“Race, Religion, and Class at the Intersection of High-Skilled Immigration in the US”

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A dissertation

submitted to the Faculty of

the Department of Sociology

in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Boston College
Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences
Graduate School

May 11th, 2021

RACE, RELIGION, AND CLASS AT THE INTERSECTION OF HIGH-SKILLED IMMIGRATION IN THE US

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Abstract

My dissertation, "Race, Religion, and Class at the Intersection of High-Skilled Immigration," takes a comprehensive approach to understanding the contemporary contexts of U.S. immigration underlined by Islamophobia and neo-liberal conditions of the U.S. economy. Methodologically, the data for my dissertation comes from the lived experiences of first-generation South-Asian Muslim immigrants arriving as young adults in search of their American dream, pursuing their graduate education in the fields of liberal arts, and science and technology, finding job prospects as high-skilled labor, growing into families, and emerging as American citizens. I study their acculturation and integration

experiences, using two distinct groups of high-skilled migrants, i.e., short-term (international students) and long-term (permanent-residents), for which I conducted a total of 68 life-history interviews across the two categories. These ethno-racial and religiously othered identities located at the confluence of their Asian American and South Asian identities, model minority stereotypes, and racialized Muslim constructs present a unique window in examining the social and cultural processes of high-skilled immigration underlined by the political contexts of the War on Terror (WOT) era, and the recent Muslim ban. I study these intersectional identities using the case of Pakistani migrants, who continue to be the largest Muslim immigrant group by national origins in the U.S. Moreover, they also have higher skill levels than the native population (MPI 2015), making the non-white, Pakistani Muslim immigrant experience in the U.S. ideal for the study of high-skilled immigration.

The first chapter, titled "Double Consciousness: How Pakistani Graduate Students Navigate Their Contested Identities in American Universities," contributes to the knowledge of contemporary contexts of Islamophobia. It presents a global and transnational frame to DuBoisian theories of double consciousness, illustrating how Pakistani graduate students perceive their religious and national identities as threatening within the Western political constructs of Islamic terrorism. They experience a sense of twoness as they pursue their academic lives in the United States. While they see their religion as an extension of their cultural selves, they battle with the social constructions of terrorism imposed on their Muslim and Pakistani identities by the American political rhetoric on WOT. Thus, continuously challenging the stereotypes surrounding their contested identities as global Muslim migrants. The research has been published alongside

educational policy practitioners and academics in a Springer publication titled *International Students from Asia: The Two-Way Street of Learning and Living Globalizatio*n.

The second chapter, titled "Gendered acculturation: Pakistani international graduate students navigating U.S. culture," is a publication in the *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* and presents new ways of thinking about the acculturation of non-white migrants as a gendered process. I demonstrate that the interplay of their intersectional identities underlines their acculturative strategies. Moreover, their gender identity emerges as a master status, shaping how they interact with different aspects of American culture distinct from their home cultural settings.

The third article, titled "From 9/11 to Muslim Bans: The Contemporary Ethno-Racial, High-Skilled Muslim American experience," focused on the experiences of long-term immigrants, examines how South Asian Muslim Americans come to terms with the outburst of Islamophobia surrounding their ethno-racial and religious identities. The study theoretically contributes to understanding the intersectional relationships of upwardly mobile classed, gendered, and racialized immigrant identities that conflate the issues of race and religion. Bringing together racialization theory, intersectionality theory, and the concept of master status, I demonstrate how high-skilled Muslim immigrants present their understandings of the Islamophobic contexts of the American mainstream. I show that while their religious identity serves as a master status to their racialized experiences, the intersectional dimensions of their complex identities are crucial to how they experience overt and covert forms of Islamophobia in their personal and professional lives.

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I am grateful to my dissertation committee, Prof. McGuffey, Prof. Spangler, Prof. Takeuchi, and Prof. Waters, for believing in me and helping me develop this research. A special thanks to the Clough Center for Constitutional Democracy at Boston College and the Immigration Initiative at Harvard University for providing financial and intellectual support for the research. I am thankful to my family Baba, Mama, Murtaza, Muji, Ayesha, Raahim, and Aamna; their love, support, kindness, and graciousness made this a reality. I also want to acknowledge the fantastic staff of the O'Neill Library at Boston College, whose support has been monumental to this research.

INTRODUCTION

The catastrophic September 11 attacks followed by the US invasion of Afghanistan initiated the Global War on Terrorism against fundamentalist Islamist groups. As a result since 9/11 Muslims in the United States have been struggling with rising anti-Islamic sentiment in their everyday lives (CAIR 2017). According to a recent poll, 61% of Americans have negative perceptions of Muslims making the Muslim immigrant experience more difficult (Brooking 2015).

US immigration adheres to stringent policies for Muslim immigrants for safeguarding national security as defined by the Patriots Act, Absconder Apprehension Initiative, and the National Security Entry Exit Registration System. Together the application of these initiatives legitimizes racial profiling of Muslims and Arabs of the Middle Eastern and South Asian descent, regardless of their American citizenship status (Asultany 2012; Mamdani 2004). Muslim men in particular are often the targets of enforced screening in immigration procedures and are scrutinized for their connection to terrorists groups (Asultany 2012). In spite of all this, Muslim immigrants have the highest naturalization rates among immigrant groups and, since 2008 approximately 100,000 Muslim immigrants have been granted legal permanent status every year (PEW 2011,

2013). Further, Pakistani immigrants continue to be the largest group of Muslim migrants by country of origin (Center for Immigration Studies 2016). [1]

During President Trump's administration, the Muslim immigrant experience became the subject of anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim rhetoric in popular discourse. The controversial travel bans on immigrants from the initial seven and now six Muslim majority counties, in addition to the recent airline regulations, have scrutinized the Muslim experience. Muslims in the US today have become the subject of increasing hate crimes and surveillance programs (CAIR 2017). Moreover, President Trumps' Religious freedom executive order, which contrary to its name, legitimized the discrimination against LGBT and religious minorities in the US.[2] These overt changes within the context of 9/11 make the Muslim experience significant in the study of contemporary immigration in the US.

The intersectional non-white, high skilled, Muslim migrant identity presents a unique window in studying contemporary immigration in the political contexts of post 9/11, War on Terror (WOT) era, and the travel bans aka Muslim ban, across the lines of racially and religiously diverse, high skill immigrants today. Two primary questions drive this dissertation:

1. To discover how gender, race, religion and class together shape their experiences in the American society. Additionally, how the intersection of these identities change over time with regard to both their personal lives and their societal surroundings.

[1] http://cis.org/Immigrants-in-the-United-States
[2] https://www.aclu.org/news/aclu-statement-reports-impending-religious-freedom-executive-order

2. To discover how the range of integration strategies that non-White, high-skilled Muslim South-Asian professionals use to navigate the US society over course of their lives. Further exploring how their life course considerations (early adulthood, midlife, and old age as they transition from singlehood to married life, child rearing and retirement) shape their acculturation and integration strategies in the American mainstream.

