splitter coding (Saldaña, 2013) were used (Yin, 2014; Saldaña, 2013). After coding was completed, these codes were categorized, and themes organically emerged for this step (Saldaña, 2013). Observation transcriptions, autobiographies, focus group transcriptions, interpretation of drawings done by participants were compared through interpretive-spatial analysis to have holistic categorization for an accurate analysis of different types of data collected in different formats. Since the drawings were interpreted by the participants during focus groups, it was also highly effective to rely on what participants said about how they conceive and perceive themselves within the representation of space and the self, and their use of liturgical language during the observations reflecting their linguistic and cultural identity. Also, observations of the spaces, including all the artefacts within them, were part of interpretive-spatial analysis reflecting spatial codes that are embedded in spatialization of cultural identities of the participants. What meanings they make through those 'materials' were also part of interpretive-spatial analysis.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of this study informed the analytical process. The theory of spatiality was embedded in the analyzing of the conception, perception, and lived spaces of the participants. The triad elements of *conceived-perceived-lived* were used holistically as they have inextricable linkage to one another in the process of identity negotiation and making. This theoretical approach from a spatial analytical perspective provided a better understanding of

identity through spatial practices and how these practices impacted on how the participants were thinking of who they were culturally and personally. The spatial theory guided this study in learning how the trialectics of spatiality plays role on the participants' experiences of *belonging*, *otherness* in both Muslim and American spaces, and develop a *hybrid identity* that was informed by their lived spaces. I present the findings on Belonging, Otherness, and Hybridity through the spatial analysis in Chapter 4 and discuss in Chapter 5 through Figure 7 on page 143 on conceptualization of Muslim Americanness, which depicts how the participants' experiences fit within the spatial theoretical approaches proposed in this study.

The ontological question of space or spatiality playing a major role in the social relations of production not only contributes to the understanding of everyday life reality to the mode of production and social relations (who is producing, who is the ruling power, who has the social power), but also the necessity of a philosophical and more social/cultural analysis of the social beings' social and spatial existence (Soja, 1996). This does not mean that spatial problematic is an existential one, rather it must contribute to the comprehension of lifeworld in a more holistic way; historically, socially, and most cohesively, spatially (Soja, 1996).

Epistemologically, the status of space has been confined to that of a 'mental thing' or 'mental place' " (Lefebvre, 1991). In the field of epistemology, our knowledge of space can be established through consciousness (or just the unconscious awareness) of space's existence with less effect in the social production of the social relations and *being* in the lifeworld activities. "Space considered in isolation is an empty abstraction, likewise energy and time" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 12). Conversely, Space—physically, mentally, and socially—is both form, function, and content with its dialectical relationship with everything else in the space of the Cosmos. Everything has a spatial dimension from most abstract to the most concrete "thing", besides

temporality and sociality, everything has a space, and every space has socially produced relations and characters. "Michel Foucault can calmly assert that knowledge [*savoir*] is also the space in which the subject may take up a position and speak of the objects with which he deals in his discourse" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 4). Relying on Lefebvre's words, abstract or the concrete form of knowledge is also the space that entails to spatial interaction of subject with the cultural and personal objects (e.g., prayer rug, tasbih, game cards, etc.). The participants in this study also presented some of their interactions with the objects that are meaningful in terms of developing sense of *belonging* to Muslimness and Americanness, which are to be elaborated in Chapter 4.

Space is both abstract and real at the same time in the sense that concrete abstractions such as commodities and money are real and concrete. It is concrete but not in the way of concreteness of an object or a product. It is instrumental, however, like knowledge it goes beyond instrumentality (Lefebvre, 1991). Space is used as an instrument for different purposes in different types of social forms. For instance, in a dominant space, it is used as an integral part of the hegemonic ideology simply for impositions of that ideology unto peoples. In later sections, I discuss Space to be both as an instrument/means and product/ends. Social space is a social product, and it is constituted neither by a collection of things (not objects alone), nor a totality of sensible data, nor by a container (be it either in the form of imaginary or real) with various contents, and that it is reducible to a 'form' imposed upon phenomena, upon things, upon physical materiality (Lefebvre, 1991).

Space is becoming the principal stake of goal-directed actions and struggles. It has of course always been the reservoir of resources, and the medium in which strategies are applied, but it has now become something more than the theatre, the disinterested stage or setting, of action. Space does not eliminate the other

materials or resources that play a part in the socio-political arena, be they businesses or 'culture'. Rather, it brings them all together and then in a sense substitutes itself for each factor separately with by enveloping it. The outcome is a vast movement in terms of which space can no longer be looked upon as an 'essence', as an object distinct from the point of view of (or as compared with) 'subjects', as answering to a logic of its own. Nor can it be treated as a result or resultant, as an empirically verifiable effect of a past, a history, or a society. Is space indeed a medium? A milieu? An intermediary? It is doubtless all of these, but its role is less and less neutral, more and more active, both as instrument and as goal, as means and as end (p. 410).

Space cannot be reduced to a stagnant 'form' of a solely physical or mental borders of an area, location, or place. Space is not a passive locus. Space is socially produced and practiced in a perceivable realm because 'subject' and 'object' inter-acts in the socio-spatial lifeworld we all live in. Speech and writing, for example, gains a subjective form as speaking 'subject' in social practice. Embodied materially through *spatialization*, speech and writing come to *being* and *becomes* an individual human's subjective utterances or signs. Each society produces a space, its own space. That space informs a spatial and social practice within itself, and that space again represents that society in different forms and content (with regards to their uniqueness) and functions, and its structure reflect how that space is socially constructed either for the need or the desire of the individuals (collectively or hegemonically).

### **Social space**

Social space contains the *social relations of* reproduction: For example, the biophysical relations between the sexes and between age groups, along with the specific organization of the

family; and the *relations of production*: For example, the division of labor and its organization in the form of hierarchical social functions (Lefebvre, 1991). As for production, buildings, statues monuments, artworks are the examples. The (*social*) *relations* are reflective of everydayness of how production and reproduction occur, it opens up the avenues to make sense of the space socially. Then if all social actions happen in a space, the activities must have spatiality and hence Lefebvre calls it as *spatial practice*. The dialectics of space and practice is a social reality.

Following are the elements of the conceptual triad of space that Lefebvre (1991) states:

- 1- *Spatial practice (perceived space)*, which embraces production and reproduction, and the locations and spatial sets characteristics of each social formation. Spatial practice ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion. In terms of social space, and of each member of given society's relationship to that space, this cohesion implies guaranteed level of *competence* and a specific level of *performance*. The concepts of Competence and Performance are borrowed from Noam Chomsky. Spatial practice regulates life, it does not create it.
- 2- *Representations of space (conceived space)*, which are tied to the relations of production and to the 'order' which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to 'frontal' relations.
- 3- *Spaces of representation-Representational spaces (lived space)*, embodying complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art (which may come eventually to be defined less as a code of space than as a code of representational spaces) (p. 33).

Soja (1996) discusses the necessity of the Other in the dialectical thinking rather than dualisms of *either/or* and he suggests the conjunction of *both/and...also*. It is also discussed by other

philosophers that we must consider of Other Spaces which recalls Soja's idea of *thirthing-as-othering* as way to possibility or possibilities. Dualist approaches in structuralism caused antagonism between groups of people. It caused the dichotomist views on how social relations are structured. In this sense, his conceptualization of *thirthing-as-othering* takes us beyond these dualisms. I analyzed the participants' experiences as Muslims interactionally; in other words, their social relations, and interactions with Others in different spaces were critically important to understand how Muslim Self is constructed and negotiated as identity is dynamic and constantly negotiated and remolded by sociality and spatialities.

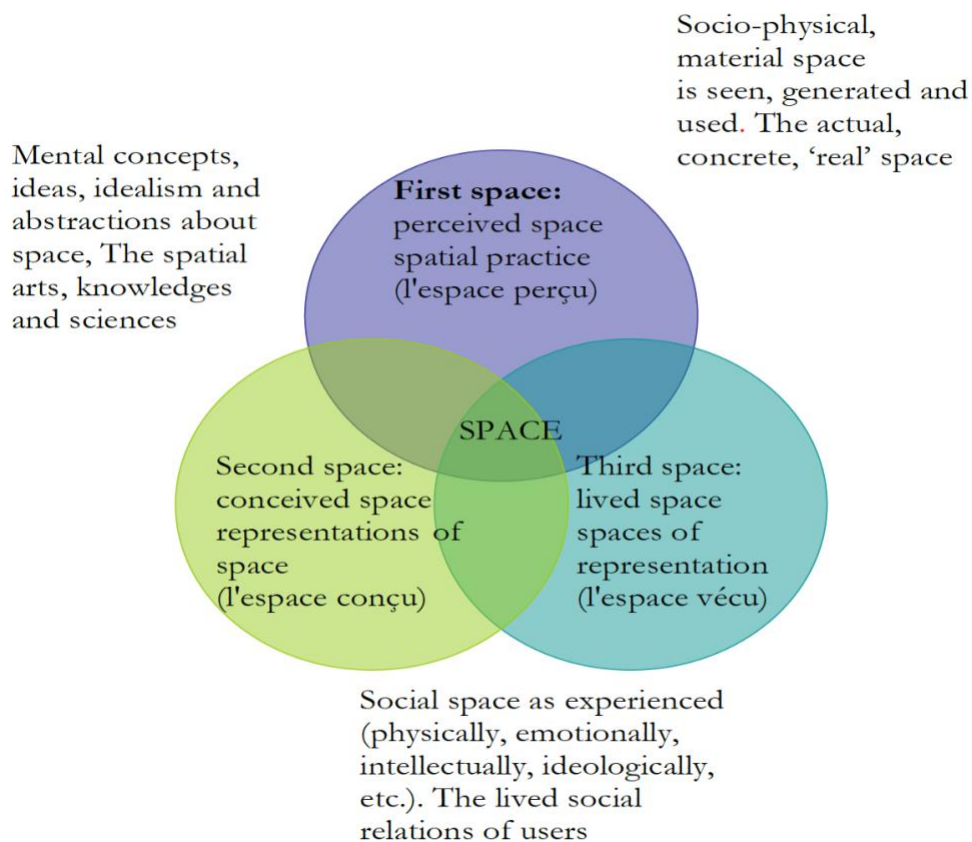
For Soja (1996), Thirdspace is the space of radical openness for all the possibilities for people: Thirdspace: a knowable and unknowable, real and imagined lifeworld of experiences, emotions, events, and political choices that is existentially shaped by the generative and problematic interplay between centers and peripheries, the abstract and concrete, the impassioned spaces of the conceptual and the lived, marked out materially and metaphorically in *spatial praxis*, the transformation of (spatial) knowledge into (spatial) action in a field of unevenly developed (spatial) power (p. 31). Firstspace epistemologies have analyzed the material form of things in space, seeing the human spatiality as outcome or *product* (Soja, 1996). Firstspace demands two ways of analysis: indigenous mode of spatial analysis (description of surface appearances); exogenous (social, psychological, and biological), because this is the realm of the perceived and the space of representations.

In Secondspace epistemologies, space confined to an abstract form or a mental thing, hence it is imagined through representations: representation of spaces (or representational spaces) (Soja, 1996). Thirdspace as being the space of both *realandimagined* also reflects that conceived and perceived collapses into the third which is the *lived space*. Relying mostly on

Lefebvre's original thoughts on the trialectics but utilizing Soja's theoretical proposals to discern what the participants experience in connection to their spatialities. Pugalis (2009) developed an analytical and methodological tool which will be utilized to apply Soja's theories in this study. Although it is challenging for the spatial analyses to be conducted in a linear fashion; for readers to be able to differentiate how each category of triadic elements help in dissecting the constructs of linguistic and cultural identity, collective identity, personal identities, and wholistically Muslimness, each category is analyzed through the themes emerged in the study findings.

**Figure 2**

*Spatialised trialectics* (adapted from Pugalis, 2009, p. 80).



## On Hybridity and Identity

Homi Bhabha in his interview with Jonathan (1990) defines the Thirdspace through his ideation and theory of hybridity: “Hybridity to me is the ‘Thirdspace’ which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom” and he explains the process of hybridity which is the essential integral part of third space “The process of hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation” (p. 211). Based on Bhabha’s definition of thirdspace; thirdspace opens new doors for the opportunities and creation of new practices and activities in order to build new meanings through *negotiations*.

Razfar and Rumenapp (2014) state that for the Learner identity, they propose to examine learning not only from the top of the class (“the good student’s perspective”), but also from the margins and non-school spaces of life (p. 270). In this sense, they state the significance of *funds of knowledge* to make connections with students using personal and cultural narratives. The concept of funds of knowledge is a mediational tool for learning, especially in the contestation of third spaces (Razfar & Rumenapp, 2014). “The intersections of language, learning, and the learner identities converge in the relationships between peers, teachers, and the communities of each” (Razfar & Rumenapp, 2014, p. 271). One can infer that learning and language has an inextricable relationship and the process that language takes place influences the learning process in a dialectal way, and ultimately impacts on the learners’ identities.

According to Sarroub (2002), Language plays an integral role in identity development and representation in many communities where “minority” or *non-dominant* populations seem to clash with “majority” dominant populations there is a sense of in-betweenness for those who live in



multiple, contentious linguistic and symbolic worlds (as cited in Razfar & Rumenapp, 2014). Learners from subordinated groups experience the in-betweenness in terms of linguistic and cultural practices and this enables them to innovate new ways of intra/interpersonal interpretations of the contexts they are in. “This in-between space shouldn’t be viewed as a marginal space, but rather, a space of creativity and innovation” (p. 281).

One can simply affirm the point that English is not merely a neutralizing entity, but also a *linguistic force* that affects local/indigenous identity constructions and the equilibrium between different components of identity (Salman, Olshtain, & Bekerman, 2015). Language is very powerful in the areas of identity formation, especially in the area that learners construct their school identities, and they attribute language such as the power language English as the central denominator that demarcates people from one another simply based on their language proficiency. “Someone is who they are because of how they are positioned with others in talk and face-to-face interactions” (Razfar & Rumenapp, 2014, p. 275). At the first glance, the idea of being positioned by others seems that control power of society solely impacts humans’ view of themselves and the others. However, one can make the connection of how the historical and social aspects influence the spatial characteristics of interactions and how individuals are shaped in terms of identifying themselves as part of the society by the two aspects of trialectics of being: Historicity and Sociality.

In terms of activity theory, third spaces can be conceived as expansive learning wherein the working with tensions and contradictions produce transformation of activity systems (Max & Stammet, 2005). The transformational feature of Thirdspace is very versatile in the sense that it allows human beings to learn how to deal with the conflicts and how to turn them into possible

new ways to expand the learning opportunities, especially in the contexts where there is diversity of cultures and languages learners practice.

Third spaces are hybrid spaces where home and school languages and preschool and primary school practices come together (Max & Stannett, 2005). “As teachers, we need to understand that schools become a space in which symbols are appropriated from homes, communities, synagogues, churches, mosques, and international spaces, as with those in the ‘borderlands’” (Razfar & Rumenapp, 2014, p. 282). This is very foundational aspect of third spaces that permit all possible funds of knowledge into learning. It creates both physical and invisible space in which knowledge humans gather from different areas of their life and there is cyclical process of internalization and application of that knowledge. A good example for that Gutierrez (2008) suggests is third space activities in which learners develop social dreaming skills through imagining in ‘playful imagination’ and ask what ‘world as it could be’ beginning the activity ‘what world is today’. This activity allows to take learners from the current physical state of being and bring them into the endless possibilities of in a world of imagination. Thirdspace rescues individuals from the confinement in the absolute physical, static world. In this study, participants shared their experiences of such inquiry of a world or a place where they could live both as a Muslim and American at the same time. Their imagination created an endless search of maintaining and embracing who they are by bringing seemingly contradictory or conflicting spatial practices into their own lives. How participants experienced this imagination of a hybrid identity is discussed in detail in the subsequent chapters 4 and 5.

Precisely, what Bhabha defines as third space is the place in which the processes of continually changing cultural identity formation and complex human negotiations for social and material survival evolve and shift, construct and reconstruct. Also, he also discusses during this

interview that third space engages the process of hybridity. Hybridity here does not refer to relativist idea of culture, rather it is a process in which structures of domination, which shape the social and material lives of dominated groups, are challenged and it creates a space for new formations of cultural identity: “The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation.” (Bhabha, 2004, p. 211). It is not the *negation* of the other, but the *negotiation* with the other. Negotiation is necessary because the social relations need this humane approach rather than the dualistic blocs between the groups. However, the differences of the peripheralized must be recognized, acknowledged, and respected in actions. Here, people can go *beyond* the norms, challenge the mainstream ideologies of dichotomizing the social groups.

For Bhabha, "hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the “third space” which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom.” (Rutherford, 1990, p. 211). As mentioned in earlier sections, Bhabha and Soja both viewed Thirdspace to be a space for new possibilities, reconstituting the previous and go beyond the dualistic and binary rhetorical understanding of Self and the Other interactions.

In this study, Muslimness is analyzed through all the triadic elements of *perceived-conceived-lived* (PCL). The participants did not only mentally spatialize what it means to be a Muslim in American spaces, but also practiced it physically by performing their Muslimness through spatial codes such as praying, using Arabic as liturgical language, using Muslim dress codes (wearing hijab or robe), prayers, growing beard, etc. In aggregate, they have *lived* their Muslimness with both what they imagined who they are and could be, and what they do and

what they experience as Muslim Americans in American contexts. They, consequently, developed a sense of *belonging* or *otherness*, or *hybrid* identity through the livedspaces.

### **Establishing Trustworthiness and Validation Process**

For establishing trustworthiness of this study, commonly termed *triangulation* method (Yin, 2014; Maxwell, 2013; Simons, 2009) was implemented by conducting multiple sources of data collection methods, as detailed in the section on Data Collection Methods, specifically observations, focus groups, drawings, images, autobiographies. I shared the drafts of report, which were the summarized narrative of the participant's collected data, for each case of the participants to review (Yin, 2014). Also, before the report review, I requested participants to make any corrections, additions, or subtractions in the transcripts, particularly their words and talks, to ensure the accuracy of the data. Analysis of the data were reviewed both by a post-graduate member and my dissertation committee members, was part of the validation process and establishment of trustworthiness of the study.

### **Ethical Considerations**

For ethical considerations, informed consents of students were collected, pseudonyms for participants were used to preserve the anonymity and confidentiality of the information so that participants' protection from misuse was established. None of the individuals who were attending the focus groups as external participants (non-Muslim friends of the participants of this study) was included, neither their words nor their analyses. Also, family members and relative of the participants of the study, and individuals who were part of the spaces visited who were present during the observations were not in the analyses nor in the transcriptions. Their actual names are not publicized and published. Each participant received an incentive in One Hundred US Dollars for being part of the study the entire data collection time. The participants had the choice to

withdraw from the study at any time they wanted, which did not occur in this study. The participants were among my students in the courses I am currently teaching at UNM. The recruitment of the participants followed all the IRB protocols of UNM. Concisely, I completed the required IRB protocols of UNM before I began conducting the research and followed all the protocols and research ethics of conduct meticulously to protect the participants from any potential social, psychological, financial, and personal harm to maintain research ethics.