Historical and empirical rationale for the study:

Immigration to the US and immigrant composition (racially, ethnically, and by skill level) has been a reflection of the structure of the US economy and global politics. Here, I present three facets that are the integral to understanding the changes in contemporary immigration: racial demographics, religious affiliations, and higher skill level.

Historically, the experience of immigrant groups in the United States has been shaped by their religious, cultural and ethno-racial identity underlined by the geo-political location of their country of origin within political and economic systems of the Western hemisphere. The British colonial invasion of the new world paved the way for ethnic cleansing mass genocide of the Native American Indians. Those who survived were looked upon as savages. Africans were brought in through the Atlantic slave trade and forced into slavery through a systemic process of dehumanization (Desmond ad Emirbayer 2010). Pre and post-World War I era brought in Eastern and Southern Europeans that were categorized inferior to the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) community (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Greeks, Italians, and Irish retained low socio-economic status due to hostile social and political conditions targeting their non-Protestant Christian faiths. Chinese, were

brought in during the gold rush as cheap labor and were reduced to the "Yellow Peril" (Lee and Zhou 2015). During WWI, despite their WASP identity, German immigrants faced hostility for the growing presence of the German language, and during WWII they were penalized for having Nazi ties (Alba and Nee 2005). Pre-WWII, Muslim immigrants were deemed unfit for citizenship because their Islamic faith was considered conflicting to the American WASP values (Bayomi 2006). The Zoot Suit riots of 1943 signified engrained historical racial prejudice of the dominant Anglo community against Mexicans and Latin Americans (Griswold del Castillo 2012). During the same year thousands of Jewish refugees sailing to the US were refused entry because they were considered Nazi spies and a threat to national security. [3] Similarly Japanese immigrants faced excruciating circumstance during WWII and were put in internment camps (Alba and Nee 2005).

The end of WWII marked the rising role of the US in global politics, economic preeminence, and a successful civil rights movement in the country. This period was also followed by changes to the immigration policies and immigration reform law of 1965. The Hart Celler Act promoted family reunification regardless of national origin and removed the quota system previously set on non-Anglo counties (Marrow 2011). New policies also encouraged high skilled immigration, welcoming large populations of international students and foreign-born graduates in the medical and technical fields (Lee and Zhou 2015; Brooking 2011), notably attracting non-white high-skilled and economically endowed migrants from parts of the world that lacked prospects of economic growth for their well-educated (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). The impact could be seen with the rise of international student population from Africa and Asia that soared by 88% and 86%

[3] http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/us-government-turned-away-thousands-jewish-refugees-fearing-they-were-nazi-spies-180957324/

respectively from 1949/1950 to 1969/1970 academic year (IIE 2016). Hence the 1965 Immigration Act laid the foundation for rising diversity of race, ethnicity, and skill level across migrant groups. It enabled non-Anglo immigrants to come to the United States to acquire higher education while simultaneously offering them naturalization pathways and economic prospects as they applied their higher skill sets to the development of the US economy in the post-industrial age (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). [4]

Over the recent decades technological advancements and globalized trade have restructured the US economy creating a demand for both foreign and native-born high skilled workers. Entering the United States as an international student for an undergraduate/ graduate degree is the most significant contributor to the increase of long-term high skilled migrants in the country (Kausal and Fix 2006). The international student population at American universities, has risen substantially from 100,262 in 1966/1967 academic year to 974,926 for 2014/2015, showing a rise of 873% across the period, making the United States the top most destination for higher education (IIE 2016). Depending upon their visa status at the time of entry and market conditions, a proportion of these students acquire citizenship status. In 2012, over 1 million immigrants were granted legal permanent residency (LPR), and 53% of these LPR's had entered the US as international students and temporary workers (Department of Homeland Security 2013). These rising numbers of international students correspond to the increasing high skilled first-generation immigrant population (Brookings 2011). According to the Brookings report, low skill immigration was reduced from 39% in the 1980's to 27% in 2010, while high skilled has jumped from 19% in 1980 to 30% in 2010 (2011). This dissertation argues that the international student

[4] Undergraduate, graduate and post graduate studies

status provides a unique gateway for experiencing the US culture. If these temporary migrants choose to stay in the US, they emerge as first-generation skilled migrants, whose strategies of integration and incorporation are informed by their pre-existing experience as international students.

In addition to the changes in skill composition of the immigrants coming to the US, religious and ethnic diversity are important components of the changing American mainstream. There are a surging number of 42.4 million non-white immigrant groups from Asia, Sub Saharan Africa, and the Middle East (Center for Immigration Studies 2015; PEW 2013). While Christianity continues to be a leading religion among faith-based groups, Islam has the third largest followers in the nation (PEW 2016). From 2000 to 2014, there has been a 36% growth in immigrant population, and in particular the Muslim immigrant population has seen a 71% rise from 1,518,755 in 2000 to 2,600,448 in 2014. Though African American Muslims were historically the first Muslims brought in though slavery, Muslims are a growing immigrant population: 63% are first generation and 45% arrived only since the 1990s (Pew, 2011) and Pakistan continues to be the leading country of origin of Muslim immigrant population in the US (Center for Immigration Studies 2016). Both post-9/11 and post Trump the Muslim immigrant experience has become the subject of rising Islamophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment.

Theoretical rational for the study:

Theories on immigrant adaptation, integration, assimilation, and incorporation have increasingly become complex in understanding the migrant experience especially given their heterogeneity in skill levels, legal/illegal status, race, ethnicity, proficiency of the host

cultures language, and contexts of reception (Alba and Nee 2005; Telles and Ortiz 2008; Lee and Zhou 2015; Shibutabi and Kwan 1965; Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Waters et al 2000). While there is growing research on immigrant incorporation and race relations (Marrow 2011), there are few studies that look at the intersectional non-white, high skilled Muslim migrant identity post 9/11. The intersectional approach allows me to situate my research across two emerging research areas of immigration scholarship: (1) the developing context of high skilled immigrant incorporation (2) The racialized identity of Muslim immigrants in US post 9/11. I discuss each of them in the subsequent sections.

1) The changing context of high skilled immigrant incorporation:

Empirical studies on immigration have used a bifurcated approach in understanding the experiences of short-term and long-term migrants in the US. Short-term migrants, specifically the experiences of international students, have been studied extensively using acculturation models focusing on their psychological wellbeing and socio-cultural adaption to the host culture (Berry 2005; Chataway and Berry 1989; Searle and Ward 1990; Smith and Khawaja 2011; Ward and Kennedy 1994). On the other hand, the experiences of long-term, high skilled migrants have been studied largely through the lives of 1.5 and 2nd generation Asian Americans. This dissertation bridges the gap between these two approaches and brings together the experiences of high skilled migrants from the point of entry as international student and as permanent residents to fully understand their incorporation processes, hence bringing in the life course perspective of short- and long-term migrants to comprehend their strategies of integration in the host society.

The experience of international students provides a unique window into non- white, Muslim, high skilled migrants' early strategies of adaptation to the American society. A large portion of the immigration literature focuses on the experiences of the low skilled migrant groups. These studies highlight their integration strategies shaped by institutional mechanisms, ethnic identity, local contexts, language fluency, and economic mobility (Alba & Nee 2003; Gibson 1988; Marrow, 2011; Portes & Zhou 1993; Portes & Rumbaut 2006; Rumbaut & Massey 2013; Telles and Ortiz 2008; Takeuchi; Waters et al 2010). These studies also provide the contemporary understanding of assimilation and integration to the host society. However, studies of high skilled immigration remain few in number and exclusively study the Asian American experience in the US. This is not surprising as Asian Americans (native and foreign born) have higher education than the non- White Hispanic, Hispanic and Black population (Ryan and Bauman 2016)). However, none of these studies look at the adaptation strategies of the high skilled, non-white, Muslim immigrants in the US. The experience of high skilled migrants has been studied largely through the lives of 1.5 and 2nd generation Asian Americans, specifically Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean and Indian Americans. These studies go beyond the Asian American model minority myth and provide a nuanced understanding of their success rates by focusing on their ethnic identities and cultural values (Dhingra 2007; Lee and Zhou 2015; Portes and Rumbaut 2006).

Lee and Zhou (2015) introduce the concept of *"hyper selectivity*", to unravel the reasons for high achievements of the Chinese and Vietnamese immigrants (page number). They show that the highly selected educated status of the Chinese and Vietnamese

immigrant parents enabled them to create structural, ethnic, and cultural resources, facilitating the second generation to adopt cultural frames assisting their accomplishment and success in the host society (2015). Despite these resources, two fifths of the 1.5 and 2nd generation Chinese do not graduate college and half of Vietnamese don't finish their under graduate programs, but these numbers are dismissed in constructing narratives around the success rates of Asian Americans. Dhingra presents a multi-cultural perspective of the integration of professional Asian American that embodies private and public expressions of their ethnic and religious identity while maintaining social solidarity with the host society (2007). He draws from the experiences of the second generation Indian and Korean American professionals and shows that these groups use their ethnic and racial identities to their advantage in multiple ways and construct a "*lived hybrid identity*", facilitating their integration to the host society (page number 2007). He doesn't illustrate their class privileges, but notes that their professional status enables them to maintain and display their ethnic selves (2007).

The Asian American integration to the host society embodies complex set of challenges as they constantly struggle with navigating positive and negative stereotypes while adhering to their ethnic heritage. Additionally, the cultural and ethnic traditions of the Indian, Korean, Chinese and Vietnamese culture are compatible and attractive to the dominant cultural norms (Lee and Zhou 2015; Dhingra 2007). Thus, Asian Americans are not considered a cultural threat to the American mainstream, coupled with their professional status, this facilitates the processes of upward mobility. Thus, enabling them to adopt their American values to the maintenance of their ethnic and cultural heritage. They reciprocate the common norms of socialization with the dominant group, for example

romantic, inter-racial, intercultural relationships and drinking alcohol (Lee and Zhou 2015; Dhingra 2007). Though the decision of marriage relies on parental approval for most Asian Americans, these groups date inter-culturally and inter- racially (ref). According to the PEW data inter-racial marriages are highest among US born Latino (28%) and Asian (26%) population that have White spouses (Qian and Licher 2011). [5] [6] These studies demonstrate a complexity in the multi-ethnic identity of the Asian American experience that facilitates selective acculturation and segmented assimilation towards upward mobility (Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Waters; Alba and Nee). But studies on high skilled immigrants overlook the interplay of migrants' ethno- racial identity that are in conflict with the host cultural settings to their high skilled status. This dissertation will explore this gap by using the non-white Muslim high skilled immigrant experience in the US.

2) Post 9/11: Emerging racialized location of Muslim immigrants in the US:

As mentioned previously, United States has a history of racializing non-White immigrant groups based on their religion, skin color, ethnic, and cultural differences, and political contexts of their countries of origin. African immigrants were dehumanized under the norms of slavery, and exclusionary immigrant polices ensured social, political and economic marginalization of earlier Asian and Mexican immigrants. President Monroe's doctrine of Manifest destiny enabled US imperialist expansion and encroachment of the

[5] http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/06/12/interracial-marriage-who-is-marrying-out/
http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/02/16/the-rise-of-intermarriage/
http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2015/06/11/chapter-6-partisanship-policy-views-and-social-values/
file:///C:/Users/haider/Downloads/2015-06-11_multiracial-in-america_final-updated.pdf
https://researchnews.osu.edu/archive/marriages.htm
[5] http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2011.00866.x/full
[6] http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2011.00866.x/full

Mexican lands that is now Southwestern United States and Mexicans were largely considered intellectually inferior to the WASP community (Telles and Ortiz 2008).[7] The Chinese were denied citizenship under the Chinese Exclusion Act of the 1882. The Gentlemen's agreement (1907-1908) ended Japanese immigration, followed by the Immigration Act of 1924 that excluded immigrants from Asia.[8] Japanese were forced into concentration camps during WWII (Lee and Zhou 2015). The Zoot Suit Riots of 1943 targeted Mexican youths that reinforced anti-Mexican sentiments embedded in the Anglo community. Similarly, non-Protestant groups i.e., Quakers, Mormons, Baptists, Jews, and Muslims have been consistently denounced as outcasts at different points in American history. However, "those with the most visibly different religious practices" have suffered the most (Moor 1986). Thus, each of the non-Anglo migrant groups have experienced social exclusion based on their distinct ethno-racial, cultural, and religious identity from the dominant Protestant group. This study situates the Muslim experience within the context of other racial minorities to fully comprehend their strategies of integration in the host society.

Historically, slavery brought in the first African American Muslims to the United States; they were forced to convert to Christianity for believing in the wrong God (Diof 1988; Grosfoguel 2012). In 1942 Ahmed Hassan, a Yemeni immigrant in Michigan, under the 1940 Nationality Act was refused American citizenship, because the judge considered his Arabic origin of the Mohammedan world in conflict with the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant way of living (Bayomi; 2006; Hassan 2002). On the other hand, Mohammed

[7] http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/essays/1801-1900/manifest-destiny/manifest-destiny---the-philosophy-that-created-a-nation.php

[8] With the exception of Filipino immigrants that were considered US citizens as Philippines was a US colony/

Mohreiz, an Arab born Muslim immigrant, who came to the Massachusetts as a permanent resident in 1921 was granted citizenship status in 1944 (Baymoi 2006; Hassan 2002). Contrary to Hassan's' experience the judge declared Mohammed's' Arab heritage as a continuation of the European and Greek traditions (Hassan 2002). These changes were facilitated by the powerful and strategic role of United States in reshaping the global political economy at the end of WWII. This global presence required inclusion of selective ethnic minorities previously excluded from the American mainstream (Grosfoguel 2012).