### **Researcher Positionality**

Including the emotion in research is part of the argument for not separating the person, and the wholeness of the person, from the researcher. "We do not cease to be who we are in the process of doing research and that includes how we feel as well as what we think" (Simons, 2009, p. 90). Apparently, choosing a certain topic to research is part of what we are interested to learn and that cannot be void of thoughts and emotions on the issues we try to discover through the research. I will acknowledge constantly when and where my "Self" or "researcher self" intervenes in, especially when interpreting and analyzing the data, it should be clear off the presumptions before confirming with the participants once again or going through a blind review of the analyses or categorizations.

I have been living in the United States since 2010. I am a Muslim PhD student at UNM. I have two kids; Yusuf is 7 years old and Zeyd is 6 years old. I live with my wife and my kids. I self-identify as Muslim Kurd living in the United States, speaking Arabic (both liturgically and colloquially), Kurdish, Turkish and English (both fluently). All the participants' cases and experiences are different than mine as I am not born here, but I do share some experiences that are similar which are the Muslim and American practices. My motivation conducting this researched emerged from a personal observation and need of understanding the complexity of

being a Muslim both as a religion and culture in the United States. My wife is a 'convert' Muslim and we are practicing Muslimness at home in other spaces, as much as we can to maintain our Muslim practices, however living in American space, we try to find ways to make spaces we navigate adaptable and vice versa. Observing my kids and myself triggers me to better understand spatialities of Muslims and what their future will look like as American Muslims.

As a researcher, my spatiality as a Muslim was not to be imposed in any part of data analysis or interpretations of their own life, their own meaning-making processes during the data collection since the study focuses on the case of my participants and their spatiality. Thus, I relied on their own perceptions, conceptions, and lived experiences.

## CHAPTER 4: BELONGING, OTHERNESS, AND HYBRIDITY

### Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study under the emerging themes of *Belonging*, *Otherness* and *Hybridity* through the spatial-interpretive data analysis conducted across the four cases of the participants: Farida, Dunya, Muaz, and Mahmud. Quotes and excerpts from the conversations, focus group interviews, and narratives are shared to illustrate the themes discussed in order to best represent the participants' voices rather than paraphrasing their thoughts, feelings, and opinions. Participants' drawings were also utilized to serve the purpose of reflecting their thoughts and representation of how they perceived themselves and spaces they navigated in in relation to their Muslimness across social spaces.

The purpose of this multiple-case study was to explore how Muslim college students spatialize their linguistic and cultural identities within and across social spaces such as home, college campus, and Islamic community center. When I use the term 'spatialize', I am drawing from Spatial Theory (Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1996; Soja, 2004) and I refer to the process of 'making or creating a space' for an idea, an identity, a chance, for something to be and take up a 'space' in what we think, do, and notice; more specifically, this study explored the making of Muslimness and Americanness by the Muslim-American college students. Thus, in this study, through an interpretive-spatial analysis method, I analyzed how the participants perceive, conceive, and live their Muslimness in the social spaces where they interact that highlight their Muslimness and Americanness in different ways. Cultural identities of the participants as part of their Muslimness were analyzed through certain markers such as body markers, dress, kinds of events they attend to, activities they do in their daily life in general, what they do in representational spaces, whom do they interact with in these spaces mostly, what worldviews

they hold conception of lifeworld (Adamson, 1980; Gramsci, 1957), and other things they reflect as part of their cultural identity as Muslims. The participants' lived experiences of schooling provides data to educators and communities to understand how these experiences have let their Muslimness visible on campuses; and more importantly, whether schooling in general is nurturing their Muslimness or not. The main research question of this study included: *How do Muslim college students spatialize their Muslimness within and across in- and out-of-school spaces?* and more specifically the following sub-questions centered on: a) how college Muslim students negotiate their collective and personal identities across spaces (social, academic, and religious); b) how Muslim students' linguistic and cultural identities are dialogically spatialized within and across social spaces; and c) how their schooling experiences (both as a social and academic space) nurture or hinder their Muslimness?

To respond to the research questions, each participant's case was analyzed spatially by revisiting the findings emerged in each space I met with them, which included, their Home, UNM campus, ICNM, and the collectively selected social space, which was Flying Star Café in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The data findings and analyses presented in this chapter are intended to answer the main and sub research questions on how they spatialize their Muslimness and more specifically their Muslim linguistic and cultural identities. All four participants attended every meeting in each space and completed all the assigned research activities. Considering the immense effect of space on identity negotiation, I take each participant's case to be unique, because the *lived spaces* are different from each other. There were common grounds and similarities across cases, however nuances are also presented in this chapter capturing the unique Muslim and American identity perception of the participants. Conceptually, the analyses of the data reflected that both *perceived and conceived spaces* of the participants inform and construct



their *lived spaces*, which comprise their Muslim and American social and cultural experiences, to be presented in the subsequent parts of this chapter. *Lived spaces* as part of the social space aspect of the Trialectics of Spatiality (Soja, 1996) made up the lived experiences of the participants as a Muslim-American both linguistically and culturally. This chapter relies mostly on the participants' narratives and their interpretation of their drawings on their spatialities across social spaces in connection to their Muslimness.

Making sense of the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data analysis of the focus group interviews, conversations, drawings, and narratives in this study, an interconnectedness among the themes became evident in this study. Thus, I present the following findings across cases to understand the lived experiences of Farida, Dunya, Muaz, and Mahmud at different levels and emphasize what meanings they made in connection to their Muslim and American identities: *Belonging, Otherness, Hybridity*. These themes were the overarching and generalizable categories of the findings across the four cases in this study. These findings do not have a causal relationship among them, rather they have a dialectical relationship through which the participants oscillate due to the very characteristics of how spatialities are created. This is to emphasize the dynamic interrelation of sense of Belonging, Otherness, and Hybridity. Thus, each theme or overarching finding is constantly revisited within the presentation of each case.

As known in qualitative studies, specifically case studies, case(s) that has/have been studied are unique and they tell both the researcher and the readers their stories about the participants' identities. Instead of a linear analysis of how each participant experienced Muslimness and Americanness based on the findings, I present how they experienced *otherness* and *belonging* to either Muslim communities or larger American society through their conceptions and perceptions of what being Muslim or American is based on the everyday

Muslim and American linguistic and cultural practices. Furthermore, I reflect how they constructed and lived through maintaining a hybrid identity through the negotiations they had to make in and between Muslim and American spaces. This dialectical relationship of what they thought of as Muslim or American to be and what they did or lived as Muslims and Americans informed their *livedspaces*. As discussed in the methodology section on this conceptual framework, we need to understand how all these are reflected and experienced in Muslim lives. Thus, in this study, I tried to achieve this goal by presenting the trialectics of the four young Muslim American college students' *conceived-perceived-lived* spaces of their lives.

**Table 1**

*Participant Demographics*

Participant Names	Gender	Ethnicity	Languages	Education	Islamic Sect	Birthplace
Dunya	Female	Palestinian Arab	Arabic and English	Bachelors	Sunni	New Mexico
Farida	Female	Dutch American Father from Netherlands convert Muslim from Christianity, Mother from California and convert Muslim from Judaism	English and Arabic	Doctorate	Shia	New Mexico
Muaz	Male	Pakistani	Urdu and English	Bachelors	Sunni	New Mexico
Mahmud	Male	Palestinian Arab	Arabic and English	Bachelors	Sunni	Louisiana

**Brief Description of Each Participant**

*Dunya* was born and raised in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She studies Biochemistry at UNM and is about to graduate. She worked as a Teaching Assistant at the Chemistry laboratory of UNM. Her parents are both from Palestine. Dunya lives with her parents with her other 2

sisters at home 2 of her sisters are married and they don't live in the same house. She speaks both Arabic and English fluently. She speaks both English and Arabic fluently. Dunya attended the Islamic school during elementary and middle school years. For high school, she attended a charter school. Dunya is the sister of the Muslim woman whose hijab was pulled off by another UNM student who was wearing Trump shirt in 2016 on the day Trump was elected as the president.

***Muaz*** was born and raised in Albuquerque and now he is 24 years old. He graduated from UNM in 2016 and got his degree in Business Administration and he also studied Religious Studies. Muaz's parents are immigrants from Pakistan to the United States. Muaz speaks Urdu and English fluently and he considers them both as his native languages. He is also competent in Arabic liturgically. Muaz still lives with his parents and his grandfather in the same house. He likes to sing mostly in Urdu and loves to play cards and smokes Hookah occasionally.

***Farida*** was born in Espanola, New Mexico and now she lives with her husband in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She is a graduate student at UNM. Her father is from Netherlands and her mother is from California. Her father immigrated to the US when he was young. Her mother's whole family is Jewish. Farida's parents are both Sunnis, but she herself is a Shi'i. Her mother is a convert Muslim from Judaism. Her father is a convert from. She speaks Arabic, which she learned at school, and English as her first language. Farida is very outspoken about Muslim women issues and rights, and she is part of a non-profit organization in New Mexico. In her graduate studies, she is interested in researching on Muslim women identities.

***Mahmud*** was born in Louisiana and when he was little kid, his family moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico. Since then, he still lives in Albuquerque with his family. Mahmud went to public school during her high school years, and during middle school years, he went to

an Islamic school in Albuquerque only for a year. After finishing middle school, for high school, he went back to a public high school. Mahmud lives in a very crowded household where he has to take care of many things such as taking care of his mother who is old. Mahmud recently (2017) graduated from the UNM majoring in Biomedical Engineering. Mahmud, unlike other cases, he grew up in a family which had a lower socioeconomic status. He could not afford to continue the Islamic school, because it was a private school. Mahmud's parents are immigrants from Palestine, and he speaks Arabic and English fluently.

Before presenting the findings thematically and categorically, it is useful to define what *Otherness*, *Belonging*, and *Hybridity* mean in this study epistemologically in connection to identity. Identities are constructed and lived dynamically through the dialectical relations of *conceived* spaces of who people think they are in *perceived* spaces where *spatial practices* are conducted (Pugalis, 2016). The findings of this study suggest that the identities of Muslim American participants were not explained by a conflict between Americanness and the Muslimness. Instead, their sense of belonging was characterized by a contrast between experiencing inclusion and otherness in their everyday lives, which are underpinned by the spatial practices, which make up their Muslim and American linguistic and cultural practices, across social spaces they navigate in. They emphasized their inclusion and the binary discourses that they encountered, which marked out the potential for their feeling of *otherness* in perceived, in other words, in physical spaces such as home, school, Muslim community center, and other spaces like cafeteria. The Muslim American participants in this study reported having constructed *hybrid* identities to move beyond these dualisms that became the sources of both inclusionary or exclusionary paradigms indicted by the dominance of each group as Muslim and American.

Also, the participants negotiated their identity, enunciating their *differences* from others, in making conscious choices of what spatiality they belong to or self-distance from other Muslims and/or other Americans. The process of negotiations certainly included conflicts, tensions, affirmations, and influences of the other Muslims and American's perception of the participants. Participants' identities, individually, spatialized through sense of *belonging* became part of the Muslim collective identity that framed Muslim or American perceived characteristics. This perceived space of both being Muslims and Americans made up the linguistic and cultural practices in this study. The findings also suggest that Muslim American individuals developed a sense of wokeness as they experienced *otherness* that informed a stronger feeling toward their own Muslim identity. This will be presented in findings section below related to *otherness*. Given the very complexity of identity development in the cases of Muslim Americans, it is challenging to discuss the notions of otherness and belonging discreetly. However, thematic categorization through the process of *spatial-interpretive analysis* (Pugalis, 2015) process provides a storyline for readers to envision how participants constructed their cultural identity as Muslim Americans both conceptually and practically. As mentioned earlier, there are inter-relations among the main themes emerged, and thus I constantly revisit the themes across them during the presentation of the findings.

### **Belonging**

Identity is inextricably intertwined with spaces and spatial practices; it is difficult to answer questions about who we are without referencing what we think and do in a socio-spatial context. Belonging, one of the prevalent conceptual themes emerging in this study as a transcending concept throughout the findings, is about the feeling of being part of a group, in this case Muslimness and Americanness, via the cultural practices in perceived spaces. Sense of

belonging is not only informed by the feelings and actions of individuals, but also by the sociopolitical discourses that have been developed historically toward certain identities.

In the case of this study's participants, *belonging* is two-faceted as they are born into the space perceived as America. In the first facet, Muslim American participants spatialized their identities through the sense of belonging to Muslimness and in the second facet, belonging to Americanness. The participants have strived to develop and maintain this sense of belonging to both identities in both Muslim and American spaces by maintaining their Muslim and American linguistic and cultural practices. Even though there is fluidity in designating those spaces, I observed dominant presences, for example, for the Muslim spatial practices at home and masjid; and American spatial practices at school campus (UNM) and other social spaces such cafeteria or workplaces. However, the findings presented that the practices are not monolithic in terms of where they are conducted by the participants such as conducting *salah* in campus library or wearing jeans at a *masjid* (a non-conformist dress style for a Muslim woman for prayer).

Traditionally, the questions of *belonging* are about how we define who is 'us' and who is 'them', and what one has to do to be included in a group or excluded from it. This is a dynamic and dialogical process of Self conceiving itself in relation with the Other is a much more complex process than binary assignments. Nevertheless, the findings yielded that the participants do conduct the spatial practices that are part of being in perceived spaces of Muslims or Americans when they are trying to develop a sense of belonging. In the below subthemes, presented through the interpretive-spatial analysis, I also describe the nuanced differences between the two belongings besides spatial practices to be included in their identity negotiations between being a Muslim and American.

## **Belonging to Muslimness**

In the cases of participants in this study—*Dunya, Farida, Muaz, and Mahmud*—belonging to Muslimness is one of the overarching themes for the spatialization of their identity both individually and collectively within Muslim spaces: Home and Masjid. The participants developed this sense of belonging, as part of their identity, through the socio-spatial practices which informed their *perceived spaces*, which is the First space in the trialectics of spatiality and through their *conceived space*, which is Second space in the trialectics of spatiality (Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1996). In the conceived space, participants' self-conception and thought processes in connection to those Muslim practices, teachings, and values are part of the development of their Muslim spatialities. Trialectically, the influence of this first and second space poured into their everyday lives in the *livedspace*, which is the Thirdspace (Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1996). In chapter 5, I present the spatiality through a diagram in Figure 7 on page 143 to capture how Muslim American spatiality, particularly this study' participants', is developed. Even though the participants are born to Muslim families, to become Muslim in Islam, one must declare his/her belief in God and his Messenger, *Muhammad*. So, we see a nuanced difference in belonging to Muslimness demand a conscious choice-making process where the Muslimness is developed.

Due to the diasporic experience, maintaining Muslimness is a challenge and Muslims in general feel a need to have a space to feel part of a community as it is not as easy to find and to be surrounded with Muslim fellows or be around a Muslim center. The conscious choice of belonging to a Muslim space represents a better understanding of the difference between the belonging to Muslimness and belonging to Americanness. The space of Muslimness is strengthened through socio-spatial practices that encompass both the religious and socio-cultural practices. In all four cases in this study, I observed commonalities around how religion of Islam

as a culture and daily use of Qur'anic Arabic as liturgical language played a significant role in participants' perceiving their identities based on the shared spatial practices such as *salah* (five daily prayers and other obligatory and optional prayers), wearing *hijab*, *Ramadan fasting*, *Iftars*, *Eid celebrations*, *reading Qur'an*, *attending weekend schools at the masjid*. Some of these practices and concepts are defined in chapter 1 with key terminology and described how participants practiced them when findings are presented thematically later in this chapter. All these practices either individually, conducted at home or masjid, or collectively conducted inform the sense of belonging to the collective identity of *Umma* that participants associate with being a Muslim.

### **Muslim Socio-spatial Practices**

*Spatial practice* embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristics of each social formation. Spatial practice ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion. In terms of social space, and of each member of a given society also relates to the physical space of that society, this cohesion implies guaranteed level of *competence* and a specific level of *performance* (Lefebvre, 1991). A spatial practice regulates life, it does not create it (Soja, 1996). Harvey (1990) terms spatial practice as a 'material' practice as an addendum to what Lefebvre calls it *perceived space* (1991). Apparently, every spatial practice contains materiality and without such material characteristics it will neither be a social, nor a spatial practice. He adds that Spatial practices derive their efficacy in social life only through the structure of social relations within which they come into play (Harvey, 1990). Another example is for the bodily *lived* experiences which may be both highly complex and highly significant, because 'culture' intervenes here, with its illusory immediacy, via symbolisms. Symbolisms, as part of a culture, when collectively practiced indicate a common discourse, they construct and



are constructed through sense of belonging, for it becomes everyday life (lived) experience, rather than simply the symbols with no associated semantic significations. Symbols and signs in the perceived spaces becomes part of the socio-spatial practices of Muslims. Through these socio-spatial practices Muslimness is embodied across social spaces.

I present the following Muslim spatial practices that reveal how each inform the sense of belonging to Muslimness:

Wearing *hijab*, *Ramadan fasting*, *Iftars*, *Eid celebrations*, *reading Qur'an*, *attending weekend schools at the masjid*, *Salah* (five daily prayers and other obligatory and optional prayers). All these practices, which are described in the key terminology section of chapter 1, either individually conducted at home or masjid, or collectively conducted inform the participants' belongingness to collective identity of *Umma* that Muslims construct.

### ***Wearing Hijab as symbolization of Muslim Identity***

*Hijab* has a highly symbolic value for both female participants of this study —Farida and Dunya—as they expressed how *hijab* has an inseparable link to who they think they are. Thus, it is significant to explore the spatial implications of *hijab* in the cases of —Farida and Dunya— and the perspectives of the male participants —Muaz and Mahmud—to have a better understanding of the connection between Muslimness and *hijab* as a Muslim spatial practice from an insider perspective. Before I present what meanings Farida and Dunya make of *hijab*, it is also important to know that the Islamic obligation to wear *hijab* is interpreted directly from the Qur'an by Islamic scholars within both Sunni and Shia sects of Islam. Although there are controversies, due to the diverse sectarian viewpoints, around to what degree and form should women cover themselves, it is an undeniable fact of being Muslim requires being a *hijabi* (Muslim woman wearing hijab) commanded in the *Qur'an*:

*And say to the believing women, that they cast down their eyes and guard their private parts, and reveal not their adornment save such as is outward; and let them cast down their veils over their bosoms, and not reveal their adornment save to their husbands, or their fathers, or their husbands' fathers, or their sons, or their husbands' sons, or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or what their right hands own, or such men as attend them, not having sexual desires, or children who have not yet attained knowledge of women's private parts; nor let them stamp their feet, so that their hidden ornament may be known. And turn altogether to Allah, O you believers, happily so you will prosper (Quran, 24:31).*

As dictated above, Muslim women can be unveiled in the presence of only a few men—in all other cases where men are present, they must wear hijab. Besides being a religious obligation, hijab also, for some Muslims, is considered to be the representation of Islam, like symbolic flag of Muslim global community, *Umma* (Bonino, 2015). Thus, wearing *hijab* as a Muslim increase the visibility of Muslimness also bring about challenges for women which I present under the other study finding on *Otherness*. Despite the challenges the participants face by being a *hijabi* within American spaces, both Dunya and Farida expressed a strong attachment to their Muslim identity through wearing *hijab*.

When I met Dunya at her house, she presented some artifacts that were valuable to her and one of them was her hijab; "Next artifact is my *Hijab*, it is my *identity*. If I was not wearing it, I would feel like a completely different person. By wearing it, I represent a large community and I feel like it helps guide me get away from bad." From home visit conversation.