In the current era despite the rising ethnic and racial diversity of the American mainstream, the September 11 terrorist attacks were monumental in establishing the visibility of the Muslim identity of immigrants of South Asian, Middle Eastern, Arab, and North African origin in the US (Baymoi 2006). Post 9/11, the War on Terror era established Islam as a threat in the Western political ideology and the Muslim identity was embedded within the constructs of extremism and terrorism. The recent ISIS threats coupled with the terror attacks in Boston, Paris, San Bernardino, Brussels, and Orlando have further instigated anti-Islamic sentiment across Europe and North America. Besides the efforts of public discourse, pre-Trump era, disengaging Muslims from radical Islam, 26 states in the US refused to accept Syrian refugees.[9]

Muslim and Arab immigrants in the US have been subjected to racial profiling under the PATRIOT ACT and the National Security Entry Exit Registration System NSEERS. The latter was abandoned in 2011. It required special screening of immigrants from Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Somalia, Eritrea, Yemen, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Lebanon Jordan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and

[9] http://www.cnn.com/2015/11/16/world/paris-attacks-syrian-refugees-backlash/

Indonesia, all Islamic countries wrapped around the politics of terrorism (Bayomi 2006). In his Presidential plans, President Trump proposed a database for all Muslims in the US and "warrantless searches and increased surveillance of American citizens who belong to the Muslim faith". His demeaning attacks on the Muslim American Gold star family who lost a son in Iraq have turned a searchlight on the Muslim experience in the U.S. He consistently raised issues around Obama's middle name (Hussain), questioning his American nationality and reigniting the birther movement that epitomized the foreignness of the Muslim faith in America (Gotanda 2011). Days before the election day the FBI questioned Muslims of Pakistani and Afghani descent, across eight states in the US, *"*whether they knew the al-Qaeda leaders killed in U.S. military airstrikes last month", terrifying Muslims across the board. [10] State and local efforts paralleled the behavior of Federal officials. Georgia state representative Jason Spencer proposed an anti-masking bill targeting the Muslim hijab. In doing so, he drew on a 1951 anti-making bill that had been directed against the Ku Klux Klan. [11] Though the bill was withdrawn after one day, it resonates European anti- Islamic sentiment prevalent in the French laws that ban Muslim women from wearing veils and hijabs (Body-Gendrot 2007). [12] A more recent initiative Counter Violent Extremism CVE targets Muslim communities to deter homegrown terrorism and will be launched in Boston, Minneapolis, and Los Angeles.

There is emerging debate on bringing back the NSEERS. Kris Kobach's recent meeting with the then President-elect Trump affirmed the possibility of a Muslim

[10] https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/11/07/fbi-questioned-american-muslims-in-8-states-about-possible-pre-election-terror-says-civil-rights-group/
[11] http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/georgia-niqabs-hijabs-illegal_us_582cd788e4b058ce7aa90a56?section=politics
[12] http://www.wsbtv.com/news/local/new-bill-would-ban-women-from-wearing-burqas-for-drivers-license-photos/467901403

registration system in the near future. [13] Thus, the question of immigration and the prospects of Muslim immigrants has become a key issue in American politics, primarily, because the political rhetoric echoes the horrendous treatment of the Japanese who were confined to internment camps during WWII. [14] [15] The Muslim travel ban, airline regulations, and the recent religious freedom executive order have legitimized the discriminatory policies against Muslims living in the America and travelling to the US.[16]

Post 9/11 changes in institutional policies, centered around the constructs of War on Terror, have enabled a process of racialization of the Muslim identity that strips them of their citizenship rights (Asultany 2012; Selod and Embrick 2013, Bayomi 2006, Mamdani 2004, Rana 2011). Racialization provides a theoretical language to understand the construction of racialized identities, as groups are assigned racial meanings (Muslims as terrorists) within the context of political conflict (i.e., War on Terror) (Barot and Bird 2001; Omi and Winant 2015; Selod and Embrik 2013; Selod 2014). In the contemporary age, race is socially and politically constructed, and covertly embedded in "racialized social structures" and "social relations" that reinforce racial biases and racial stereotypes in our everyday life (Omi and Winant 2015, 117). Muslims are stereotyped as having brown skins tones, accompanied by religious signifiers beards for men and hijabs and veils for women. Non-Muslims bearing similar visible markers as in the case of Sikhs wearing turbans and Arab Christians, and Indian Americans have been subjected to hate crimes for their brown

[13] http://mashable.com/2016/11/21/trump-advisor-leaves-folder-open/#mRZvziVQsqqg
[14] http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/18/us/politics/japanese-internment-muslim-registry.html
[15] http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/reported-trump-immigration-advisor-says-hes-drafting-plan-for-muslim-registry_us_582c59bde4b01d8a014b6328
[16] http://usuncut.com/news/trump-goes-full-nazi-demands-muslims-wear-id-badges/…… https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2015/11/20/donald-trump-backs-a-federal-database-to-track-muslims-but-not-gun-sales/?tid=sm_fb

and Muslim like appearance. [17] Tyler (2016) argues that the Black American experience is embodied in the legacy of slavery and the subjects of structural, social, cultural racism, while Muslims in the US face "Islamophobic racism" and are racialized as jihadists and terrorist in the post 9/11 context. There has been a substantial rise in attacks against Muslim women with hijabs, since President Trump took office. [18] Growing research on the Muslim experience shows a racialization process at work as Muslim Americans of South Asian and Arab origin, whose racial category falls outside the black and white racial binary (Silvia 2014) are delegitimized of their citizenship status and subjected to extensive surveillance with or without their consent (Rana 2011; Selod 2014).

On the other hand, Obama nominated a Washington based lawyer, Abid Riaz Qureshi, a Pakistani born Muslim American as the first Muslim Federal judge. Daliah Muhammad from New York, and Ibtihaj Mohammad, hijab wearing New Jersey native, both Muslim American Women, brought home gold and bronze medals respectively in the 2016 Rio Olympics. Additionally, Human Abedin, Michigan born American of both Pakistani and Indian descent was the vice chairwoman of Hilary 2016 campaign for President. Kumali Nanjani, Pakistani born American comedian/actor/writer starred in first Hollywood movie (The Big Sick) starring a Pakistani migrant character. The movie is his autobiography and has received 97% approval ratings on rotten tomatoes. [19] Despite the presence of Muslim Americans in notable positions the essentialized discussion on inherent Islamic extremism

[17] https://qz.com/922545/srinivas-kuchibhotlas-wife-articulates-the-devastation-of-being-an-immigrant-in-the-us-after-her-husbands-murder/?utm_source=qzfb

[18] http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/18/us/politics/japanese-internment-muslim-registry.html

[19] https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/the_big_sick/

specific to the Muslim identity has sparked debates around the prevailing immigration policies for Muslims in the US.

The Islamophobic sentiments experienced by Muslims today echo a degree of anti-Semitism experienced by Jews in the American society. According to the FBI, over the past year, hate crimes against Muslims have increased by 61%,[20] and the community has been a victim of four murders, 27 aggressive assaults, and has reported 120 cases of intimidation, higher than other religious minorities in the country. [21] Rising hate crimes, racial profiling, and special registration programs criminalize and dehumanize the Muslim identity categorizing them as the suspicious other. President Trump recently broke a 20-year-old White House tradition of hosting dinner for Muslims celebrating Ramadan. [22] (Ramadan is one of the holiest months for Muslims across the world). These sentiments legitimize the ongoing marginalization of the Muslim community in the American mainstream.

This dissertation focuses on the South-Asian, high-skilled, and Muslim migrant experience positioned in the American society within the context of War on Terror. The high-skilled Muslim identity rests at the intersection of their racialized, religious, and class identities that can help unravel the questions of acculturation and integration in the backdrop of post 9/11 and post 11/9 America. Past research on professional Asian American integration shows that first and second-generation Indian Americans cautiously

[20] https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/hate-crimes-against-muslims-hit-highest-mark-since-2001/2016/11/14/7d8218e2-aa95-11e6-977a-1030f822fc35_story.html
[21] https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2015/tables-and-data-declarations/1tabledatadecpdf
https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jun/26/donald-trump-abandons-traditional-white-house-ramadan-celebration
[22] https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jun/26/donald-trump-abandons-traditional-white-house-ramadan-celebration

avoided associations with South Asians, South Asian Americans, specifically Muslim Americans to separate themselves from terrorist stereotypes (Dhingra 2007). Asian American professionals use their ethnic identity to their advantage and downplay the negative connotations associated with them. They also hold legal immigration status that enables them to interact better with the economic opportunities in the urban labor market, thus facilitating a privileged context of reception for the 1.5 and 2nd generation (Nee and Holbrow 2013). Hence their high skilled, legal status and better contexts of reception facilitate their upward mobility. On the other hand, low skilled Latin American immigrants struggle with political and social inclusion in working class rural neighborhoods due to absence of legal citizenship status (Marrow 2011; Telles and Ortiz 2008). Nevertheless, questions of ethnic and religious intolerance with reference to the high skilled non-white Muslim legal immigrant status largely remain unanswered.

Focusing on the non-white racial identity of Pakistani migrants, ranging across a spectrum of light to dark brown skin colors, makes them a visibly distinct ethnic and racial group. Dark skinned racial identity of Cambodian, Hmong, and Laotion individuals adversely affected their trajectories of incorporation as they face downward mobility and higher rates of poverty (Lee and Zhou ref). Regardless of generation level, non-white foreign and US born Mexicans are perceived as migrants and have historically navigated negative stereotypes surrounding their racialized Mexican identity (Telles and Ortiz 2008). President Trump during his election campaign publicly revived these sentiments, calling Mexican's rapists and thieves and by his notorious agenda to build a wall to keep them out. Moreover, dark skinned Mexicans and 1.5 generation reported racial othering and discriminatory experiences and educated Mexicans often experience more discrimination

as they compete with Whites in the labor market (Telles and Ortiz 2008). However, the question of migrants' experience at the intersection of race, class religion, and gender are often over looked in immigration theory.

I use insights from intersectionality theory to understand how the intersection of the non-white Muslim high skilled experience shapes their acculturation and integration into the American society (Collins, 2000). This dissertation brings into discussion the intersection of race, legal status, and class on a migrant's life chances and lived experiences in the changing circumstances of immigration shaped by the events of post 9/11 and Trump America11/9, while also looking at the complex construction of Pakistani-American identity as they transition from short to long-term immigrant status.

My initial research on short-term high skilled Muslim migrants uses the case of Pakistani graduate students to understand how international students in the US comprehend and deal with discrimination in the host society, which can illuminate larger processes of othering, identity development and contestation. Using qualitative interviews of 28 Pakistani graduate students (13 female and 15 male) studying in the US, I conceptualize the analytical strategies adopted by international students to deal with discrimination in the host culture.

The first chapter, titled "Double Consciousness: How Pakistani Graduate Students Navigate Their Contested Identities in American Universities," contributes to the knowledge of contemporary contexts of Islamophobia. It presents a global and transnational frame to DuBoisian theories of double consciousness, illustrating how Pakistani graduate students perceive their religious and national identities as threatening within the Western political constructs of Islamic terrorism. They experience a sense of

twoness as they pursue their academic lives in the United States. While they see their religion as an extension of their cultural selves, they battle with the social constructions of terrorism imposed on their Muslim and Pakistani identities by the American political rhetoric on WOT. Thus, continuously challenging the stereotypes surrounding their contested identities as global Muslim migrants. The research has been published alongside educational policy practitioners and academics in a Springer publication titled *International Students from Asia: The Two-Way Street of Learning and Living Globalization.*

The second chapter, titled "Gendered acculturation: Pakistani international graduate students navigating U.S. culture," is a publication in the *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* and presents new ways of thinking about the acculturation of non-white migrants as a gendered process. I demonstrate that the interplay of their intersectional identities underlines their acculturative strategies. Moreover, their gender identity emerges as a master status, shaping how they interact with different aspects of American culture distinct from their home cultural settings.

The third article, titled "From 9/11 to Travel Bans: The Contemporary Ethno-Racial, High-Skilled Muslim American experience," focused on the experiences of long-term immigrants, examines how South Asian Muslim Americans come to terms with the outburst of Islamophobia surrounding their ethno-racial and religious identities. The study theoretically contributes to understanding the intersectional relationships of upwardly mobile classed, gendered, and racialized immigrant identities that conflate the issues of race and religion. Bringing together racialization theory, intersectionality theory, and the concept of master status, I demonstrate how high-skilled Muslim immigrants present their

understandings of the Islamophobic contexts of the American mainstream. I show that while their religious identity serves as a master status to their racialized experiences, the intersectional dimensions of their complex identities are crucial to how they experience overt and covert forms of Islamophobia in their personal and professional lives.

1.0 CHAPTER 1: DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS: HOW PAKISTANI GRADUATE STUDENTS THEIR CONTESTED IDENTITIES IN AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

The United States is the top destination for tertiary level education for international students from around the world (UNESCO 2014). However, after 9/11, from 2002 to 2006, for the first time in three decades, the US saw a consistent decline in the number of international students coming from Asia, the Middle East, and Africa (Bollag 2005; IIE 2004). Stringent immigration policies, cumbersome visa processes, national security issues (Campbell 2005; Urias and Yeaky 2005), heightened hostility, and prejudice towards international students all contributed to the plummeting numbers in the US (Council of Graduate Schools, 2004; Lee and Rice 2007; MacWilliams 2004). In particular, Muslims from South Asia and the Middle East residing in the US gained visibility in the host society after the terror attacks. Several hundred Muslim international students left the U.S. without finishing their degrees due to threats to their safety from the dominant group (McMrtrie 2001). Despite their negative experiences, few studies empirically explore the discriminatory experiences of international students during the "War on Terror" (McDermott-Levy 2011; Tummala-Narra & Claudius 2013).