Adding to her thought on why she was wearing hijab, she reflected on how it was her own choice:

Hijab is very sacred for me. I have worn hijab since my elementary school when I went to Salam academy kindergarten to middles school. It is very normal to wear where people around you also wear it. It was never forced on me by my family, it has always been my choice and it is a symbol of safety for me from other people. I felt a lot of people respect

me more like my colleagues or friends. They ask sometimes if I ever want to take it off, and I don't because I feel stronger with it. I know that I look *different* when I wear it.

Even though hijab can be a reason for outside threat due to the incident her sister experienced on campus, when the Trump supporter pulled off her hijab, Dunya shared that "it is a symbol for safety" for her personally. For some Muslim women, like in the case of Dunya, hijab has a meaning of shield that protects their personal identity against outsiders. This is also because, in Islamic culture, women wear hijab to protect themselves from men's evil-intended gaze, which is also why Dunya is also practicing wearing hijab.

Hijab does not necessarily only mean 'wearing a headscarf' but covering the body as a personal privacy for Muslim women and also strengthen the sense of belonging to collective Muslim identity. They consider that wearing hijab protects woman body. In her autobiography, prompted on the research sub-question about schooling experiences, Dunya shared that, "At college, I decided to surround myself with familiar faces. Muslim girls, who were wearing hijab, just like me were with me as long as I wasn't in class. Being with them was like my safe haven. I knew I *belonged* with them". This shows that when a Muslim woman is with her Muslim fellows who practice hijab culturally, especially in a dominantly non-Muslim space such as the college campus, she develops a sense of belonging toward the individual and collective Muslim identity as the alliance creates a support system through which belonging to Muslimness is strengthened.

Farida also shared similar sentiments about hijab being part of her Muslim identity, " I wear hijab, so that's very clear that I am a Muslim". Although Farida shared that wearing hijab was part of who she was a Muslim, she reflected on the visibility as a Muslim woman could be "burden", which I present the reasons a little more detailed in the section on *Otherness*. She reflected that "wearing hijab is like representing to be a good Muslim". Farida also stated that her

parents did not force her to wear hijab, which is another signifier of practicing it is a matter of conscious choice-making. When I met her at her house, she shared her journey on how she made this conscious decision to 'become' Muslim and begin wearing hijab:

In my junior year in the Summer, I read the autobiography of Malcolm X and I realized I am definitely Muslim even though I did not wear Hijab at that time. I wanted to pray, and I thought this is what I believed. I think, at that age, reading his autobiography as a Muslim, as part of Nation of Islam, just like mainstream Muslim, it was just really inspiring. It shifted me and I started, that summer, wearing hijab and a couple months later Sep 11 happened.

From this insider perspective, it is evident that like Dunya, Farida also made a conscious choice of wearing *hijab*, leading to 'becoming' a Muslim. Although wearing hijab is a religious obligation, Muslim women in the US have the choice to practice or not. Making such conscious choices leads shifts in cultural practices as in the case of Farida .

Wearing hijab as a socio-spatial practice and part of material symbol for Muslim women identity (Lefebvre, 1991) has different implications such as constating part of becoming a Muslim woman, belonging to collective Muslim identity. Based on what Farida and Dunya shared in this study, there was a common sentiment toward it as being the reason for belonging to Muslimness through conceiving as the necessary component of being a Muslim and acting upon in everyday lives.

### ***Reading the Qur'an***

Reading Qur'an is not only a pure reading practice for Muslims, but it is like a guidebook on how to live according to obligations and to be a good human being, as the goal of many other religions. Thus, reading Qur'an was observed to be very central in all four cases of this study as a

spatial Muslim practice. Muslims feel attachment to the religion and Muslim way of living through the Qur'an (Bonino, 2015). Also, there are multiple spatial implications of this practice as it purposes developing literacy in Arabic as liturgical language, which is a common language within religio-cultural discourse. Additionally, it also serves as a guide for life, a book for reflection, a book for connection to *Allah*. Qur'an is also read together out loud in the masjids (sacred worshipping space for Muslims) which also reflects a collective spatial practice that inform building the sense of belonging to Muslimness. Every masjid has many copies of the Qur'an in their libraries available to many people to read when they come to masjid.

This liturgical language used on a daily basis during prayers individually and collectively, and also in the conversations among Muslims (using Muslim phrases like Salam Alaikum, Alhamdulillah, Inshallah, etc.) inform how Muslim linguistic identity is developed through the linguistic cues that are comprehensible only by Muslims. When Muslims recite Qur'an during a collective prayer or listening to a Khutba (an obligatory Friday sermon), they build a collective Muslim collective identity around a linguistic practice of Qur'anic Arabic as a liturgical language. Thus, the use of liturgical language as a spatial practice builds a sense of belonging to Muslimness.

During my visit at her house, Dunya shared another artifact, which was the Qur'an, to be very important to her personally:

First, most important one (object/artifact/belonging) for me is Qur'an, because it answers all my questions, if I am lost or anything. I open it and read it, and I feel in peace. Or if I have a question, I can find the answer in Qur'an. It is like a lifestyle. That is the most important one.

Farida also shared why Qur'an served both as literacy development in Arabic for her and also to emphasize how reading and understanding the Qur'an strengthened her sense of belonging to her Muslimness:

Once I started learning Arabic and studying the Qur'an, I just became more interested as a language, but mostly to better understand the Qur'an. Also, to realize my *own identity and my relationship with my religion*.

Muaz mentioned the importance of familial attachment through the lessons of the Qur'an which is a reflective of how Qur'an played a guiding role in viewing his own life:

My dad quotes the Qur'an when we talk about this stuff; there is a dua in the Surah Al Furkan and goes like this: " **وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا فُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا** " (And those who say, "Our Lord, grant us from among our wives and offspring comfort to our eyes and make us an example for the righteous). Qur'an, 25:74.

Imame is like let me be imam for my family and my dad heavily embraces that and he thinks that I would be asleep if I know everybody is asleep in the family. He tells me that he would not go to sleep if I don't come back home. He never jokes about that and he will wait for me to come home. From the home visit.

The participants' input on reading the Qur'an can indicate that the Muslims are reading the Qur'an as spatial practice, and follow this sacred text as a Muslim guide, which is both a manifestation as a *material* role in building a linguistic and cultural identity around the Muslim faith and practice and in developing a sense of belonging to Muslimness.

There are different interpretations of Qur'an that are available because Muslims follow diverse schools of thought in understanding the Islamic concepts and obligations. However, *Tawheed* (Unity or Oneness of Allah) is the fundamental Islamic conceptual tenet in all the

Qur'an interpretations. The concept of *Tawheed* is also significant unifying factor that informs a building of a collective Muslim body and global belonging to Muslimness through developing the triadic element of conceived space (mental space) around a common conceptualization of what every Muslim thinks of Muslimness in relation to the understanding of believing in Tawheed also builds unity among Muslims. More succinctly, believing in Unity is to believe in unity of Muslims as they all think of Muslimness in the same conceptual understanding. In a conceived space of a Muslim in another part of world shares the same conceived space of another Muslim in a difference place that builds a uniform understanding of Muslimness conceptually. Qur'an becomes both the material for the conceived space, but also perceived spaces which are the obligations commanded in the text to be practiced spatially just like wearing hijab, performing the obligatory prayers (i.e., fasting, salah, pilgrimage, paying zakat, etc.).

Mahmud reflected on his childhood spending time with his Muslim friends at the masjid, "I still get very excited when I go to masjid, because my community is there. I get to read the Qur'an." Mahmud's reflection reiterates the centrality of reading Qur'an as a spatial practice that is a common religio-linguistic practice for Muslims to build a sense of belonging to the Muslim community and Muslimness.

All the participants shared that reading or reciting Qur'an in their everyday life played an important role in developing and maintaining Muslim linguistic and cultural identity. Also, All the participants in this study are practicing Muslims, which means that they had a strong relation with their religion in terms of following the prescribed guidelines. This is also because of their regular practice of Islam at home. As practicing Muslims, their families also have dedication to raise their kids as Muslims as all the participants emphasized this objective of their parents.

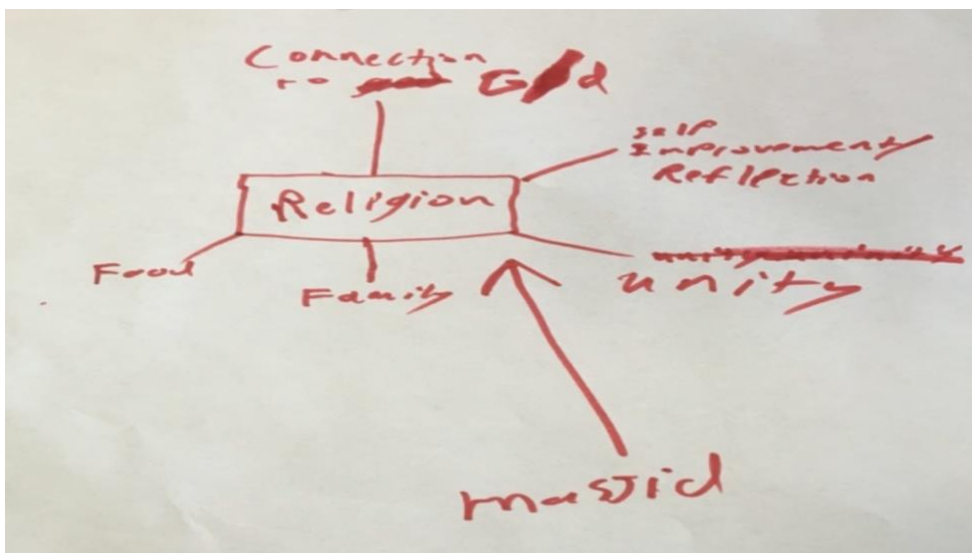
### *Obligatory Prayers and Masjid Activities*

Masjid (worshipping space for Muslims) as a perceived and physical space, serves as a space for community-building and a space for Muslims to develop a sense of belonging to Muslimness through the socio-spatial practices, such as daily obligatory prayers and Jumaas, eating iftar dinners during Ramadan fasting, Eid-celebrations, and attending the weekend schools where kids learn Arabic literacy through learning how to read Qur'an and other Islamic teachings of etiquette. Also, they serve for supporting the elementary and middle school students academically such as mentoring of Math and extracurricular basic computer programming activities.

For diasporic Muslims, role of masjid is significant in developing of a sense of belonging to Muslim community and identity. Reflecting on this spatial practice in the masjid, Mahmud shared his interpretation of his drawing for Masjid:

### **Figure 3**

*Mahmud's drawing of Masjid representation*



Every *jumaa* people come together and I feel connected to them. A lot of the people or everyone here I consider them to be my family How can I improve as a person and



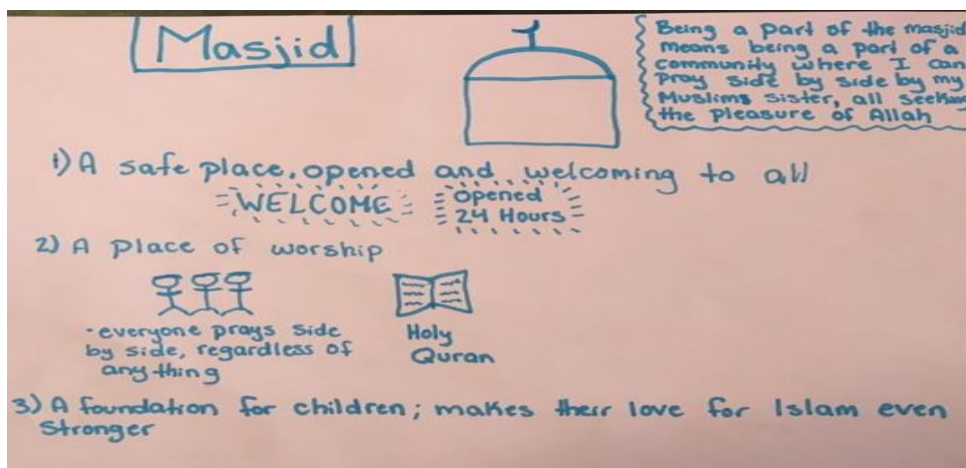
Muslim; I reflect when I pray when I am at the *masjid*. Religion is at the center which at the core is the community. Mahmud's reflection on his drawing of *masjid*. To me, one of the more important things is the community. For any religion, it starts from the community to be at the center. There is a unity of people. Mahmud's reflection on his drawing of *masjid*.

Mahmud reflected on a connection among individual practices of Islam spatially through believing in one God, which was emphasized on the concept of Tawheed, and being with other Muslim fellows allows him to develop a sense of belonging to a 'Muslim family in *masjid* and around the *masjid* activities' which is an indication of a collective Muslim identity development around these spatial practices within this Muslim space. Family in this representation of Mahmud's conception of *masjid* reflects the centrality of *masjid* in becoming the social space for Muslims for not only coming together for prayers but also building friendships and bonding through those other social practices such as sharing food and spending time together.

Dunya presented her drawing of *masjid* reflecting on the practices she does there and what they mean to her personally as a Muslim woman:

#### Figure 4

*Dunya's drawing of Masjid representation*



In connection to materiality and symbolism of perceived space, she reflected similar sentiments with other participants about the masjid being a space of belonging to Muslimness, where she is around the community of Muslims who are sharing common linguistic and cultural traits. She reads Qur'an and prays in the masjid both individually and collectively with others. Dunya interpreted masjid being a place for safety and equality which bolstered her sense of belonging to the Muslim community.

*Ramadan iftars* are part of the spatial practices among the masjid activities. A Ramadan iftar is not only a time for breaking fasting, but also a socio-spatial practice through which Muslims come together and share food with each other for 30 days of the month of Ramadan (in lunar calendar) and strengthens the feeling of togetherness. As Dunya reflected through her drawing in Figure 4 on page 102, masjid provides a space for children to develop a communal Muslim identity with other children and learn and act upon Islamic practices. Children also play soccer and basketball at the court within masjid campus. For the participants, activities in masjid both for children and adults such as Ramadan iftars or weekend schools, and sports activities were reflected as an integral part of developing a sense of belonging to Muslimness and Muslim space from an early age with their peers.

*Eid celebrations* are also among the masjid activities that reflect Muslim spatial practices. Eids are the two special holidays of Muslims in which all the Muslim families come to masjid for 'Eid prayer' and celebrations afterwards. In diasporic Muslim communities around the world, these Eid gatherings are significantly important in building a sense of community and collective Muslim identity. In the Eid gatherings, Muslims perform the Eid salah inside the masjid and once it is over, Imam (prayer leader) usually delivers a sermon on the importance of Eid and togetherness and Umma concept. After the sermon, everybody enjoys breakfast offered by the

community members outside the masjid and gifts are distributed to the children. Sometimes, they have other fun activities for children such as face-painting, pony-riding, or bringing bouncy houses on masjid campuses.

In sum, all the participants of this study reflected on a strong sense of belonging to Muslimness through Muslim spatial practices that occupy their everyday lives across different social spaces, but predominantly home and masjids. The Muslim aspects of their identity were not only immersed and intertwined with other facets of identity, but crucially they were played out and practiced consciously in the realm of the 'everyday'. *Halal* Eating and drinking according to the laws of their faith or fasting in Ramadan for instance demonstrated the conscious everyday performance of faith as an embodied practice which regulated the Muslim body itself. Similarly, attending the mosque with varying degrees of regularity to take part in the rituals of bowing and kneeling before God reinforced that Muslim identity through embodied rituals as part of spatial practices.

### **Umma as a Collective Muslim Identity**

*Umma* is another central concept in Islam, as mentioned briefly earlier, in developing a sense of belonging to a collective Muslim identity through the concept of Tawheed, which is the manifestation of conceiving Muslimness through believing in the Oneness of God. Thus, whoever believes in Tawheed belongs to the global Muslim community, *umma*. The idea of the *umma* does not denote to an ethnic or any linguistic group; rather it stands for moral community for building of an imagined of inclusive perfect community. The concept of *umma* as a term appears 60 times in the Qur'an that has a primary meaning in Muslim literature, a religious community bound by faith and transcending all other markers of *belonging*. *Umma* is constructed through spatial practices obligated by the Islamic teachings both at individual level

in different spaces such as home or collectively at the representational spaces like *masjid*. The concept of the *umma built* abstractly through the concept of Tawheed becomes concretized into living experiences through the Muslim spatial practices, explained and exemplified in the earlier section, in which community memories reign. *Umma* can literally be defined as the global community of Muslims. Mahmud reflected on this concept of *umma* in *masjid* and practices within:

I still get very excited when I go to *masjid*, because my community is there. I get to read the Qur'an. We used to sleep over during Ramadan (last 10 days). We were doing simulation of Hajj (pilgrimage to Makka). *Masjid* is community-based. When you are not sociable or sad, people approach and ask if everything is okay. Religion should be the most important matter, but it is strengthened through community. It is a support system.

Belonging to *umma*, as a development of collective Muslim identity, is an outcome of the spatial practices that participants conduct, but also it has a dialectical relationship through which Muslims also strive to be part of that collective identity so that they do the Islamic practices religio-culturally.

### **Belonging to Americanness**

Another overarching theme of this study is that 'Americanness' is a manifestation of what could be described as the socio-politics of *belonging*. Americanness is not easily defined, as national identities are both imagined and constructed (Anderson, 1991). There exists a space between legalistic ideation of citizenship and the emotional and self-conscious component of *belonging* which can be discerned by arguing or inferring that there are also Others' acts within the nation-state that are not authentic "normative" enough to develop spatiality of *belonging*. Given the socio-politically loaded nature of the term then, it is not surprising that during the

focus groups and individual conversations for this research study, the subject of Americanness was one which would draw out the difficulties of defining pure American nationality in the cases of this study's participants.

In this section, I present some of the meanings the participants attribute to the materiality of identity through the American symbols and practices in terms of in what ways they are being American or spatially conceive of what Americanness is through their thoughts and "normative" spatial experiences around; *celebration of American holidays, belonging to citizenry, non-halal or non-Islamic practices, use of English.*

Asking participants about their sense of Americanness often elicited responses characterized by *ambivalence*, which will be discussed within the emerging theme of *hybridity* across the cases. All the participants expressed a sense of their *being* American as they were all born in the United States. Being American, unlike becoming or choosing to be Muslim, is a given as they are un-optionally happened to be born in the US and their Americanness is granted. Everydayness of Americanness is much more present compared to Muslimness. In perceived space of Americanness, they cannot just simply 'un-belong' to American space. Linguistic and cultural dominance of Americanness 'make' them to belong and spatialize it. Thus, the eminent presence of Americanness is part of observing the participants' belonging to American identity to be part of their inevitable reality as Farida stated, "We are in the US, so obviously that's present (being American or being part of the American culture)".

In contrast with their preconceived notions of lack of passionate nationalism of Muslims within America, participants were defensive about their American identity being questioned by Others (especially non-Muslims) even though they do act upon Americanness through being in American materiality and sharing American cultural traits. Although they understand and can

articulate the possible reasons behind these perceptions, which include the 9/11 events and its aftermath, the study participants did point-out that they wished they did not have to prove or defend their American identity.

Muaz shared his sentiments of being American by pointing that he was also American just like any other person who was born in America, "I never ever actually hide my American identity. I am proudly American". During one of the focus group interviews, Dunya reflected on the similar sentiments:

So, a lot of the time, people will talk to me and start asking me "Oh, where are you from?" and I say I am from Palestine. And then they say, " Oh you don't have an accent" and I respond that "Because I was born here, and English is my first language".

Mahmud also shared his experience around the similar question and his response was:

Usually, I tell *them* I am from Louisiana, but they keep asking where I am originally/really from 😊 or they ask where my parents from or what my ethnicity is. I usually tell them my ethnicity is Palestinian. I would also tell them openly I am American. It felt as if always an explanation was necessitated to validate his American identity as he does not look similar or his name is not Anglo.

Muaz also shared of an incident of this validation process:

I will tell you a funny story. Once, I was at a grocery store and we checked out, the person says, "Where is your accent from?" and I was like what, hold on; "where is my accent from?". I speak like a New Mexican, man! :) he said, "No, because I hear kind of Persian accent". I told him that "You are coming up with something fake in your head, because I speak just like you; *I am from here*."

Participants either were gladly announcing their birthplace as America or they became defensive to claim equal belonging to American space. They were also very well aware of Others' preconceptions about who they could be or looked like American. Participants disrupted these pre-conceived ideas about them by these responses and through their unexpected spatial practices which will be discussed in detail in the sections on *Otherness* and *Hybridity*.

In Mahmud's case and others, there was a symbiotic relationship between being American and non-halal (illicit) spatial practices as part of the material aspect of Americanness such as eating non-halal food, hanging out mostly with non-Muslim friends who drink alcohol which is strictly forbidden in Islamic practices and according to the teachings of the Qur'an. One can observe an attribute of non-Islamic aspect of being American as it does not match with the Muslim spatial practices at certain times.

Mahmud added to what being an American meant to him, when I directed the very question of who and what was American, by referring to it as the practice of citizenship rights and the constitution:

To me, it is like believing in those common core beliefs in the constitution and actually to be genuine about it. Like freedom of religion, freedom of speech. All those basic rights. Also, they are who try to better themselves and care about themselves. Right now, I am ashamed of **our country** (United States) at the moment, because more than half of the people are my way or the highway.

Following a constitution as a reflection of belonging to Americanness or exercising American citizenship rights was common across cases of—Farida, Dunya, Muaz, and Mahmud—, but based on their remarks, it could be inferred that there is a nuanced difference between following Qur'an as a guide and a requirement in becoming a Muslim and following a constitution as an

American that is part of a system enforced on the participants externally. Exercising constitutional rights as part of the American spatial practices and conceiving them as part of their American identity is a reflection of the conceived space of Americanness that yield to a sense of belonging to Americanness.

### **Celebrating or Observing American Holidays**

Celebrating or Observing American Holidays is a manifestation of spatial practices that inform as a sense belonging to Americanness for the participants. For the participants, sometimes it is just a part of being around the celebrations of the holidays and being exposed to them, and sometimes they actively participate in observing them. Some of the common official holidays that are observed in the US, as known, are Christmas, Thanksgiving, even New Year's, and other cultural holidays that either have religious attributions or none are Halloween, Valentine's, etc.

When I asked about what made up of American culture, Mahmud reflected on observing some of these American holidays and some of his experiences:

I do celebrate them, but for example for thanksgiving, there is meaning to it. My dad never liked us doing it (Halloween), because he thought it was *haram* and I tried to argue with them when I was younger and one time my friends asked me outside the house, and I said screw it and I went with them and had a lot fun. One time, me and my brother Ayman, we did go together. I think I did it 3 times (from home-visit conversations).

Mahmud's parents are from Palestine and they immigrated to the US, so their experiences and practices can differ from their own son because they were not born here and they have not been through socio-spatial enculturation throughout their lives as Mahmud did. Mahmud was born and raised in the US and exposed to the mainstream cultural practices through schooling and on a daily basis activities reflect Americanness and American culture. One of the important



points here in his reflection is that some of the holidays do not fit in Islamic practices as they involve what is called 'haram' (illicit) practices, such as drinking alcohol, inappropriate clothing (during Halloween), intermingling with females.

When I asked the same question to Dunya, she responded that, "Being okay with their holidays and maybe going one extra step and join their activities like extracurricular things and be okay with their thoughts and normalize the things *they* do." According to Dunya, normalizing what Americans do means conceiving them to be normal in the perceived spaces she was born into, and she lives in.

Another example of American culture is to date someone before marriage, which is quite common in the US for young people from high school to college years. Muaz shared, "I was actually talking to this White girl (American) for a really long time, for about 6 months." Dating in Muslim culture and Islamic teaching is illicit and not accepted. It is also considered to be breaking boundaries between man and woman, because there are restrictions in terms of interaction between opposites genders as outlined in the Islamic teachings. There are many reasons for not dating in Islam, but all the rulings are not listed here, rather focusing on how Muaz embraced this very Americanness of young ages. When I asked him what it meant to be okay when he did American things, he provided the response above. It is part of American cultural process to "know someone before marrying them".

Muaz continued to his argumentation on how he embraced his Americanness and reflected on how it was okay if practiced among Americans in comparison to practicing those American cultural elements among his Pakistani friends who were not born here:

Also, there is cultural part. For example, if I am going to hang out with my friends, it is very much different to Americans, then it does to Pakistanis. Let's say I am telling an

American girl, if I am married to her, "Oh hey I am going to go out with my friends", she will say okay because she will understand what that means. So, these are huge differences. We do hookah night at my house and if my friend comes and stays a little late, he will not be able come again (because he is married to a Pakistani). We smoke hookah and play dominos, or we would play board games. It is tough to invite him sometimes, because he will show up with his wife in a room with 15 boys. From home visit conversations.

In their schooling experiences, participants lived through their Americanness and developed a sense of belonging to their American identity in the physical spaces where the 'American things' were socially practiced every day. Clothing is an example of these practices. For example, Farida shared her experience around her clothing choices during her high school years:

First three years of high school, I tried not to be Muslim. We had basketball games and you were supposed to wear your uniform, shorts, and tank top. My parents didn't make us wear hijab or anything, but you can't wear these; you shouldn't wear shorts. So, I got to school and changed to shorts. From home visit conversations.

In Farida's experience, as a material practice of American identity by wearing a tank-top and shorts, which would not be acceptable in Muslim culture, is another good example of connection between an American spatial practice and American identity. The cultural tension between her parents and her choice of socio-spatial practice of doing an American thing by wearing a tank-top reflects how a hybridized Muslim and American identity is developed in different social spaces by maintaining both Muslim and American cultural practices. For Farida, it was normal to dress as such because that's what was normalized in an American space such as in her high

school. At the same time, Farida also experienced an in-between state that oscillates between Muslim and American spatiality.

In sum, all the participants shared their sentiments and sense of belonging to Americanness in multiple ways through their citizenship and exercising their constitutional rights, American style of dressing and other cultural traits that are dominantly existent, use of English, both as a first and native language, as it is the dominant language across institutional and official spaces as presented in this section. Furthermore, English was reflected as part of their linguistic identity both as a Muslim and American. Belonging to Americanness was manifested in the social practices as they were present in everyday lives of the participants regardless of their voluntary or involuntary involvement.

Participants reflected a sense of belonging to Americanness by *being* American and building on the internalized dominance of American linguistic and cultural traits. To analogize, it resembles to being a fish in the ocean that has to breath in order to survive, but it should not touch the water or not getting wet by swimming in that water. So, being in America resembles to the situation of that fish which naturally came to be a fish in that ocean and had to swim and be part of the ocean to continue its livelihood. So, for the participants, it was inevitable to socio-spatially practice Americanness as a given in the perceived and physical spaces to survive in the American space. One must speak English and manifest the cultural traits of Americanness to be part of the larger American society along with other factors such as being an American Citizen, following the constitution. A child who lives in the US cannot simply ignore the exposure to colorful Christmas, Easter, Halloween, etc. The presence of American culture in their everyday lives in schools and outside of school is eminent.

To summarize the section on the overarching theme of *Belonging*, I aimed to present my exploration of how the participants spatialized their Muslimness across social spaces through developing a sense of belonging to both their Muslim and American identities through their spatial practices. I also presented the nuanced differences between the two of those belongings. Also, participants expressed their awareness of their American identities, and they all expressed their belonging to Americanness in either celebratory mood or as mandatory siding with larger society.

In the next section on *Otherness*, I present another prevailing lived experience of Muslim American participants of this study through which they negotiate their Muslimness and Americanness across social spaces.

### **Otherness**

In this section, I present how unexpected socio-political and spatial practices of the participants worked as factors of their being *othered* as Muslims in American perceived spaces and as Americans in Muslim perceived spaces. Non-complicit ideations and acts were manifested in the contrastive spatial analysis of the socio-political discourses on who belonged—or not—especially when normative socio-political and spatial practices and discourses were disrupted by unexpected practices.

Otherness in the cases of—Farida, Dunya, Muaz, and Mahmud—were manifested as a feeling of being the *other* due to holding the identity of the dominated or target group within the dominant American or Muslim perceived spaces. It is the state of marginality as the spatial practices such as wearing Hijab at a college campus like UNM is not expected as the demographics in this space are predominantly non-Muslim. Another example of being the other

is to be wearing "skinny jeans" at a masjid where the majority of the members expect a different dressing fashion that complies with Islamic rules on clothing especially during the prayers.

Otherness is literally defined as the quality of being different, unfamiliar, or foreign. All the participants shared many examples from their lived experiences on how they came to realize their differences from other Muslims or Americans either through the interactions with other people across social spaces or by consciously maintaining or carrying out their own spatial practices, which informed those differences. According to Bhabha (2004), the notion of feeling, conceiving, and living as the *other* is the enunciation of the differences to manifest who people are despite the imposition of the dominance unto them. Otherness is also the socially and spatially constructed system of exclusion. In the dominant and culturally hegemonic discourse of Americanness, the sociopolitical aspect of otherness lies in the vilification of the marginalized identity altogether and call them as villains. In the case of Muslims, they are labeled as terrorists (Haque, 2004). Whatever Muslims do become different, scary, and evil from Islamophobic perceptions (Haque, 2004).

In the two subsequent sections, I present how participants of this study experienced the sense of *otherness* both in American spaces and Muslim spaces; in which the former is more systemic and hegemonic, and the latter is more cultural and due to the outcome of diversity of Muslims as the strong tradition of Islamic practices aim to preserve the so-called authenticity. Also, otherness in American spaces was a much bigger challenge for the participants as it was not an experience that they were able to dismiss or ignore. In contrast, the experience of otherness within Muslim spaces, the participants were able to make conscious choices to either participate in the collective spatial practice of Muslimness, or not. Also, I aimed to emphasize the insider struggles of the participants as being Americans, they had to cope with their

differences from other Muslims while they were trying to build a sense of belonging to *umma*. In both Muslim and American spaces, participants had to negotiate those differences linked to themselves, which I later present in the last overarching theme of *Hybridity* as the other layer of spatialization process of developing of a hybrid Muslimerican identity.

### **Otherness within American Spaces**

Americanness might be an altogether ‘woolly’ concept, but it suddenly seems more concrete as a member moves to exclude another one, who is deemed as non-conformist. Americanness in this instance becomes an identity cemented through exclusion of both, those who seek to exclude and those who resist that exclusion. Through this intersection between personal identity and the politics of location (Hooks, 1991; Yuval-Davis, 2007), counter-hegemonic discourse begins to take form. Exclusionary discourse in American spaces have long history, but for this study, I focus on the very specific experiences of the participants which revealed how the Islamophobia and prejudice against Muslims take place when Muslims conduct non-fitting actions, which I call the *unexpected socio-spatial practices* such as wearing hijab, carrying Arabic originated Islamic names, using liturgy, praying in the official institutions like school, growing beard. Interestingly, the markers of belonging to *umma* become the factors for the sense of otherness in American spaces, which I describe in the following section.

### **Unexpected Socio-spatial Practices**

Unexpected socio-spatial practices in American spaces, as mentioned earlier in the opening, carry the meaning of participants' doings and acts that seem to be non-American as they look different and have associations with the pre-conceived ideologies against Muslims as a threat (Bonino, 2015 & Haque, 2004). In the cases of Dunya and Farida, the practice of wearing hijab was apparently an unexpected spatial practice and the representation of an identity that

'should not belong to American space' in the perceptions of other Americans, rather it is the traits of the Middle East that do not have the right to be practiced in the US because they are foreign. Even though Dunya and Farida are Americans who were born to either American families or to the American geographies, wherein they had to speak English and be part of larger society, they were perceived as foreign to American space due to the unexpected spatial practice of wearing hijab. For example, in her autobiography, Dunya vividly shared her experiences of otherness at school:

When I graduated high school, I was very excited yet nervous/scared. A new journey awaited me, and I didn't know what to expect. On my first day of college, I remember walking into my chemistry 121 class at 11am, a classroom filled with over 300 students, and as I walked through, I felt like all the eyes were on. I felt different. That was the first time I felt like that. I remember going home and telling my parents, and they told me this is the reality. *We are different*. You do wear a hijab and will get stares, so the way you decide to handle this is the way you'll get through it.

In another reflection on her drawing of School, she also shared how she was not expecting to be hired as she was firstly wearing hijab and she was also a woman:

I was asked to become a TA for the chemistry labs, and it was a job choice between this boy and me. I presented myself well-mannered and took on the challenge. A lot of my colleagues/friends tried to advise me in not getting my hopes up – as it was me versus a white male. I remember getting the E-mail that I was hired and couldn't have been prouder of myself" From reflection on her drawing of UNM

While sharing Dunya's experiences on the feelings of difference and her self-conception, the reader should recall from the earlier sections of this paper that she and her sister experienced the

horrific hatred attack on campus by a student wearing Trump shirt in 2016. Muslim women might experience otherness more than men as they become more visible through the hijab as a symbol of Muslimness.

There are sometimes surprising moments when Muslims practice American cultural elements that seem unexpected by others. For example, Farida shared how certain practices she engaged in came across somewhat surprising to other people because she was wearing hijab (i.e., perceived as Muslim) while participating in ‘mainstream’ activities:

I wear hijab, so that's very clear that I am a Muslim. I like sports, I like hiking, I like comics. There are other things that I do should not be read through the lenses of Muslimness. Sometimes people get surprised when I say I do those things. "*Oh, they do that, too!?*".

*Islamophobia* is both the means and outcome of othering Muslims in American spaces.

Muslims are depicted to be someone to be scared of (Haque, 2004). During my visit at her house, Farida reflected on this issue vividly through her drawing and her interpretation below:

### **Figure 5**

*Farida's drawing of Home and outside*





This is also an abstract interpretation of when the home space is also disrupted (dark colors) and also surveillance. I think we are surveilled by the FBI. Somebody called and made up a story that my husband planning an attack and he has arsenal of weapons. This happened in March (2018). They came and took for the interview. We had to get a lawyer. It became clear from what they said that they had been surveilling whether listening to our calls or watching our house. It is really horrible. After the FBI and since then, everything I think about our house has changed. When we have critical conversations, we have to leave our phones and go for a walk. That is the disruption.

Farida lives in Santa Fe and in her neighborhood, she learned that her neighbor across the street reported her family, as Farida was wearing a hijab; and Farida shared that the neighbor suspected that they were hiding weapons at home and assumed that Farida and her husband were a threat to others in the neighborhood. This was because she was wearing a hijab and her husband is a Muslim immigrant from Iraq and grows a beard, which make them look different due to the unexpected spatial practices. The "disruption" she referred to is the perception and the attitudes of the others about her because of her differences. Such views are problematic when someone tries to live peacefully and happily in their home and their neighborhood. Farida continued reflecting on this Islamophobic attitudes that triggered othering toward her:

It is important for Muslims to know where it began so that we know how we stay in solidarity with other communities and orient ourselves in a way that we see the threads of it. It is important to see the Islamophobia in the ways of institutional, inter-personal or individual racism. In interpersonal Islamophobia, Muslim women experience it more because they wear hijab and visible as Muslims.

Muaz also reflected how people perceived him differently if he had to reveal he was a Muslim or Pakistani "*They* are going to think that I wear shalwar-kameez all the time having an AK-47 in my hand." Mahmud also shared that "In public school, I got bullied; every single day I got called terrorist (elementary and middle school)." Labeling Muslims as terrorist is the outcome of Islamophobia and becomes the easiest way to exclude them from their rights to express themselves freely or practice their Muslimness without thinking that it could be damaging to do so.

As another unexpected spatial practice, performing salah (daily Muslim prayer) as the most obligatory form of Muslimness in public or at places where it might seem awkward to non-Muslims and Mahmud shared an example of how others thought of him when he prayed:

When we are studying, I tell them I am going to praying. When they catch me praying, they would feel like "oh this guy is talking to himself and making funny movements". I tell them I am not crazy.

According to this example, it could be as innocent as 'oblivion' of what Islam is, but if someone associates all those practices with the practices of a terrorist as the general media depicts, then it becomes the underlying factor for *othering* of Muslims more systemically.

Participants showed a level of cultural resistance to exclusion despite of their differences that became factors to be othered by maintaining their Muslim spatial practices that enunciated their Muslimness. Being a Muslim and conducting Muslim spatial practices cause a significant challenge, for example, when seeking employment or basic social rights at official institutions. The participants could have chosen to hide their identity or distance themselves from their Muslimness to prevent being othered, but they did otherwise. I gathered, through this research, I gathered that they made a conscious choice as Muslims to practice their Muslimness despite of

the Islamophobic actions and perceptions. Did it influence the participants' level of engagement in sociopolitical conversations about it? Yes, they certainly tried to abstain from contentious arguments with others who might not have understood their cultural practices, but they also did not hesitate to be vocal about how they should have been treated as equally as all other American citizens. In a sense, they chose to conduct their Muslim spatial practices to not conform to the hegemonic pressure, which is systemic as historically known (Haque, 2004), that aims to homogenize them into perceived, dominant and uniform cultural identity.

In sum, in this sub section, I presented the ways in which Muslim Americans participants' unexpected spatial practices were the factors in experiencing sense of *otherness*, which in return informed how they negotiated their identities constantly across social spaces by selectively enunciating their differences. I also aimed to emphasize the very trialectical relationship in developing spatialities by self-conception-perception of self and others and lived experiences as Muslims navigating and negotiating their Muslimness across American spaces.

### **Otherness within Muslim spaces**

The study findings showed that participants experienced otherness not only within American Spaces as a Muslim, but also within Muslim spaces as an American, such as at home or at masjid. The factors for being othered were due to the linguistic and cultural *differences* that they carry as Americans, however other reasons observed to be the factors of otherness within masjid were due to the gender dynamics among Muslim men and women, and also because of ethnocentrism around Arabization of the masjid space, and the sectarian differences in the spatial Islamic practices.

Muslim spaces have served as a safe haven like for Muslim American participants where they felt the soothing feeling of belonging to *umma* through collective practices, as presented in

the section on *Belonging*. However, because of the differences in the spatialities of Muslims, it could be space of dominance of certain sect or ethnicity even if the masjid meant to be all inclusive and embracing internal diversity. Again, in these spaces I observed how the interactions Muslim to Muslim could also have implications for the spatialization of Muslim-Americanness within masjid. For the factors that cause otherness within Muslimness, I termed it as the *community unexpected spatial practices*, the Muslim and American social activities and practices, which are reflective of what community expects from an individual who shows up at the masjid and how he/she can be diverging in terms of differences in the spatial practices.