This chapter uses the case of Pakistani graduate students to understand how international students in the US comprehend and deal with discrimination in the host society. The significance of studying the Pakistani student experience is three-fold. First, though Pakistan is geographically part of Asia, specifically South Asia, since the War on Terror commenced, the role of Pakistan has been significant in sheltering Iraqi Taliban and

religious extremists (Al-Qaeda members, often Arab) in the country, while simultaneously being a strong ally of the US against the War on Terror. Such factors have enabled the international media to politically portray the country as part of the Middle East. Thus, Pakistani international students embody both a South Asian and Middle Eastern experience in the US. Second, from 2009 to 2011, Pakistan was among the top 25 countries of origin of international students studying in the US (IIE 2009; 2011a). The United States also has the largest Fulbright program for Pakistani nationals (USFEP 2011; 2013). Despite being the third largest Muslim-majority sending nation of international students studying in the US from the Asiatic region (IIE 2010; 2011b; 2012; 2013; 2014a), Pakistani international students largely remain an understudied population. Third, since 9/11 there has been a rise in anti-Islamic sentiments against Muslims and Arabs in the US (CAIR 2008). The majority of the Pakistani students coming to the US are Muslim[23], and on arrival to the host culture are aware of the Islamophobic sentiments surrounding their religious identity. This chapter focuses on the complexity of the Pakistani graduate student experience in the US, which can illuminate larger processes of othering, discrimination, identity development and contestation. I use the term discrimination to demonstrate the hostility, prejudice, and social exclusion experienced by Pakistani international students from the dominant group, based on their religious and national identity.

Using qualitative interviews of 28 Pakistani graduate students studying in the US, I conceptualize the analytical strategies adopted by international students to deal with discrimination in the host culture. I use the DuBoisian notion of double consciousness to

[23] Pakistan is a Muslim majority country, and 95% of the population adheres to the Islamic faith while the remaining 5 % minorities practice Christianity and Hinduism (CIA 2010).

theorize how Pakistani graduate students see their religious and national identity from the host cultures perspective. The students not only see their Muslim and Pakistani identity through their own eyes, but also see these identities challenged within the context of the War on Terror, hence embodying a sense of double consciousness in the host society. They encounter discrimination as their national and religious identities are contested in the Islamophobic settings of the host society. They negotiate these identities by having a deeper understanding of worldviews on the War on Terror, enabling them to overcome and deal with the conflicting circumstances challenging their nationality and religiosity in the host culture. The findings show that Pakistani students feel the need to demonstrate their innocence to members of the host society in the context of War on Terror, and are constantly battling the negative constructs of terrorists and terrorism surrounding their national and religious identities. In addition, students who were travelling or studying in the Southern parts of the US faced threats because of their religious and national identity as compared to those living elsewhere. Before I delve into the theoretical framework, I discuss the literature on the acculturative challenges experienced by international students student on arrival to the host culture.

1.1 ACCULTURATION AND NEO-RACISM

International students studying in the US represents a diverse group of individuals coming from Europe, Asia, Middle East and Africa (IIE 2014b). On arrival to the host culture these students experience a lack of social support due to the absence of family, friends, and unfamiliar social and cultural circumstances (Frey & Roysircar 2006; McClure

2007; Sawir et al. 2008; Zhao et al. 2008). However, welcoming institutional policies and the communal environment of the American university can assist in their acculturation experience (Sherry et al. 2009; Su¨mer et al. 2008). International students with a large number of friends have been linked with academic success and positive experiences in the host culture (Bochner et al. 1977; Furnham and Alibhai 1985; Sam 2000). They also have a significant impact on the US economy, promote multiculturalism in their programs, and help groom American undergraduates for global careers (IIE 2014c).

Acculturation studies on international students often center on psychological adaptation, focusing on depression and stress, as the students experience the new culture (Berry et al. 1990; Russel et al. 2008; Searle and Ward 1990; Ward and Kennedy 1993). Studies show that discriminatory experiences faced by international students are often linked to high acculturative stress. These experiences often cause feelings of anxiety, resulting in homesickness among the students (Atri et al. 2006; Jung et al. 2007; Wang et al. 2013; Wei et al. 2012). Further studies show that cultural, religious and linguistic differences can lead to isolation and depression; thus, discouraging international students from making friends in the host culture (Chen 1999; Mori 2000; Smith and Khwaja 2011). Poor English language abilities and stereotypes around race, ethnicity, and cultural traditions in the host culture are often the root causes of discrimination experienced by international students from these regions (Bonazzo & Wong 2007; Poyrazli & Lopez 2007; Ruble & Zhang 2013; Sodowsky & Plake 1992; Wei et al. 2012; Wong et al 2014). However, the spectrum of these experiences varies among this group based on their phenotype, gender, culture of origin, and language abilities. Research shows that white students from New Zealand, Canada, and Europe face fewer problems than dark skinned

students from Middle East and Africa (Duru & Poyrazli, 2011; Hanassab 2006; Kilinc & Granello, 2003; Lee and Rice 2007).

According to Toussain & Crowson (2010) international students are perceived as a "*symbolic threat"* due to their cultural and religious differences, and a "*realistic threat"* as they compete for economic and academic benefits with American students (415). Lee and Rice (2007) use the concept of neo-racism to operationalize the prejudices experienced by international students: *"Discrimination becomes, seemingly, justified by cultural difference or national origin rather than by physical characteristics alone and can thus disarm the fight against racism by appealing to 'natural' tendencies to preserve group cultural identity—in this case the dominant group" (389).* Their study shows that students from the Middle East, Latin America, and Asia experience both covert and overt forms of discrimination in the host culture (Lee & Rice 2007). The concept of neo-racism offers insight on the national and cultural differences that lead to social exclusion and discrimination against international students. Nonetheless, the concept doesn't elaborate on how the religiosity of this group also inflects their experiences of prejudice in the host society. It also overlooks the complex experience of students from the Middle East and Asia, due to their contested religious and national identities in the realm of War on Terror.

Muslim international students from the Middle East, Africa and Asia face rising challenges due to the rising fear of Islam in the US (CAIR 2008; Tummala-Narra & Claudius 2013; McDermott-Levy 2011). The religious signifier of covering the head (i.e. hijab) for women and beards among Muslim men increases their visibility in the host culture. A study on Arab Muslim women showed that Omani women wearing hijab often experienced micro aggressions, and were frightened due to feelings of hostility as a result

of their religiosity in the host culture (McDermott-Levy 2011). These signifiers can increase their chances of facing anti-Islamic sentiments inside and outside college campuses (Tummala-Narra & Claudius 2013; Kishawi 2012; William and Johnson 2011).

These studies make crucial contributions in the acculturation literature focusing on the international student experience. First, they clearly show that international students of non-European descent face more challenges and discrimination in the host culture than their European and Western counter parts. Second, such incidents lead to higher acculturative distress and social exclusion of international students from the host society. Third, these studies point to the importance of social support and social networks that mitigate these negative experiences. At the same time, the diverse ways that international students understand and respond to the discrimination they face remains undertheorized. I use the DuBoisian theory of double consciousness to conceptualize how Pakistani graduate students negotiate their religious and national identity in order to navigate prejudice in the host culture.