### **Community Unexpected Spatial Practices**

#### ***Dressing Styles***

Dressing Styles were the one of the factors that Muslim women participants were othered because they did not follow the traditional practices among other Muslim women. Wearing a hijab cannot sometimes be sufficient at the masjid to be included. For example, Farida covered herself with a hijab, but wore jeans also, which caused her to diverge at the masjid from the expectations, especially in comparison to the other women, who were either fully covered in *burqah* or wearing long skirt. Farida reflected on her experience about clothing at the masjid:

Whatever is *dominant* in that masjid, it becomes the *norm*. One time I was wearing tunic, loose trousers, for the jumaa, one lady gave a skirt to wear. Sometimes it is fine because I come to masjid wearing skinny jeans and ask for a skirt. But generally, *I don't want my body to be policed in the masjid*. From focus group interview at the masjid.

Dunya also shared that when she visited to the masjid, she became more careful about what she wore, since she was worried that it would be inappropriate to wear anything "un-Islamic" even though she didn't wear long skirt outside the masjid, either.

## *Language and Ethnocentrism*

As explained in earlier sections, the language of all prayers in Islam is Arabic and all the Muslims around the world use Arabic as the liturgical language either while reciting or reading Qur'an, or while performing salah (obligatory prayer); they recite verses from the Qur'an. Thus, most of the part of collective prayers such as jumaa include mostly Arabic language and *Khutbas* (Friday sermon) are delivered partially in Arabic. Participants critically reflected on the dominance of Arabic language at the masjids and it is a reflective of ethnocentric practice around Arabness and Arabic language although Arabic is practiced as a liturgical language on a daily basis and also as part of their Muslim linguistic identity. I observed a close inter-relationship between language use and cultural perceptions about the spatial practices done at the masjid. Muaz, on the excerpt below, reflected on the very issue of language use, what culture is prioritized, what discourse pattern is followed during *Khutba* delivered at the masjid during jumaa prayers:

Darussalam and ICNM are Arab-centered. The *Khutbas* are given in English when it is not Imam's first language. (He talks about the discourse pattern to be indirect). It is about good relationship with the people. I only go to masjid once a week for Jumaa. That's why I don't come to ICNM. Usually, there is a person standing in front of people (*Khutba*) who doesn't speak English very well. 2- It is not organized in an American fashion. For people who are educated here, there is a way to deliver the message: Concept 1, 2, and all the points and conclusion. So here at ICNM, if you have a Pakistani or Arab guy, the way he organizes information is not the same. What happens is an amazing phenomenon. Somehow, they tie it back what they want to tell. You get confused. There are cultural differences.

For Muaz, he was used to the linguistic structure of English speech and when he was at the Masjid, he found the discourse pattern somewhat challenging to be able to follow the sermons. He attributed it as an outcome of culture related to the delivery of the speech. We could call this as a linguistic otherness. According to Muaz's argumentation of masjid's being more Arab-centered was manifested in the linguistic patterns dominated in the sermons. To Muaz, the masjid should have been more inclusive of the American lingua-cultural traits especially considering that the masjid, though internally diverse, exists within American space even though it is exclusive to Muslim culture in terms of being a religious institution serving only Muslims for Islamic practices.

Farida also expressed her thoughts and experiences around the ethnocentric aspect of otherness:

There is also, generally, hierarchy in Muslim community, *like Arab is true Islam*. It is multi-layered as the treatment of Arabs are harder in the broader society, but within the community, they are considered to be more prestigious and better than others. (From focus group interview at the masjid)

Being an American put her in a secondary position as the language of Islam is Arabic and the tradition of Islam historically stemmed from the Arab culture. To Farida, thus, someone who was Arab was considered to be superior in a Muslim space and thus American identities were othered as they are not considered to be authentic as Arabs. This was an important reflection from Farida as it pertained to how Muslims could be impacted by being marginalized in the larger society but at the same time, they could become force of marginalizing those who did not fit in the norms of a Muslim space that is occupied by majority of Arabs.

### ***American Culture***

In connection to what is expected culturally from Muslims at the masjid and outside; for masjid goers there are other implications if practicing so called certain non-Islamic activities. For example, Muaz felt he was being monitored by the other Muslims who followed him on the social media and he shared only what he thought he would be not judged culturally according to the expected Islamic spatial practices:

I have friends on Facebook and for certain sharing, certain people won't see it. For example, Imam Musa would not see I am wearing Unicorn. There is a lot of things I share that are blocked from Muslim people, because I don't want to be judged that way, whether it is Halloween or political opinion. From home visit conversations Muaz was conscious of being potentially othered if other Muslims learned about what he was doing and how that did not align either with traditional with Islamic tradition. He was aware of his differences from the non-American Muslims, though hard to define what that meant, and his own way of *living* his Islamic culture or American culture that was in conflict with Islamic teachings in case of celebrating Halloween, for instance. I discerned that he did not want to be othered just because of his carrying different cultural traits doing "American things". Muaz continued sharing his feelings around otherness and his resistant reaction to others' perspective about his Americanness, which was certainly a manifestation of how he was able to embrace both his Muslimness and Americanness simultaneously when he participated in activities that seemed to be non-Muslim:

Imam Musa (pseudonym) is a good example of this. His experience was drastic over the five years. When he first came, he would stand at the minbar (sermon stand) and tell that "smoking is haram". He used to have an outsider perspective. If you ask me here now if I want to smoke I would. I purposefully post my pictures with hookah. For me, it is like

who cares. He would think about me that "He wants to dress like a devil (referring to Halloween costume)". From home visit conversations.

Masjids as Muslim spaces are not only places where this contrast of Americanness was observed among the participants. When I asked about *differences* between him and his parents in the cultural practices as he was born in the US, Mahmud reflected:

I kind of diverge in certain things, maybe eating at restaurants, non-halal, or eat at a place where they sell alcohol or has a bar; and my parents would be really mad at that. I have a lot of friends that drink. There are also moments that they are like "You are acting like you are Americanized", when, for example, I hung out the whole year with non-Muslims or not following the religion, or when I curse a lot. From home visit conversation.

Even in familial spaces such as home could be places where Muslim Americans experienced otherness especially if the parents were immigrants and could not fully understand American experience of their children who were first generation Americans born to a relatively more secular society in which Muslimness is not practiced at the same level. This is not to say what they did or didn't was permissible or not. They are the lived experiences that one must respect for the sake of celebrating *differences* even at surface level if not can be fully accepted within a group with their differences.

### ***Madhab Differences (Sect/School of Thought)***

Another cause for otherness is the madhab differences among Muslims. There are two main madahib (sects) in Islam: Sunni and Shi'a. Among all the participants, only Farida follows Shi'a madhab and she expressed her feeling of otherness as she reflected that at the masjid, referring to ICNM that "When you go to masjid, people assume that you follow their madhab". She thought that it was because of the dominance of the Sunni Muslims in Albuquerque:



I am less comfortable at the masjid with the social things or different sectarian dynamics.

ICNM is a Sunni masjid and that's not a bad thing, or that's who the community is.

Because I identify as Shi'i, I wouldn't have problem or I would be comfortable with praying there, but for Shi'i practices, I would go to other masjids (Shia)

Among the two sects there are many differences both in terms of conception of Islamic leadership, individual, and collective Islamic practices.

In the case of Farida, even though she was following Shia madhab which was the othering factor in a Sunni masjid, it could be inferred that she made a conscious choice to participate in these particular Islamic spatial practices at this masjid in order to develop a sense of belonging to larger *umma*, which is a conceived space of an all-inclusive universal Muslim community.

Although the concept of Tawheed brings all the Muslims together to form a unity around an imagined community, the *differences* in Muslim spatialities are often, if not always, disregarded and the 'difference-blindness' pushes othered Muslims to negotiate their individual identities across Muslim spaces. This negotiation is usually reflected in the dynamic relationship between the individual and the perceived space; the constructed Muslimness carry spatio-temporality as the individual also experiences different feelings and thoughts at different times, which reflects the dynamism of Muslimness that is discussed in chapter 5. In the figure below, Farida beautifully represented this experience of spatio-temporality of *otherness* in connection to her Muslim identity within masjid:

**Figure 6**

*Farida's drawing of Masjid representation*



This is a spiral which represents me and time. They are like fractures, meaning my relationship with the masjid, my relationship with the Muslim communities, it varies over time, but it echoes itself. Same thing happens but you feel *differently*. For example, every time I go to masjid somebody says something about my clothes. Sometimes I get upset and I want to leave and other times I am like it is okay you are in your state. The feelings about masjid differ across time. Farida self-reflecting on her own drawing

In sum, in this section, I aimed to present the overarching theme of the study findings on *Otherness* that all the participants reported to be experiencing in their lives at different levels and different forms across social spaces, particularly American spaces of school campus and outside of schools, and Muslim spaces such as home and masjid.

### **Hybridity**

In the first two sections of findings, I presented the two emerging themes of *Belonging* and *Otherness* in order to let the readers understand and untangle the complexity of how Muslim Americans, as in the cases of this study's participants, spatialize their Muslimness across social spaces and through the theoretical lens of Henri Lefebvre's triad of conceived, perceived space,

and lived space. Even though it is a challenge to present the spatial experiences discreetly, it is instrumental to analyze them as such so that we can observe how participants negotiated who they were holistically in the given social and historical context.

In this third section, I present, *hybridity* as another emerging theme of this study. This is perhaps the most important aspect of spatialization as it unfolds how the participants manifested who they were both as a Muslim and American 'wholistically' despite the dichotomist view of identity by the hegemonic discourses. I present how they utilized their *differences* as a way to navigate across social spaces. Hybridity refers to the *livedspace*, where participants embrace the markers of both *belonging* and *otherness* through resisting the exclusionary dominance and arriving the conjunction of being "both/and also" (Soja, 1996) by a process hybridization of Muslim Americanness. The negotiation occurred when their differences were heightened, and they consciously selected to stay in-between to develop what I call, *wholeness*. It is significant to emphasize that the hybridity, in this study, does not simply mean the mixture of Muslimness and Americanness, rather presents how the participants developed the *wholeness* or *enunciate* their differences in multiple ways to exist and live as a Muslim in American spaces and as an American in Muslim spaces. I also present this idea as not conflicting the two identities, but rather as participants utilizing these identities as cultural assets in navigating across the different social spaces.

Analyzing the data spatially, I drew on both Bhabha's hybridity theory and Soja's theories on Thirdspace to present Lefebvre's theoretically loaded concept of *conceived-perceived-lived* triad, which Soja (1996) also called it as Trialectics of Spatiality. I relied mostly on participants' self-interpretations of their drawings and narratives in the spaces, including the participants home, masjid, UNM campus, and the Flying Star café, I collected the data. I also present their

own across-space analyses in order to let the participants to interpret their narratives and drawings that informed how they developed their hybrid identities in different ways.

The concept of hybridity occupies a central place in postcolonial discourse. It is “celebrated and privileged as a kind of superior cultural intelligence owing to the advantage of *in-betweenness*, the straddling of two cultures and the consequent ability to negotiate the *difference*” (Hoogvelt 1997: 158). This is particularly so in Bhabha’s discussion of cultural hybridity. For Bhabha, hybridity is the process by which the colonial governing authority undertakes to translate the identity of the colonized (the Other) within a singular universal framework, but then fails producing something familiar but new (Bhabha, 1996). Bhabha (2004) argues that a new hybrid identity or subject-position emerges from the interweaving of elements of the dominant and dominated challenging the validity and authenticity of any essentialist cultural identity. Hybridity is positioned as antidote to essentialism, or “the belief in invariable and fixed properties which define the *whatness* of a given entity.” (Fuss, 1991: xi). In postcolonial discourse, the notion that any culture or identity is pure or essential is disputable. (Ashcroft et al., 1995). Bhabha himself is aware of the dangers of fixity and fetishism of identities within binary colonial thinking arguing that “all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity.” (Rutherford 1990: 211)

Bhabha posits hybridity in such a form of liminal or in-between space, where the ‘cutting edge of negotiation’ occurs and which he terms the third space (Rutherford, 1990). This is a *livedspace* intrinsically critical of essentialist positions of identity and a conceptualization of ‘original or originary culture’: "For me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the ‘Third Space’, which enables other positions to emerge." (Rutherford 1990: 211). Thus, the third space is a

mode of articulation, a way of describing a productive, and not merely reflective, space that engenders new possibility (Soja, 1996). It is an ‘interruptive, interrogative, and enunciative’ space of new forms of cultural meaning and production blurring the limitations of existing boundaries and calling into question established categorizations of culture and identity (Bhabha 1994).

According to Bhabha, this hybrid third space is an *ambivalent* site where cultural meaning and representation have no ‘primordial unity or fixity’ (Bhabha 1994, p.26). The concept of the third space is observed as useful for analyzing the enunciation, transgression and subversion of dualistic categories going beyond the realm of binary thinking. Despite the exposure of the third space to contradictions and ambiguities, it provides a spatial politics of inclusion rather than exclusion that “initiates new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation.” (Bhabha 1994, p. 1). At the point at which the dominant presents a normalizing, hegemonic practice, the hybrid strategy opens up a third space of and for rearticulating of *negotiation* and meaning (Bhabha 1996).

After the theoretical recap of this thematic finding, the next section elaborates on the ways through which participants, in *livedspaces*, developed their hybridity as Muslim Americans. What I observed that hybridity, as part of spatialization process, emerged in the 'sense of *wholeness*', utilizing multiple *linguistic* and *cultural* resources, ambivalent aspirations, *dynamic* and strategic shifts.

### **Sense of Wholeness**

As one of the selective codes, *wholeness* was one of the ways hybridity was manifested in the cases of this study's participants. All the participants shared the idea of being 'One' referring to their self, hybridizing their Muslim and American identities, including their ethnic and

religiocultural traits. When I asked Dunya about how she approached this issue of living as a Muslim woman in the US, she responded:

I think I look at it as a *whole* and as one thing. I mean there wasn't a time that we thought 'Oh God this is America, we don't do this here.' It is mainly a one big picture. For example, if someone asks me where I am from. I respond I was born in Albuquerque; NM and my parents are originally from Palestine. (From final focus group interview).

Her example reflects how she could be from the US, but she could also proudly announce that she carried her family's cultural traits by sharing where they are from originally.

She continued with her interpretation of where she had the highest level of sense of belonging:

I feel like I am holding onto each place in different ways. With my parents (referring to the home space), I feel like there are norms and you act according to what they expect from you. But at school, you decide what you want to do, how you want to do, what your path should be...; so, it is all on you. That's why I pick university to be the most comfortable place. *It is a reflection of who I am all in once Muslim, female, American; I can implement each identity from each place in here (university campus).*

Interestingly, she chose school campus to be where she experienced the *wholeness* as she had the partial freedom to be able to selectively become whoever she wanted and that was where realized that she was holding a *whole* identity where her Muslimness and Americanness merged. It is also important to note that the school is where participants reflected to as a more official space (firstspace), where they experienced the dominance of Americanness. Also, the Muslim polarity, socio-politically, was more apparent on the school campuses, especially in the cases of female participants—Farida and Dunya— as presented in the earlier sections. Despite the fact that

Dunya and her sister experienced the horrific hatred attack on campus, she still felt the strength in her Muslimness and resistance to such impositions of others on her:

Then, on the day of the 2016 elections, an incident happened that haunted me and my sister for a while. We were sitting in the library, when a man wearing a trump shirt approached us, and pulled of my sister's scarf. It was a man she knew, one in the same program as her(engineering). We were shocked. We heard about stories like this, but it hits hard when you actually see it happening. We were terrified. We notified UNM police and went home and told our parents. We said we didn't want to go to school, but my dad refused. He told us to never give up, and to definitely never let the hijab be a reason for us giving up. So, we continued going to school. And now, looking back on this day, I feel like that situation has only made us stronger in our faith. We were the hijab more proudly than ever. Now, I am a senior in college. From her autobiography

Dunya was aware that her difference while wearing hijab could make her vulnerable to Others who are non-Muslims, but she consciously made the decision to enunciate her difference and resist *others'* exclusionary perceptions and attitudes.

When I asked Muaz how he saw himself in all those social spaces (research sites) he responded that, "There is no division among them. I feel like I have dual identity". I tried to understand what he meant by that, and he elaborated on what dual identity meant:

It means that I can be two at the same time. I can be Pakistani and American or Muslim and American. My identities naturally switch from space to space. I know how to change my tone when I am interacting with different groups of people white American people, black people. I know how to interact with each of those groups in different ways. It is about, I was saying before, it is the multiple personalities or identities, so, I have, deep

down, *there is no place I can be 100% who I am. If am 100% of who I am*, then I lack the perception I like to carry. It has to shift according to the places. I never had an issue of *combining my Muslim identity and American perspective*"

In Muaz's case, the experience of hybridization process was similar to Dunya's, but it carried its own traits in connection to the sense of *wholeness* by employing spatial strategies in order to navigate across American and Muslim spaces. Muaz shared his self-perception on his hybrid Muslim and American identity which reflected strategically employed spatial and dynamic oscillations between his cultural identities. His elaboration shed light on better understanding the experiences of US born Muslim Americans' efforts to maintain such hybridity in the US context. When he referred to language in connection to how he conceived of his linguistic identity, Muaz meant that he still spoke Urdu as his native language. Culturally Muaz reflected on his identity's oscillations between Muslimness and Americanness and sometimes he experienced very strongly in his Muslim Practices. He was self-conscious of the struggle of maintaining his hybridity. As Muaz shared, he was raised mostly within White Americans and went to schools where the demographic of the schools was predominantly consisting of White people. For him, the hardship came from the pressure of the dominant culture; however, he managed to maintain his Muslimness despite that fact.

### **Ambivalences and Dynamism**

Developing of hybrid identities are manifested also in the dynamic shifts within and across spaces and in doing so, participants reflected on how the dynamic nature of their Muslim-Americanness also lied in the ambivalent feelings. It is the feeling of belonging to neither Muslimness nor Americanness or belonging to both by oscillating between the two, which is another manifested characteristic of hybridity; *in-betweenness* (Bhabha, 1994). For Soja (1996),



it commenced as taking sides with the marginal, in common with Marxist perspectives, but it also departs from the constraints of binary logic of either/or to produce a Thirdspace of resistance that would counter the authority of the center(s) through its spatial *in-betweenness* characterized by cultural dynamics and ambivalences (see also Bhabha, 1994). In this regard, the spatial strategy of thirding transcends dualism through an openness to 'the both/and also,' where the opposite or antithesis of the process is contained within it and at the same time set against it (Bhabha, 1994, Soja, 1996).