1.2 DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE PAKISTANI GRADUATE STUDENTS:

As previously stated, the perceptions of Islam and Muslims are linked to the current political ideology of terrorism. Cesari (2010) argues that the West has developed an essentialized approach in conflating Islam with terrorism. Disha et al. (2011), in their analysis of hate crimes in the US, show that the 9/11 terror attacks have resulted in a larger wave of hate crimes against Arab/Muslims in the country, regardless of their socio-

economic status. Pakistani graduate students arriving to the US are aware of anti-Islamic sentiments surrounding their religious and national identity (CAIR, 2008). The current geo-political framework of the War on Terror, and the capture of Osama Bin Laden in Pakistan, contributes to the negative perception of Muslims and Pakistanis, and characterizes them as the "*other*" in the host society (Omi & Winant 1986,3). Therefore in order to survive, Pakistani students not only see their religious and national identity through their own eyes but also from the outside i.e. the western perspective. I demonstrate that in the host culture these two identities of the Pakistani graduate student become more pronounced. They embody the DuBoisian notion of double consciousness of viewing their Pakistani and Muslim identity in the context of War on Terror in the host culture (Du Bois 1903).

Du Bois describes the experience of African American people as looking at oneself through the outsiders' perspective (Falcon 2001). In *The Souls of the Black Folks he explains "It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (Du Bois 1903/1982, 45).* Du Bois uses double consciousness to conceptualize the troubling experiences of African Americans in the hands of white supremacists, as they struggled with being both American and Black, and were subjected to inequalities, and racist dehumanization of their "negro" selves (Anzaldúa 1999; Falcon 2008). I extend this concept of double consciousness to Pakistani graduate students as they negotiate their national and religious identity in the host culture. The Pakistani and Muslim identities are not perceived as threatening in their home

society. But post 9/11 in the US context, however, the Muslim identity is associated with terrorists and terrorism. The Pakistani students see this religious identity from the perspective of the host culture, and struggle everyday as they battle with the constructs of War on Terror surrounding their religiosity. This perspective from the outside marks their twoness and double consciousness in the host society, as they look at themselves from a Western perspective.

When the religiosity of the Pakistani graduate students is not made apparent in the absence of religious signifiers i.e. hijab for women and beard for men, they are still perceived as dangerous by the dominant group. Attempted terror attacks in the US conducted by assailants of Pakistani origin have received prominent media attention, such as the attempted car bombing of Time Square in December 2010 by Faisal Shazad, a naturalized American citizen of Pakistani descent[24], who had entered the country as an international student. In addition, according to the Institute for Economics and Peace (2014), Pakistan has been ranked third on the global terrorism index, following Afghanistan and Iraq. Thus Pakistani graduate students are constantly aware that their nationality is often conflated with terrorists with in the War on Terror framework in the host society. They see their nationality from the host culture's viewpoint, and struggle as they challenge the stereotypes of terrorist and terrorism surrounding their country of origin. The students thus posses double consciousness as they negotiate their religious and national identities in the US. Their national and religious identity is viewed as synonymous to each other in the context of War on Terror from the host society. Pakistani graduate students

[24] NY Daily News May 2010 *"Times Square bomb suspect Faisal Shahzad 'was just a normal dude' before making neighbors suspicious"* http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/times-square-bomb-suspect-faisal-shahzad-normal-dude-making-neighbors-suspicious-article-1.444286

studying in the US thus experience othering as these identities come into conflict with the host culture. I explore how they use their sense of the selves from the host culture's perspective as they negotiate their religious and national identities, and investigate how they make use of their worldviews to navigate these conflicting experiences.

1.3 DATA AND METHODS:

My participants consist of 28 Pakistani graduate students, and are spread across 8 states in the US. This demographic information is helpful in capturing the texture of Islamophobia in the US. However as per IRB protocol and to ensure confidentiality of the participant's identities, I only reveal their regional location in the US as Southeast, Southwest, Northeast, Midwest, and West[25]. I interviewed 13 women and 15 men studying in the US over a period of six months from February to September 2012. The age of participants in the study ranges from 23 to 40 years old. This variation reflects the multiplicity of life experiences and life circumstances that can influence how students negotiate their national and religious identity in the host culture. Please refer to table 1 for the demographic composition of the sample. Unlike under-graduate programs, the graduate programs in the US provide a higher chance of funding, enabling young adults from varying professional and personal backgrounds to pursue their academic interests. The multiplicity of their experiences provides a complex picture of the Pakistani graduate student experience in the US. Using a life history approach, I document the social, cultural, and ideological transformations occurring /having occurred in the lives of these students on arrival to US (Thomas & Znaneiecki 1927; McCall & Wittner 1990). I developed a comprehensive interview guide that was divided into three major sections: (1) the life of the respondents before coming to the U.S, (2) their experiences upon arrival, and (3) their current experiences in the host culture. In this paper, I focus on the third section of my interview guide, and pay attention to questions that investigate the negative experiences of students in the host society. I started off with the leading question:

[25] I use the National Geographic outline maps for the regional distribution of the US. http://education.nationalgeographic.com/maps/united-states-regions/

Have you experienced any discomfort in the host culture? The purpose of keeping the question broad was that students could highlight any personal negative incidents experienced during their stay. The question resulted in a longer conversation, as the respondents shared their discriminatory experiences in the host culture within the context of War on Terror. I also asked about the state and city where they were located in, when they experienced these incidents. Such information provided deeper understanding of contextualizing their discriminatory experiences within the geographical space of the US.

The intention was to keep the interview informal so the respondents could reflect on their life in the host culture. I use grounded theory methods and draw upon the narratives of the participants that inform the theoretical framework (Glaser and Strauss 1967). I located Pakistani graduate students by emailing international student organizations, South Asian groups and Muslim student associations across the US. However, word of mouth was most effective in accessing the group and generated a snowball sample of Pakistani graduate students studying across different US institutions (Mile and Huberman, 1994; Weiss 1994). I built upon the prevalent networks of these students to locate participants for my study. My positionality as an insider to the focus population increased my chances of connecting with the participants.

My knowledge of Urdu (the national language of Pakistan) helped them talk openly about their experiences in the host culture. The interviews lasted between 1 and 2 hours, and following my participants' choice of language, the conversation was carried out in either or the languages i.e. Urdu and English. I conducted interviews in person with respondents in the greater Boston area only and used Skype video-calls for interviewing remaining participants. The audios of the interviews were recorded. I informed the participants when I began and stopped the recording. Only one male respondent did not allow me to record his interview. I did not record his interview and only took notes. Participants' real names have been replaced with pseudonyms to protect their identity.