Farida interpreted her identity in the drawings of all spaces in connection to where she belonged, and she expressed a feeling of ambivalence as the dominance of either Muslim or American spaces imposed a certain image on her; and her awareness of this imposition forced her to the in-between space where she felt she struggled 'to fit in either or both':

The presence of Whiteness which is unavoidable in American society. Because the way I was raised, the way I am, I am usually racialized. I feel some kind of identity around that. I have a Dutch passport and it means a lot. I was able to visit Europe. It is a connection to identity in that way. It is more functional than it is emotional. I would say I am from New Mexico if someone asked me. I don't want to be associated with colonial American homeland. I have to be careful when I say I from here because I have native friends who have been here thousand years. I have issues with identity. *Like I don't know where I am from, where is my home.* It is always a question. Identity is complicated. In this space, you are too conservative and, in this space (she was referring to school and other non-Muslim spaces), you are not conservative enough. Final focus group interview

For Farida, it could be argued that hybridity was not only about the merging of her Muslim and American identities, but rather an ambivalent stance where there was always the questioning of

*whatness* and who she was. The influence of other people's perceptions and Farida's lived experiences also made her question of who she was. The participants like Farida or Muaz who manifested hybridity within their identities as a process of *conceived-perceived-lived* usually have had critical attitudes and a high-level consciousness (Lefebvre, 1991). That's the reason why they contested the dominance, but at the same time they lived through it by socio-spatially practicing the linguistic and cultural elements of the dominant: Muslim or American. What Farida shared was also a reflection of the dynamic characteristics of identity development during which the participants experience *otherness* and/or *belonging*, henceforth, they strategically make choices of participation or enactment of their spatialities (Adamson, 2002; Soja, 1996). This is where the negotiation occurred, in the in-between spaces. Mahmud also reflected on his identity to be hybrid in the same way as to be dynamic and constantly changing:

Growing up, I knew I did not have to be one-dimensional and *being an American doesn't mean I couldn't be a Muslim*. But there were times through looking at media and interactions with day-to-day people, made me feel like it had to be one or the other. Having a strong Muslim community allowed me to not feel this way. And that's why it was so important to me to have close Muslim friends so that I wouldn't be one-dimensional. Overtime, I feel like that I am starting to return to the person I was in high school, but I still have lots of growing and exploring of my own identity and in college has shaped it as multiple identities at the same time.

According to Mahmud, it was not him who did not want to be American and Muslim at the same time, it was the 'others' who wanted him to be either a Muslim or an American, but not together. In the conceived space, he thought he was a hybrid, but in the perceived space, there were moments of negotiation. He gave the example of how media portrayed Muslims and how his

interactions on a daily basis "makes him feel like it", like as separate entities. He was very conscious of how his identity was dynamically shifting across time and space as his *livespaces* were enriched with many spatial practices, conceptions, and perceptions.

Dunya also shared similar feelings:

For the cafe one, the main thing is the diversity. So, regardless of your gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, you can participate here. In the *masjids*, it is only for Muslims, but here it is for anybody. Unlike home environment, where there is only one home, *here different homes meet*. It is a place for study, meeting with my friends and relax. *I can be myself here rather than trying to please anyone*. Challenges to be here are to find a place to pray and moments where I feel uncomfortable like earlier, I was ordering the drink and the older gentleman was waving in front of my face instead of telling it is my turn to order. He assumed that I didn't speak English. From final focus group interview

Here, Dunya shared about how she could hold her hybridity in social spaces, like a café, until her embracing and self-perception of her Muslim-Americanness was disrupted when her Americanness was questioned by the dualistic views of other people. As a *hijabi* lady, she interacted with a non-Muslim American and the perception of a non-Muslim about her was stereotypical in which the person she interacted assumed that she was not from the US and did not speak English because the general stigma on Muslims is that they do not speak English or they are not from the US, thus they do not belong in an American space. For the non-Muslim, she did not fit in the mainstream of American culture or the norm.

### **Hybridity and Unexpected Spatial Practices**

All the participants developed hybrid identities through maintaining their both unexpected Muslim and American spatial practices socially and culturally, which I presented in

earlier sections of this chapter, such as wearing a hijab in a café or school, wearing jeans in the masjid, praying in the library of the school, playing cards and smoking hookah but performing salah or fasting at the same time, playing music but reciting Qur'an as well, etc. Participants did not conceive those spatial practices to be conflicting practices or elements that should have been eliminated from their *livedspace*. The participants did not consider those practices to be clashing traits of their cultural hybrid identities, but rather as cultural assets that made them who they were as a *whole*.

Farida reflected on this aspect of holding hybridity for her Americanness, "We are in the US, so obviously that's present (being American or American culture). There is conflict between your worldviews. It is not a bad conflict. It is normal." (From Home Visit). She added more about reconciling her feeling on her Muslimness; "I am very critical of masjid and our Muslim community, and there are a lot of things I don't agree with, but at the same time from that something can come as *resilient* and *beautiful*." (From Home Visit). It is evident that Farida and all the other participants utilize the *differences* between Muslimness and Americanness as assets to be able to exist and navigate across social spaces, and create a new hybrid identity that is emergent from those oscillations between the two worlds that are constantly revolving within each other.

According to the traditional Islamic thoughts and practices, Music is not preferred to be licit and when someone plays, sings, or even listens to it, usually they are perceived to be performing or doing something illicit and Farida gave an instance when she practiced the hybridity around the issue of music in her own wedding by presenting that music should not be considered to be haram (illicit) as it could celebrate the diversity of people from *different* cultural backgrounds:

Because of the diversity of friends and families, we did not have a wedding. We only did marriage ceremony. Because we were very young and like I have Jewish family and Israeli family, and I have Dutch family, atheists and Catholics. My husband is very conservative Shi'i and we were very stressed out about that and afraid to accommodate all those differences. If it was now, we would have had the wedding and told them you are adults... I love music and I would have had both types of music during my wedding. My parents play music, and they were never like "music is haram"... I don't think music is haram (From home visit conversations).

Playing or listening to music is something that would usually not be conceived as illegal in American mainstream culture. However, Muslim individuals struggle around this aspect since it is *imposed* as a social practice that should not be conducted. It is not expected nor it is against the "norm". I have presented many examples and instances in which participants had to negotiate their identities around their spatial practices when they were neither expected to be part of nor accepted in a dominant social space.

Just like using linguistic assets of speaking multiple languages within different spaces, participants were able to utilize those practices within contested spaces as mentioned earlier like wearing hijab at school. For example, all the participants used English, as part of their linguistic identity, at home to a certain degree, where they needed to utilize their English comprehension skills to discern meanings. Dunya gave an example of how there was a linguistic hybridization at home:

Most of the time, my parents talk to us in Arabic and we respond in English. Majority of the time, we use English at home. But when, my dad, for example, talk from Hadith or

Quranic verses, he talks in Arabic and gives the translation in English just to further our knowledge in Arabic." (From home visit conversation)

Here, this is another example to this linguistic asset which is the transliteration of the Qur'anic verses so that English speakers who do not speak or read Arabic fluently, can read it and ultimately learn how to recite the Qur'an. Farida shared how the transliterated Arabic was utilized at home so that she and her family could learn and use Arabic as an essential component of being a Muslim in prayers and integral part of Muslim linguistic identity:

We used Arabic because we prayed at home together all the time. My dad does calligraphy in Arabic. It was always present. We didn't speak Arabic as a spoken language at home, but now I read stuff about Muslim we read stuff about Muslim homes using *anglicized Arabic*.

On the one hand, according to the participants, in the Muslim perceived space, English is seen as a foreign language, but at masjids existing in American space, there is a need of translation of the Khutbas (Friday sermon Muslims must attend to), for example, as the diversity brought about the need to be provided for everybody from different linguistic backgrounds. On the other hand, it becomes controversial when Arabic is used extensively as the considered holy and preserved language for every part of a prayer. During a focus group interview, participants were debating over what language should be used in masjids and some suggested that the whole khutba (which is half Arabic and certain prayers within Khutba must be Arabic) can be delivered in English as Muaz opposed that he did not understand Arabic and missing the points during a very important prayer. Here it was evident that the use of language could be part of unexpected spatial practices when the need was articulated by those who live in-between the languages. In Dunya's example, her father was aware of Dunya's linguistic asset of speaking English and he utilized it as such.

The participants, in the above examples and excerpts reflected how they built a hybrid Muslim American linguistic identity by using both English and Arabic for different purposes such daily use in conversations, prayers or while reading the sacred text.

In sum, hybridity allowed the participants to disrupt and move beyond the dualistic views on the identity development. One of the most important conclusions of this study is the contrasting but resilient spatialities of Muslim Americans, who strategically develop new hybrid identities that contested the systemic *impositions* and assimilating forces of the worlds they live in and where they belong and have people who are important in their personal lives. Findings further unraveled that one could both belong to the same space or be othered, but what othered the participants could become a sharp point that distinguished them from others; so, they embraced and transformed those sharp points within their hybrid identities or third spaces that they developed. Moje et al. (2004) defines third space as a construct which “merges the ‘first space’ of people’s home, community, and peer networks with the ‘second space’ of the discourses they encounter in more formalized institutions such as work, church, or school” (p. 41). Practically, Muslims Americans could belong to *umma* but diverge spatially with those sharp points to exist as whoever they want to be especially given that they carry their unique cases of being non-optionally born to the dominant culture of the United States where their Muslimness is vilified and subjugated in certain situations and instances.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I presented the findings of the study under emerging themes of *Belonging*, *Otherness* and *Hybridity* from the spatial-interpretive data analysis conducted across four cases of the participants as a response the main research question: *How do Muslim college students spatialize their Muslimness within and across in- and out-of-school spaces?* The themes were

presented under subthemes of participants elicited data on how they developed sense of *belonging, otherness, and hybridity* within both Muslim and American spaces and what those concepts meant for the Muslimness and Americanness. The findings suggested that participants as Muslim American developed hybrid identities and wholistic self-conception through spatial practices that informed their third spaces, disrupting the first and second spaces across social spaces: Home, Masjid (ICNM), UNM campus, and the Café. The findings also categorized in a fashion that can unravel the complexity of Lefebvre's triad of conceived-perceived-lived, which was the main guiding theoretical framework of this study.



## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

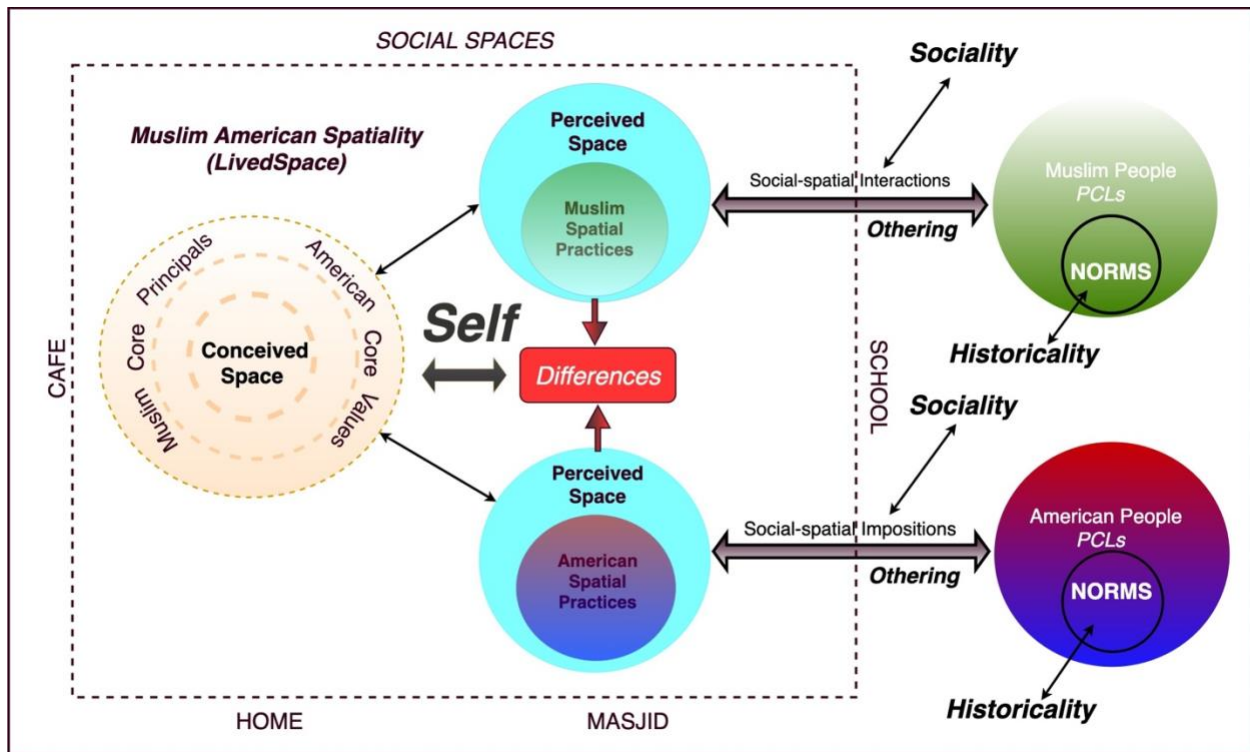
The purpose of this multiple-case study was to explore how US-born Muslim college students spatialized their linguistic and cultural identities within and across their social spaces such as home, college campus, and Islamic community center. This study also aimed to present how the US-born Muslim college students negotiated their collective and personal identities across these spaces. In the study, their schooling experiences were further analyzed to explore how they have nurtured their Muslimness.

Guided by the theories of Henri Lefebvre's spatial triad of *perceived-conceived-lived* (PCL) in relation to Soja's Thirdspace theory and Trialectics of Being and Spatiality, and Homi Bhabha's ideas of Hybridity, the data collected from home visit conversations, focus group interviews, drawings, and autobiographies, were analyzed through the methods of interpretive-spatial analysis (Pugalis, 2009). Linguistic and cultural identities of participants as part of their Muslimness and Americanness were analyzed through their spatial practices across social spaces and certain markers such as wearing headscarves, having Muslim names, dress, kinds of events they attend to, activities they do in their daily life in general, what they do in the representational spaces, their interactions within these spaces, what worldviews they hold onto, and other linguistic and cultural elements they reflected on as part of their spatialities as Muslim Americans.

In this concluding chapter, I briefly summarize and discuss the findings of the study from a spatial perspective and in relation to the overarching research questions. I present the discussion through a conceptualization of Muslim American spatiality within the framework of Thirdspace of Muslim-Americaness, which is depicted in figure 7 below. The discussion is followed by the implications of the study both for research and practice and concluding remarks.

**Figure 7**

*Conceptualization of Muslim American Spatiality*



In figure 7, I intended to visualize this study’s findings through a conceptualization that aims at untangling the complex process of the spatialization of Muslimness and Americanness, a negotiation between two cultures, together in relation to the *trialectics of spatiality* and *trialectics of being* that I mapped (Soja, 1996). I linked the trialectics of spatiality (Soja, 1996; Lefebvre, 1991) and made evident in the map the *perceived-conceived-lived* (PCL) triad. The dotted box on the left of figure 7 represents the trialectics of Muslim-American spatiality or how participants see themselves. This spatiality is dialectically influenced by the historicality and sociality of Muslimness and Americanness. Historicality and Sociality were observed as both American and Muslim spaces socially reinforced norms that were co-reconstructed with the participants, which divided or made evident and juxtaposed the contrasting identities of the student participants. These spaces were also occupied by other Muslims and other American

people who also had their own spatialities and influenced participants' perspectives through interactions and relations, namely sociality. The historicity of spatialities and identities transferred into impositions on either a Muslim or American identity of the study participants to be what is expected from them and relinquish the other identity of them, which was deemed as opposing. Although Muslim Americans were born in the US, they strive to express their belonging to Americanness through spatial practices and clinging to American core values, which can be compatible with Muslim core principles. But given the contrasting and separate view on these identities, participants felt othered in their own homeland because of a normativity on what counts as American. In a way, their Muslimness became the cause for being perceived as a non-American, an Other, a criminal or a threat to the society and this perception is constructed through marginalizing discourses and dominance intentionally to decide who should be included or occluded in American society.

The participants' spatiality was also impacted by Muslim and American socio-spatially and socio-politically (PCLs) imposed norms on every *one* of them to identify *the other*, which was found also within self. The study participants also identified spatial practices (presented in chapter 4) associated with being American or Muslim. However, the participants' conceived spaces were dynamically composed of both Muslim core principals and American core values. So, they thought of themselves in connection to both Muslimness and Americanness.

The participants' livedspaces represented their perceived identity with other Muslims and Americans. Participants dynamically negotiated the external impositions pressed by others. Their thinking of who they were and how they saw themselves in a lived space was not devoid of the influence of the American and Muslim norms that were developed historically and culturally. In the dynamic of negotiation, external factors such as social sentiment by people influenced their

decision-making process as an individual, thereby helping them learn to negotiate from a strategic perspective in friendly and adversarial contexts (Anzaldúa, 2015).

Outside of the perimeters in figure 7 on page 143, I tried to portray the physical spaces where these negotiations and livedspaces were experienced by the participants. In the negotiation process it could be inferred that they both developed a sense of belonging to both Americanness and Muslimness, but also otherness. Ultimately, the participants hybridized their identity in the process of claiming of their unique Self who embraced both Muslim and American identity *wholistically* by not giving up on what they thought and did in their everyday life both as a Muslim and American. In the next section, I discuss the study results, starting with the experience of belonging as both American and Muslim.

### **The Experience of Belonging as both American and Muslim**

In the case of study participants, *Dunya, Farida, Muaz,* and *Mahmud*, belonging to Muslimness was one of the overarching themes for the spatialization of their identity both individually and collectively within Muslim spaces: Home and Masjid, representing a space of worship for Muslims (Soja, 1996). The participants developed this sense of belonging, as a conceived space, as part of their identity construction through socio-spatial practices, which also inform their perceived spaces. This conscious choice of belonging to either Muslimness or Americanness, or both, represents a better understanding of the difference between the belonging to Muslimness and belonging to Americanness. Religious and socio-cultural practices encompassed the socio-spatial practices that strengthened their Muslim identity for them (Adamson, 1980). Lefebvre (1991) provided the example of the body and its parts for the Social and Spatial Practice that presupposes the use of the body: the use of the hands, members and sensory organs, and gestures of work as of activity unrelated to work. This is the realm of

*perceived* (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 40). Another example is for the bodily *lived* experiences which is both highly complex and highly significant, because 'culture' intervenes here, with its illusory immediacy, via symbolisms. Symbolisms, as part of culture as well, when collectively practiced indicating a common discourse for it becomes everyday life (lived) experience, rather than simply the symbols with no associated semantic significations. Symbols and signs in this sense becomes part of the spatial practice of a people, as in the case of Muslim Americans.

In all four cases, there were commonalities around how religion as a culture played a significant role in the participants' process of self-identifying who they were based on the shared spatial practices. For example, *salah* (a set of five daily prayers and other obligatory and optional prayers), wearing *hijab*, *Ramadan fasting*, *Iftars*, *Eid celebrations*, *reading Qur'an*, *attending weekend schools at the masjid*, which are linked to Muslim socio-spatial practices (Soja, 1996). All these practices, either conducted individually (conducted at home or masjid) or collectively, informed the belongingness of the participants to a collective identity of *Umma* that Muslims construct. *Umma* is a collective Muslim identity that is based on the premise which means that a Muslim's faith and his/her pride in believing in Islam as well as respecting the values of the Islamic civilization and culture, accentuate Islamic teachings, possess the freedom to practice either as an individual or in a community, implementing religious responsibilities and the obligation to preach to the human community (Adamson, 1980).

Also, participants shared their sentiment and sense of *belonging to Americanness* in multiple ways through their citizenship and exercising their constitutional obligations and rights. Other ways of reflecting American belongingness included the style of dressing and other cultural traits, and use of English (Adamson, 1980). The participants' linguistic identity was manifested in the use of English that included both as a first and native language given it is the

dominant language across Americans especially including the institutional and official spaces such as college campuses as presented in this section (Soja, 1996).

Furthermore, *belonging to Americanness* was also manifested in the social practices as they were present in everyday lives of the participants regardless of their voluntary or involuntary involvement. All the participants expressed a sense of their *being* American as inherent, as they were all born in the United States. In addition, their everydayness of Americanness was also commonly compared to Muslimness being less present. In the perceived space of Americanness, they were not able to just simply 'un-belong' to the American space. The linguistic and cultural dominance of Americanness 'made' them have a strong sense of belonging to American identity and the ability to spatialize their Muslim identity by interacting with other communities to promote their collective identities, such as *Umma*. Thus, the eminent presence of Americanness in American spaces was part of the participants' observing of their belonging to an American identity as an inevitable part of their reality. As Farida stated, "We are in the US, so obviously that's present (being American or American culture)". I interpret this as the presence of Americanness has already been embodying their American identity in a context where the American social practices are constantly exposed in the lives of the participants.

Following the United States' constitution as a reflection of belonging to Americanness or exercising American citizenship was also common across cases. *Celebrating or observing American holidays* was another manifestation of belonging to Americanness (Soja, 1996). For the participants, sometimes it was just part of being around the celebrations of the holidays and exposed to them, and sometimes they actively participated in observing them. Some of the common official holidays that participants partly observed in the US, as known, are Christmas, Thanksgiving, even New Year's, and other cultural holidays either having religious attribution or

none are Halloween Day, Valentine's. The next section presents the experience of otherness in the spatialization process in American and Muslim spaces.

### **The Experience of Otherness in both American and Muslim Spaces**

Another salient finding of this study was that of *otherness* in the spatialization process that participants experienced within both Muslim and American spaces. Otherness is particularly important to understand how the participants were set apart from their own community, as they did not always fit with the norms imposed on them either through the social-spatial interactions or dominant socio-historic impositions. The four cases reflected a commonality of constructing a Thirdspace of embracing both Muslim and American cultural values and resisting binary impositions on them. The participants strategically utilized and embraced otherness. Muslim Americans experienced otherness as their spatial practices, or what they were expected to do, did not conform to their expected or normative Muslimness or Americanness.

In the process of being *othered* within Muslimness, it was observed that the Muslimness was embedded in socio-spatial interactions where each participant's *enoughness* of their religiosity was scrutinized through the norms of what was expected from them in their Muslim spatial interactions and practices. For example, Muslim men are supposed to grow beard; and they are not supposed to use swear words, play card games, listen to, or sing music, visit a sports bar, nor smoke. For Muslim women, they are supposed to wear hijab; and are not supposed to wear jeans, observe certain American holidays, nor celebrations such as Halloween and Thanksgiving. Dating is strictly not expected or allowed for both genders. When the participants engaged in spatial practices that are against the norms, the participants experienced a questioning from their Muslim fellows about their Muslimness, in terms of their authenticity.

As presented within the contextual background of this study in the introductory chapter, Muslims are subject of constant scrutiny as they defend their Americanness since they are often othered from this identity based on their Muslim spatial practices, such as wearing hijab on school campus that is foreign and thus othered. Perception of Muslims by other people in non-Muslim societies has always been historically negative and Muslim have been vilified because of their differences from the dominant culture and norms (Haque, 2004). In terms of the participants' experience of otherness within American spaces, there was a dialectical influence of American PCLs on the individual's spatiality, which was embedded in not only in the sociality that could be observed in the *othering* gazes against Muslims, but also in the verbal attacks, or vilification and stereotyping of Muslims by Americans (Bonino, 2015; Haque, 2004; Atbakar, 2004). It was common among Muslim American women participants of this study, who became visibly the other, as they wore a hijab. In such instances, Muslims became more prone to such attacks in social spaces such as school campuses which supposedly should provide safe spaces for all (Anzaldúa, 2015). For example, in the excerpt below, Dunya shared her experience when her sister's hijab was pulled off on the UNM campus, in her autobiography, she shared how being seen different is causing this feeling of unsafety:

When I graduated high school, I was very excited yet nervous/scared. A new journey awaited me and I didn't know what to expect. On my first day of college, I remember walking into my chemistry 121 class at 11am, a classroom filled with over 300 students, and as I walked through, I felt like all the eyes were on me. I felt different. That was the first time I felt like that. I remember going home and telling my parents, and they told me this is the reality. *We are different*. You do wear a hijab and will get stares, so the way you decide to handle this is the way you'll get through it.



Not feeling safe and feeling of different in a supposedly nurturing environment for personal development, the participants experienced a sense of being pushed out of the American space and feeling of being *ripped apart* even though they are born and native to America. It was the others who oppressively intended to break their identities apart, so that they were not perceived as One full Self. Dunya's experience of feeling different than other Americans was due to the stares she got from her American classmates in an institutional space is a great example of how a Muslim female could experience *otherness* especially because of their Muslim visibility, wearing a hijab, and could experience challenges of integrating in American space.

The sharp difference between the *otherness* within Muslimness versus Americanness is that the former has benign influence for a Muslim to be excluded from Muslim space (Contreras, 2017). However, in the latter, there is a *systemic othering* which becomes prevalent when considering the potential effect of Islamophobia; thus, the dominance uses all its forces to maintain the differences as the reference point for the vilification (Contreras, 2017). Using othering toward Muslims and ultimately excluding Muslims in the whole world was observed by the Muslim Travel Ban in 2017, which was put in action by the President Donald Trump's executive order (Contreras, 2017). The Muslim experience around the Travel Ban, for example, not only exacerbated the systemic othering toward Muslims, but also it caused a sense of feeling that diverts Muslim Americans from non-Muslim Americans. This unfortunate state-imposed discriminatory act on Muslims also intended to influence on weakening the Muslim community-building efforts and impacted on the perceptions of how they were not welcomed in American space where they socially and physically belong to. As presented in the findings chapter, the study participants also shared their such thoughts and feelings on this matter as it directly

impacted on their perception of how non-Muslim Americans perceive them as if they did not have the right to belong to American space and detached from their families and relatives.

After discussing the experience of otherness in both American and Muslim spaces, the next section presents the participants' experience of *difference* in American and Muslim spaces.

### **The Experience of Difference from other Muslims and Americans**

As analyzed in chapter 4, Muslim American participants made a conscious choice of manifesting their differences; for example, by wearing hijab on campus (American space) or wearing jeans in masjid (Muslim space), as a way to resist the binary thinking of belonging to either Muslimness or Americanness. They did so by enacting unexpected spatial practices that promoted moments or actions that disrupted or strived to modify the expected perceived spaces of who they were as Muslims or Americans. While *difference* is consciously utilized by both Muslim and American PCLs for the purpose of dominating and othering of the Muslim PCLs and American PCLs; in return, this process became a strengthening force for Muslim Americans to become resilient and exist as who they think they are as a *whole* and enact their *livedspaces* in both American and Muslim spaces.

Participants were also conscious of this *othering* process which manifested through their reconciliation of their Muslimness and Americanness in their conceived spaces. Spaces that were dialectically influenced by the realization of the differences in their spatial practices; differences that they maintained by seeking other possible ways of expressing both of their identities, which they fully embodied. Thus, they engaged in a process which Soja termed as *thirding-as-othering* (1996). The participants' goal was to transcend the binary perceptions in order to send messages to both Muslim and American people the possibility of a Thirdspace, so that they do not necessarily have to belong to either but both, and also be an-Other which is unique and valuable

in its own given its distinctiveness from others. Muslim valued their culture becoming difficult to be influenced by foreign cultures (Anzaldúa, 2015).

Even though there are claims of inclusivity and diversity in both Muslim and American spaces, the study participants expressed that they faced the challenge of molding their ways of doing and being to fit in by suppressing their difference in terms of spatial practices. They embraced who they were by resisting to what others intended to impose on them. Socio-spatial practices offered opportunities to materialize interdependence as a relation, ethos, and locus of expertise (Anzaldúa, 2015). In this sense, I understand socio-spatial practice as a justice-building endeavor, a project of building access (Anzaldúa, 2015; Soja, 2010; Soja, 1996). Thus, there was a constant negotiation of participants encountered PCLs. It was not a *negation* of the other, but a *negotiation* within the other. Negotiation was necessary because the social relations needed this humane approach rather than dualistic separating blocks between the groups. However, the differences of the peripheralized must be recognized, acknowledged, and respected in actions. Here, the participants went *beyond* the norms and challenged the mainstream ideologies of dichotomizing the social groups.

It was a matter of whose spatiality was more elevated and othered given the need to protect their Muslim identity and sense of belongingness. Celebratory view of cultures only helped in the identification of the traits and characteristics expected for a cultural group. The dominant culture outweighed the Othered culture and stood out at the center, while the Othered culture and identities had to remain in the margins. The cultural hegemony imposed the norms on the Othered, so that the individual who was marginalized always ended up feeling less and incomplete. According to Anzaldúa (2015), having positive emotions about one's culture helps to decrease the presence of risky behaviors. As such, the participants who reflected this positive

attitude towards their both Muslim and American culture on how valuable their cultural traits were and they strived to strengthen their cultural identity that is unique to them at the same time resisted the cultural hegemony of the majority that was imposed on them through the norms both in Muslim and American spaces.

### **Arriving at a Thirdspace of Muslim-Americanness**

Participants of this study spatialized their linguistic and cultural identities through the sense of belonging, otherness, and hybridity which were manifested in their perceived and conceived spaces (Bhabha 1994; Soja, 1996), which dynamically also constructed their *livedspaces*; namely, a Thirdspace of Muslim-Americanness, or *Muslimmerican* identity, the practice integrating Muslimness in American culture and vice versa. In the findings chapter, I presented how the Muslim American participants developed a sense of belonging to their Muslimness through their conceiving of Muslim core principles, as well as by spatially practicing their Muslimness. Moreover, they also developed a sense of belonging to Americanness through the conception of American core values such as, learning their freedom as an American, valuing the importance of liberty; as well as exercising American spatial practices such as, demanding equal citizenship rights and celebrating American holidays, and use of English as part of their linguistic identity.

Even though this study initially proposed that Muslims would navigate across American spaces as US-born Muslims, the study concluded that participants have an integrated, wholistic sense of belonging to both Muslimness and Americanness, which yielded a hybrid identity and the creation of their own Thirdspaces (Bhabha 2004; Soja, 1996). The initial proposal also intended to abstain from presuppositions about referring to the participants as Americans, since it is known that the birthplace or holding an ID card of a country does not merely mean associating

someone to that place as their home. In the cases of this study, I learned that there were multiple reasons for participants in developing a sense of belonging to both Muslimness and Americanness, ending developing a hybrid identity.

Through the analysis of this study findings, the role of conceived spaces proved to be substantial in influencing the perceived spaces of the participants. It might be as such because the conceived spaces are the center of conscious mechanism of the Self given their immersion in the new culture (Mathias, 2016). However, conceived spaces cannot be independent from the perceived, since an identity is co-constructed through both conceiving of the world and the corporeality of the perceived spaces (Matus, 2009). In the case of Muslim American participants, it is through the Muslim and American spatial practices. Thus, there is a dialectical relationship between the two that make up the participants' *livedspace*. For Muslims, then, it is not only the belief of their culture as in the realm of the conceived, but also through their social acts, latter which correlate to the perceived spaces in which Muslims spatially practice their Muslimness (Anzaldúa, 2015). I emphasize again that the conceived space is not the realm of pure theoretical world devoid of the influence of the perceived spaces. I argue that there is a dialectical pressure among and across both Muslim and American spaces that ultimately produces the *livedspaces*.

### **In-betweenness and Thirdspace**

Anzaldúa (2015) suggests a term from the Nahuatl language to refer to an *in-between* state: *Nepantla*. Concept that refers to an uncertain terrain that one crosses when moving from one place to another. Being in an in-between state occurs due to the socio-spatial impositions by both other Muslims and Americans on the participants, and this reflects how differences could push them to oscillate across two spaces. It provided the participants a legroom to be able to navigate freely and resist the binary, opposing, exclusive thoughts of who they should be. In the

same way, the participants raptured and surpassed this binary thinking. Mahmud reflected on this in the interview at his home through his conscious awareness of how he thinks of this clash of conceiving of his identity and what others think who he should be:

"Growing up, I knew I did not have to be one-dimensional; and being an American doesn't mean I couldn't be a Muslim. But there were times through looking at media and interactions with day-to-day people, made me feel like it had to be one or the other."

(Home visit)

Muaz also reflected on what Anzaldua (2015) presented the idea of navigating across places and the shift due to the external forces that try to rip them apart from what participants saw themselves as One whole self:

"It is about, I was saying before, it is the multiple personalities or identities, so, I have, deep down, *there is no place I can be 100% who I am. If am 100% of who I am*, then I lack the perception I like to carry. It has to shift according to the places." (Final Focus Group)

In all four cases, I gathered that the participants also experienced this constant conflict across spaces because of the constant clash of the cultural ways of both Muslimness and Americanness. The clash is not only due to the ambivalent feelings, but more importantly due to the impositions they received by others. This constant clash, however, became a force for them to build this Thirdspace to exist being both and object the imposed separatist binary perceptions of others. Muaz also reflected on this oscillation by stating that: "*My identities naturally switch from space to space. It means that I can be two at the same time. I can be Pakistani and American or Muslim and American.*" Given the above quote, there is a need to rethink of dynamism of identity from a spatial perspective because this perspective would help better understand the experiences of

people who live in-between. It is significant to know that the spatial conflicts may occur anywhere and anytime because humans are spatial and there are always differences which are constructed out of social-spatial interactions and impositions that have their histories (Matus, 2009). The participants of this study showed a form resilience in the way they were writing their own history by resisting the impositions from both sides about predetermined thoughts and attitudes toward who can or cannot become Muslim or American.

Anzaldua's (2015) concept of *Nepantla* sheds light on this constant negotiation of the participants' Muslimness in American space and their Americanness in Muslim spaces. As I emphasized earlier in other sections, the participants enunciated their differences in a sense to exist in peace with themselves when interacting with others, who viewed them as Others. The participants embraced their differences as a way of reflecting and living the wholeness of who they were. When embracing this hybridity, they deconstructed both what being Muslim meant, and what being American meant; as a result, they reconstructed what it meant to become both at simultaneously.

Anzaldua's (2015) presents the concept of *Coyolxauhqui* that in the case of the participants also represents "fragmentation, imperfection, incompleteness, and unfulfilled promises, as well as integration, completeness, and wholeness" (p. 50). The fragmentation or incompleteness is imposed on them by other Muslims and Americans who think the participants are never enough nor belong to either. To illustrate, Mahmud reflected on a good example of being perceived as incomplete was that it was not him who did not want to be American and Muslim at the same time, it was the 'others' who wanted him to be either a Muslim or an American, but not together. Others want to see them separate and imperfect, but the participants see themselves as a complete Whole consisting of both being Muslim and American. Their

Muslimness and Americanness are complimentary to each other. Thus, the participants built an intact *Muslim-american* identity. However, they built this strong nod by bringing the pieces together of what they think as valuable to them and what reflected who they were in different spaces. In particular, during their interactions with others, they employed spatial strategies by embracing values that support their hybrid identity and ignore those that undermine it. Thus, they bolstered the maintenance of the intactness of both Muslim and Americanness.

For male participants, one of the Muslim spatial practices is wearing beard, but Muaz did not reflect on the significance of beard as he did not think he must do it just because it was imposed by his Muslim fellows. On the other hand, for Mahmud, it was an important part of his Muslim spatial practices. However, it was not a strong reflection of being a Muslim in an American space as anybody could grow beard and not be a Muslim. In contrast, celebrating Halloween or playing cards and smoking, practices not accepted in Muslim spaces, were the socio-spatial practices they thought to be part of their *livedspace* even though they are aware of Muslims do not expect these spatial practices. Then, Muslim-American participants were not less or more Muslim or American when they did or thought differently than others who belonged to these spaces. In terms of what the participants thought who they were, all four participants had a strong feeling of belonging to both spaces and thus experienced hybridity and wholeness of their Muslim-American identity.

Muslim American participants constructed a hybrid identity in which the reasons for the sense of belonging and otherness became both instrument and outcome of the hybridization. The participants did not view Muslimness and Americanness as conflicting, rather they utilized the differences as a conjunction where the two meets in a way that is inseparable. I proposed in the earlier sections that the participants found value and significance in *otherness* as their sense of



Selfhood, or the inseparable identity is nurtured through the spatial practices that are the reasons for American and Muslim PCLs othering them. The participants' conscious choices of maintaining their unexpected spatial practices were the manifestation of their finding meanings in the hybridization process of their authentic Self, which also resisted the dominance.

Through a thirding-as-Othering approach or dare to embody a different way of being and doing, the participants were able to both embrace their otherness and find possibilities of dialectically influencing the dynamics of the social spaces. Social Spaces, as conceptualized earlier, are not pure locus occupied by people and *materials* (Lefebvre, 1991), but they are filled with discourses, ideologies, spatial practices that manifest peoples' orientation toward a conception of a world that is socio-politically (re)produced by the occupants. Thus, space becomes both as a means and outcome of thought and action. In this regard, Muslim American participants contested the norms that intended to separate their intact Muslimerican identity by hybridizing their spatial practices in the social space that dialogically allowed other possibilities to be created in the social-spatial interactions (Bhabha, 2004). Lefebvre (1991) elaborates on the necessity of the dialectics of perceived and conceived in order for *livedspace* to be nurtured and construct the meaningful *whole*:

The form corresponds approximately to the moment of communication - hence to the realm of the perceived. The function is carried out, effectively or not, and corresponds to the directly experienced in a representational space. The structure is conceived and implies a representation of space. The *whole* [emphasis added] is located within a spatial practice. It would be inexact and reductionistic to define use solely in terms of function, as functionalism recommends (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 369).

Considering the two realms of Muslimness and Americanness as separate also creates the bloc for hybrid individuals who are subject to such reductionist thinking as they are not fully accepted in Muslim or American space either because of their conceived or perceived spaces. Separation of Muslimness and Americanness is not possible as they cannot be lived independently. This is

the very idea of dualistic thinking and outcome of methodologies of multiple identities. In the case of this study's participants, Muslimness and Americanness are complementary to each other. Thus, it cannot be expected that a Muslim American pretends to be a person that she/he is not or try to mold oneself as someone she/he does not want to be. The participants were conscious of their differences, and they found those differences as assets for building of such hybrid identity. Otherwise, they strategically assigned different spatial practices for designated spaces for Muslimness and American spaces.

### **Wholeness and Thirdspace**

Participants expressed this oscillation between the two worlds they held together. Oscillations should not be viewed as negative or a lack in the construction of identity as they represent the moments in which the conscious is behind the wheel making decisions of self-distancing or filtering the norms according to its demands of building *livedspaces* that makes sense to them. As proposed in the findings, it is the concept of woolly intactness where different colors and types of materials make up a meaningful design. Wholeness does not propose stagnant characterization of spatiality, rather it allows the spatio-temporal shifts in the process of negotiation and dialogical relations with others in the social space. It also allows to bolster the anti-reductionist thinking of these spatialities and let us find authenticities that break apart the notion of sameness (Jaspal & Coyle, 2010).

In order to emphasize the linearity and *wholeness* of the participants' spatialities such as *perceived, conceived, and lived*, I preferred to refer to PCL as *perceived-conceived-lived* instead of perceived-conceived-lived or perceived, and lived without separating them just like Soja (1996) refers to Thirdspaces instead of spelling as "third space" or "Thirdspace" by other researchers. It signifies the non-fixed, hybrid nature of the term and the nuanced meanings I

loaded onto it. Although this does not solve the problem of fixated notions of identity making, at least it familiarizes the readers to the *wholistic* discourse of spatialities through this linguistic maneuver.

In this study, through spatial analytical perspectives, I aimed to present the notions of Muslimness and Americanness and how this study's participants have developed a hybrid *Muslimmerican* identity. I furthermore presented the conceptualization of how US born Muslims spatialized their identities across social spaces, based on the findings of the study data analyzed through interpretive-spatial analysis. This study re-conceptualizes hybridity and Thirdspace within the context of Muslim Americans' lived experiences from a perspective of wholeness. I also reworked the concept of otherness based on the nuanced difference between self-distancing, otherness informed within the social interactions, and also othering experienced through the social-spatial impositions of the norms that are developed in the history of domination. In the subsequent sections, I conclude this study with the implications in research and practice along with a brief conclusion to revisit what is presented in all the chapters of this paper.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study was one of its first kind to explore the spatialization of college Muslim Americans who are born and raised in the United States, but it had some limitations that I attended to in my study. This study did not account for religiosity and gender in the process of identity negotiation at a comparative level. Given the political climate at the time I was recruiting participants, the potential participants were afraid to partake in this study. Cases were selective to a sufficient extent that the data was diverse, but this study could bring about a more comparative findings if included Muslims who were non-practicing in the collective Muslim activities such as daily prayers, Jumaa, or Ramadan events and prayers.

Even though this study provided resourceful data and findings what Muslim Americans experience on a daily basis and how they navigate across social spaces in the United States, it does not capture the actual moments of those lived experiences. Thus, a longitudinal study would present richer data especially considering the very characteristics of the spatialization processes in identity negotiation of Muslims. It would capture the dynamism and shifts of PCLs over time.

### **Implications for Research**

The major contribution of this study was utilizing the spatial theoretical framework and data analytical tool that intended to unfold the complexity in which Muslim college students negotiate their identities to maintain both Americanness and Muslimness, especially in the cases of US born Muslims. The spatial practices of languages and cultures of Masjid, on School campus, or home, do not reflect linearity in the spatiality of Muslim Americans. In this sense, spatial practices that nurture the hybridity and *wholeness* become fluid and dynamic through the PCLs. The spatial triadic elements constantly influence one another and shift due to its dialectic relationship. This study implies and suggest new ways of understanding of these complexes embedded in linguistic and cultural practices of Muslim Americans. Spatial perspectives and analyses of the phenomenon of Muslimness will not only rescue Muslims from confinement in one single category, but also allow Muslims, who are born in the US, themselves to re-analyze how they spatialize their identities in the larger society of the US. Living as a Muslim in the US becomes a challenge since we are positioned in the target group due to historically of the issues surrounding Muslims in the US, and visibility of Muslims becomes an issue as individual spatiality interacts with other PCLs.

The impositions of other ethnic understandings of Muslimness due to the internal diversity becomes problematic in conceiving, perceiving, and *living* as Muslims in the US. This

is due to the social and spatial interactions of Muslims being influenced by other Muslims and Americans' PCLs. There are unique ways of practicing Muslimness as an American which does not look like other kinds, which are embedded in dress styles, language, conception of lifeworld as a Muslim, interpersonal relationships, and all the other spatial practices that are part of their Muslimness and Americanness. Studying Muslimness from spatial perspectives in such a comprehensive and multidimensional approach provides better analytical theorizations and methodologies on identity negotiation across social spaces.

This study presented multiple methods of data collection that can best help in understanding spatialities. Collecting the data in the actual social spaces that participants navigate helped them reminisce about their lived experiences and reflect on the ways that the interactions influenced these experiences. The significance of the study was in both in the theoretical approaches used and using the spatial analysis in the Muslim American context as the first study conducted in the US.

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 principal 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.

## **Implications for Practice**

Although participants have expressed gratitude for the 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' input, 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.

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. 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). Understanding the background of these students and the challenges they face is the first step for higher education practitioners to nurture their identity development socially and academically. 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, to best support their students and create an environment conducive to their development and growth. 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.

Masjids and other Muslim community centers can make more clear statements on the diversity and inclusion for the purpose of developing healthier relationships among the people who attend the events and prayers. They can be open to dialogue sessions where the issues of cultural and ethnic diversion and different viewpoints on spatial practices are discussed in a more democratic way. They can practice the fundamental Islamic concept of shu'ra (the principle of consultation) in which the public and the center administration can consult each other on the challenges and issues Muslim Americans face.

This study furthermore provides Muslim and non-Muslim friends in understanding the differences that can have amongst one another and scholars and communities should strive to change some of the negative and othering perceptions about Muslim Americans. For parents, it suggests creating a home space where their children's Americanness is nurtured and an understanding of the cultural dynamics they develop between home and other social spaces. Finally, this study proposes for all the people who have socio-spatial differences and holding hybrid identities to consider their differences as unique cultural assets that contribute to the communities and every space they occupy.

### **Conclusion**

The study shows that US born Muslim college students spatialize their identities across social spaces through a process of negotiation of their identities in their perceived spaces of Muslim and American spatial practices that are at times distinct from other Muslims and Americans as they conceive of their personal identity through developing a sense of belonging to both Muslimness and Americanness. Conceptually, the analyses of the data reflect that both *perceived and conceived spaces* of the participants inform and construct their *lived spaces*. *Lived*

*spaces* as part of the social space aspect of the Trialectics of Spatiality made up the lived experiences of the participants as a Muslim-American both linguistically and culturally.

The study findings were presented under emerging themes of *Belonging*, *Otherness* and *Hybridity* from the spatial-interpretive data analysis conducted across four cases of the participants as a response to the main research question: *How do Muslim college students spatialize their Muslimness within and across in- and out-of-school spaces?* The themes were presented under subthemes of participants' elicited data on how they developed a sense of belonging, otherness, and hybridity within both Muslim and American spaces and how they experienced being othered or a sense of belonging informed their development of a hybrid and *whole* identity of Muslim American. The findings suggested that participants as Muslim Americans developed linguistically and culturally hybrid identities and wholistic self-conception through the enunciation of their differences in both Muslim and American spatial practices. This hybrid and *whole* identity; in other words, the Thirdspace of Muslim American was developed through the process of a constant negotiation of their spatial practices that disrupt norms that are socially and historically imposed across social spaces.



## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

#### Consent to Participate in Research



#### An Exploration of Muslim Linguistic and Cultural Identities across Social Spaces

#### Consent to Participate in Research

September 26, 2018

**Purpose of the study:** You are being asked to participate in a research study that is conducted by

Ibrahim Demir, PhD Candidate and Dr. Carlos Lopez Leiva in the LLSS Department. This qualitative multiple-case study is about learning from your lived experiences as a Muslim college student in the U.S. More specifically, this study explores how you view your linguistic and cultural experiences across social spaces. Guided by Lefebvrian spatial perspective, the study will analyze how the participants perceive, conceive, and live their Muslimness across four representational spaces (e.g., UNM campus, home, and Islamic Center of New Mexico). Learning about lived experiences across these spaces might reflect participants' self-perceptions and socio-spatial experiences (linguistically and culturally) as Muslims. Muslims' lived experiences at school might help us learn about what Muslim students need to face while studying on campus and enacting who they are and who they think they can be on campus.

This research employs a qualitative case study methodology to examine the main question under study. The data will be collected through qualitative methods used in case studies: Participant observation, focus groups, drawings (Self-reflection), and autobiography (Yin, 2014; Maxwell, 201).

Participants in this study will be purposefully selected because they self-identify as Muslim, were born in the United States, and are currently students at or recently graduated from the University of New Mexico. You are being asked to take part in this study because you fulfill the three criteria mentioned above and you are an adult student over the age of 18. This form will explain what to expect when joining the research, as well as the possible risks and benefits of participation. If you have any questions, please ask one of the study researchers.

**What you will do in the study:** You will be part of research activities done in the spaces you normally navigate in your daily life: Home, UNM campus, Islamic center, and a choice of your own space. You will participate in personal interviews and one collective interview Focus group, Drawings (as representations of the Self in each specific space) and narratives, images of the spaces you choose individually, and autobiographies on schooling experiences will be part of data collection methods. There will be four total meetings in two-month period. Each meeting will last between 90-120 minutes (four total meetings). The autobiography (homework) will take 60-100 minutes and you are asked to take pictures of a place in NM (homework) and create a small narrative which will take 30-40 minutes. The total time you will spend in two-month period of this research is approximately 12 hours. All the meetings will be

audio-recorded. The focus group will be audio-visually recorded. The researcher will also be taking notes as part of data recording technique.

- When I meet with you at your home individually, you will share artifacts or objects and we will have informal conversations. At your home, you will draw a representation of your home life.
- When we meet at ICNM as a group, we will have informal discussion on the events or incidents (both positive and negative) at this place. You will have the option of writing about your feelings and experiences if you don't want to talk. You will do drawing at ICNM too based on what this place means to you.
- When we meet at UNM campus, you will choose a place on campus and you will take pictures of that place. Then, you will create a short narrative for the pictures. We will have an informal discussion on the events that have involved Muslims on campus. You will do drawing by adding or changing your initial images and descriptions of the place. As a homework, you will write autobiography on your schooling experiences as a Muslim. You will share your typed autobiographies with the researcher via email.
- You will choose a place individually and on your own, you will take pictures of the space in New Mexico and create a small narrative describing why this space is so relevant to your life. You will send all of this information to the researcher via email.
- When we meet at the place you have chosen collectively, you will draw a representation of this space based on what this place means to you and what it means for you to be here. After drawing, we will have informal interactions.
- At this place (you have chosen collectively), we will have a focus group during which you will share a brief summary of your autobiographies. Next, you will engage on an analysis of your sets of drawing collected throughout the study.

**Risks:** Emotional distress, inconvenience and possible loss of privacy and confidentiality are associated with participating in this research study.

**Benefits:** There will be no direct benefit to the participants participating in this study. However, it is hoped that information gained from this study will assist both the participants and the researcher in gaining collective insights in understanding how US born Muslim college students navigate and negotiate their identities across social spaces.

**Confidentiality of your information:** The signed consent forms will be scanned stored digitally. They will be kept identifiable for 3 years after study closure. The hard copies will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the office of the PI, in Hokona Hall # 292, UNM, while the scanned copies will be kept in PI's password protected office desktop. Only the PI will have access to consent forms after they have been stored.

The data will be digitally stored in an encrypted electronic folder on One Drive only accessible to the researchers. The backup of the data will be kept in an encrypted folder on Dr. Carlos López Leiva's password protected desktop in his office Hokona 292 and Project Team members (PI Dr. Carlos López Leiva and Ibrahim Demir) will have shared access to these data files during the analysis phase and publication process. All autobiographies of the participants will be collected via the researcher's (Ibrahim Demir) password-protected personal laptop and they will be deleted from the laptop immediately after transferred to the folder UNM OneDrive. All the audio and

visual recordings will be retained securely in the encrypted electronic folder on One Drive only accessible to the researchers for 3 years after study closure.

Best measures to protect the security of all your personal information will be taken, but full confidentiality for all study data may not be guaranteed. The University of New Mexico Institutional Review Board (IRB) that oversees human subject research may be permitted to access your records.

Your name will not be used in any published reports about this study.

**Payment:** You will receive a gift card worth of \$100 once all the meetings are complete. In case you withdraw from the study at any time, you will receive a payment proportionate to the time you have spent during the study.

**Right to withdraw from the study:** Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw your participation at any point in this study without penalty and if you decide to withdraw at any point, your data will be deleted immediately from all the folders.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the research study, please contact:

Ibrahim Demir, Hakona Hall 279, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131. [idemir@unm.edu](mailto:idemir@unm.edu) or Dr. Carlos Lopez Leiva, Hakona Hall 292, (505) 277-7260, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131. [callopez@unm.edu](mailto:callopez@unm.edu)

If you would like to speak with someone other than the research team or have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the IRB. The IRB is a group of people from UNM and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving people:

UNM Office of the IRB MSC02 1665 1805 Sigma Chi NE Albuquerque, NM, (505) 277-2644, [irbmaincampus@unm.edu](mailto:irbmaincampus@unm.edu). Website: <http://irb.unm.edu>

### **CONSENT:**

You are deciding whether to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you have read this form (or the form was read to you) and that all questions have been answered to your satisfaction. By signing this consent form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights as a research participant. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you. Please carefully read the questions below and circle the choice that you prefer. If you choose "NO" to second question, you will still be able to participate in this study.

- May the researcher have your permission to audio-visually record your participation in this study?

YES      NO

- May the researcher use your autobiographies, narratives, drawings, and visual information of artifacts you shared for conference presentations and publications?

YES NO

I agree to participate in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Adult Participant

Signature of Adult Participant

Date

**Researcher Signature** (to be completed at time of informed consent)

I have explained the research to the participant and answered all his/her questions. I believe that s/he understands the information described in this consent form and freely consents to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Name of Research Team Member

Signature of Research Team Member

Date



OFFICE OF  
THE INSTITUTIONAL  
REVIEW BOARD

DATE: October 12, 2018

IRB #: 08118

IRBNet ID & TITLE: [1233582-3] US Muslim College Students' Spatialization of Their Muslimness:  
An Exploration of Muslim Linguistic and Cultural Identities across Social  
Spaces

PI OF RECORD: Carlos Lopez Leiva

SUBMISSION TYPE: Amendment/Modification

BOARD DECISION: APPROVED

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 9, 2018

RISK LEVEL: Minimal Risk

PROJECT STATUS: Active - Open to Enrollment

DOCUMENTS: Application Form - AM Application (UPDATED: 09/27/2018)  
Consent Form - Consent Form (UPDATED: 09/27/2018)  
Protocol - Protocol (UPDATED: 09/27/2018)

Thank you for your Amendment/Modification submission. The UNM IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an acceptable risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks to participants have been minimized.

The IRB has determined the following:

Informed consent must be obtained and documentation is required for this project. To obtain and document consent, use only approved consent document(s).

This determination applies only to the activities described in the submission and does not apply should any changes be made to this research. If changes are being considered, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to submit an amendment to this project and receive IRB approval prior to implementing the changes. A change in the research may disqualify this research from the current review category. **If federal funding will be sought for this project, an amendment must be submitted so that the project can be reviewed under relevant federal regulations.**

All reportable events must be promptly reported to the UNM IRB, including: UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to participants or others, SERIOUS or UNEXPECTED adverse events, NONCOMPLIANCE issues, and participant COMPLAINTS.

If an expiration date is noted above, a continuing review or closure submission is due no later than 30 days before the expiration date. **It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to apply for continuing review or closure and receive approval for the duration of this project.** If the IRB approval for this project expires, all research related activities must stop and further action will be required by the IRB.

Please use the appropriate reporting forms and procedures to request amendments, continuing review, closure, and reporting of events for this project. Refer to the OIRB website for forms and guidance on submissions.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Procedure for Data Collection and Analysis**

Site Visit Procedures	Data Sources	Mode of Interaction	Duration of the Visit
<p><b>HOME:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The researcher will meet with the participants individually at their home.</li> <li>➤ Participants will talk about who they are with the support of artifacts/objects that they choose.</li> <li>➤ <u>Drawing</u>: Participants will draw a representation of their home space in response to the following prompts: <i>What does/did this place mean to you? and What does/did it mean for you to be here?</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Field Notes</li> <li>-Drawings</li> <li>-Pictures of Artifacts</li> <li>-Audio recording of conversations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Informal one-on-one conversation</li> <li>-Sharing of artifacts and drawings</li> </ul>	<p>90 – 120 minutes</p>
<p><b>ICNM:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The researcher will meet with the participants as a group.</li> <li>➤ Participants will have an informal discussion on incidents/events, both positive and negative, occurred at this place based on the following prompt: How do/did these incidents/events impact you as a person being part of activities done in this place? Note: Previous incidents will be provided by the researcher and participants can share from their experiences, as well. Participants will have the option of <u>writing</u> about their thoughts, feelings, and experiences if they don't want to talk about it.</li> <li>➤ <u>Drawing</u>: Participants will draw a representation of the ICNM space in response to the following prompts: <i>What does/did this place mean to you? and What does/did it mean for you to be here?</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Field Notes</li> <li>-Drawings</li> <li>-Audio recording of conversations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Informal group conversations</li> <li>-Sharing of drawings</li> </ul>	<p>90-120 minutes</p>
<p><b>UNM CAMPUS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The researcher will meet on campus with the participants as a group.</li> <li>➤ <u>Images</u>: Participants will choose a place on campus and will accompany each other to take a picture of that place. Then each will create a small narrative describing why this UNM place is so relevant to them.</li> <li>➤ <u>Conversation</u>: Participants will discuss informally and react to events involving Muslims on UNM campus. Handouts from news journals will be provided and discussion prompts include: <i>How do/did these events impact you as a Muslim-American person at UNM?</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Field Notes</li> <li>-Drawings</li> <li>-Images</li> <li>-Audio-visual recording of conversations</li> <li>-Handwritten materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Informal group conversations</li> <li>-Sharing of drawings</li> <li>-Taking pictures together around UNM campus</li> <li>-Walking</li> </ul>	<p>90 - 120 minutes</p>

- Drawing: Participants will add to or change their initial images and descriptions about the UNM space they chose in relation to the following prompts:  
*How does this information affect your representation of UNM? Describe why?*

**AUTOBIOGRAPHY:**

- As Homework, participants will develop Autobiography: Participants will write on their schooling experiences as a Muslim as a response to the following prompt: Please narrate your schooling experiences as a Muslim before you started the college and after.

Note: Participants will email their autobiographies to the researcher before the focus group and they do not have to share them with other participants.

**PARTICIPANTS' SITE CHOICE:**

Individual Choice:

- Images & Narratives: Individually and their own, participants will visit a place of their choice that is linked to their identities. They will take pictures of the space in NM and create a small narrative describing why this space is so relevant to their lives. They will send all of this information to the researcher via email.

Collective Choice:

- The researcher will meet with the participants as a group at a place that they have collectively and previously chosen.
- Drawing: Participants will draw a representation of the space in response to the following prompts: *What does/did this place mean to you? and What does/did it mean for you to be here?*

After drawing participants will share some snacks and interact informally.

- Focus Group: At the same place, participants will meet as group. In the group, participants will share a brief summary of their autobiographies. Next, they will engage on an analysis of their sets of drawing collected throughout the study. They will be asked to map or find relationships among them and create a common oral narrative that makes sense to them and that describes who they are and how they feel as Muslim Americans in these spaces. Participants will have extra resources to add extra drawings or labels of their sets of drawings.

-Electronic documents of autobiographies

-Homework  
-Online communication

60-100 minutes

-Field Notes  
-Drawings  
-Audio-visual recording of conversations and Focus Group  
- Images  
-Narratives  
-Pictures of the maps or categories of the drawings

-Informal group conversations  
-Sharing of drawings, images, and autobiographies  
-Focus Group conversation and analysis  
-Online communication

30 - 40 minutes

90 - 120 minutes



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