1.3.1 Coding and Analysis:

I translated and transcribed the interviews in English, and took notes on the interactions with the respondents. In particular, the notes kept track of the frustration and discomfort experienced by the

participants while sharing their discriminatory experiences in the host society. I also noted at the time of the interview, whether the respondents had visible religious signifiers--hijab for women and beard for men--that could contribute to their discrimination in the host society. I rely on Miles and Hubermans' inductive approach to carry out data analysis that also informs my theoretical framework for the study (1994). After coding, I collated similar and conflicting patterns as the respondents described uncomfortable and threatening circumstances in the host society.

Table 1: Participants' Details:

No.	Name	Gender	Age	Duration (Year. Month)	Regional Location
1	Faiza	F	25	2.4	Northeast
2	Zohaib	M	35	0.8	Northeast
3	Junaid	M	38	3.7	Southeast
4	Ahmed	M	30	2.4	Northeast
5	Rubina	F	40	1.8	Southeast
6	Shaista	F	36	2.6	Midwest
7	Talha	M	25	0.8	Northeast
8	Ali	M	29	0.8	Northeast
9	Tanzeela	F	35	2.6	Midwest
10	Naveed	M	25	1.6	Midwest
11	Mahmood	M	27	0.8	Northeast
12	Areeba	F	23	0.8	Northeast
13	Omer	M	25	0.8	Midwest
14	Saad	M	25	0.8	Midwest
15	Humera	F	23	1.8	West
16	Mehwish	F	31	0.8	Northeast
17	Mohsin	M	24	1.8	Midwest
18	Rohail	M	27	0.8	Northeast
19	Hayyat	M	25	1.8	Northeast
20	Mona	F	25	0.8	Southwest
21	Zohaib	M	38	0.101	North East
22	Qasim	M	25	0.8	Southwest
23	Sara	F	25	1.6	West Coast
24	Seema	F	31	4.101	Northeast
25	Hina	F	35	2.101	Midwest
26	Amna	F	26	0.5	Southwest
27	Zobia	F	31	4.11	Northeast
28	Raza	M	27	5	Midwest

1.4 FINDINGS:

Pakistani graduate students battle every day with the social constructions of terrorism associated with their national and religious identity, which are in continuous conflict with the Islamophobic settings of the host culture. The male respondents in the sample experienced more discriminatory incidents compared to the women. This is not surprising because men have carried out more terrorist acts. Student's visiting or living in the southern parts of the US experienced heightened hostility against their religious and national identity than their counterparts living in other areas of the country.

When students used religious signifiers (e.g. head scarf, beard), the practice increased their likelihood of experiencing threatening and/or discomforting situations in the host culture. Since Pakistani students vary by phenotype (brown to fair skin tones), they can often be misidentified as belonging to other parts of South Asia or/ and the Middle East. Their religious Islamic identity is not immediately recognizable in the absence of religious signifiers. Thus, I present the responses based on the presence and absence of the religious signifiers that further shapes their discriminatory experiences. I show how these experiences embody the Duboision notion of double consciousness as the Pakistani graduate students navigate their contested religious and national identities in the host society.

Presence of Religious Signifiers: Conflicting Religious Identity in the host society.

Only two female respondents wore a headscarf and one male respondent had a beard. Their responses show that the beard for men and headscarf for women act as religious markers in the host society, and increase the visibility of their religiosity in the host culture.

Faiza is currently living in the Northeast, and does not wear the headscarf. But she recalls a startling incident, while she was studying at a college in the South that influenced her decision:

"Well the people are nice in general. But when I came here, I used to wear a headscarf and that was my personal decision only. Shortly when I came to the south, that week, 3 American girls had embraced Islam, and I used to wear scarf, and one day when I was doing laundry and came back to pick up my clothes, somebody had thrown all my scarves on the floor and I was left a note saying 'don't ever wash your scarves here'

I told my mother about this incident and she told me that if this is creating complications for you so don't wear it. After that I decided to take off my scarf and it's my personal decision and I don't regret it."

Though Faiza is threatened for washing her headscarves in a laundromat, she did not complain to the school or the authorities. Rather, she attempts to rationalize the situation from the perspective of the host culture. She argues that her headscarf in combination with the recent conversion of American girls to Islamic faith made her a threat to the dominant group and a target for Islamophobia. She sees her religiosity as viewed from the outside, and chooses not to cover her head to avoid any animosity in the future. Her scarf made her religiosity visible and placed her in a hostile situation. Her decision to not wear the headscarves shows how she sees her own religiosity from the host culture's perspective. She has double consciousness and is aware of how her religious identity is contested in the host society. She negotiates this identity by taking the scarf off to avoid any further conflict.

Faiza does not regret her decision to not wear a headscarf and this choice is facilitated by her home culture. In Pakistan, women are not socially obligated to cover their heads and the choice of wearing a headscarf is voluntary, especially in urban spaces. She uses her experience from the home culture to navigate the new cultural settings. The question remains whether she may have experienced more hostile conditions if she had continued to wear the scarf.

Contrary to Faiza's experience, Zobia, who lives in the Northeast, struggles in deciding whether or not to cover her head in the host culture. She has gone through episodes of wearing the headscarf, taking it off, and wearing it again. Her decision to cover or not to cover her head is influenced by how she is viewed by the host society. She struggles

with how her religiosity is seen by the host society in the realm of War on Terror and is continuously conflicted by it. Her experience embodies double consciousness, as she is constantly aware of her representation in the host society, as she switches to wearing and not wearing the scarf. She is conflicted by the perception of the self and how she is viewed by the host culture. She was the only female participant who chose to cover her hair.

"I was wearing a scarf, when I came here. I used to cover my head. I did it for one year. I rarely saw any Muslim women wearing headscarves, but I felt people would stare at me a lot. They didn't say anything but I am sure I looked different from them. Even though I wanted to blend in with the people so I don't get any extra attention. But people would look at me as if I am different. So I decided to take off my scarf, and took it off for two years. Not because I didn't like scarf anymore, but I didn't want to become prominent. But after years I felt I still looked different and maybe I am Asian and everyone around me is American. But I longed for it. When I would see someone wearing it, I would say oh I wish I had the guts to wear it like her and I liked their modesty. So one year ago I started becoming more religious and I have started wearing scarf again."

On arrival to the US she wore the headscarf, but she experienced stares and discomfort. She notes, "*They didn't say anything but I am sure I looked different from them"*. Zobia finds herself prominent in the host society and though she didn't experience any negative comments on her appearance, she feels that people stared at her because she "*looked different"*. Even though she wanted to "*blend"* in to the host culture, she felt that she stood out because of her headscarf. She eventually removed the scarf to integrate into the host society. However Zobia notes that even after taking the scarf off, she was still othered in the host society because of her South Asian appearance. She has a light brown complexion, a common feature of Pakistani identity. Her religious identity and South Asian identity highlight her otherness in the host society. However, she longed for the headscarf, and missed that part of her identity especially when she saw someone else wearing the hijab. But she lacked the "*guts"* to wear it herself. Over the past year she has decided to

cover her hair, and the choice of wearing her headscarf is a struggle of personal courage, as she negotiates her religiosity in the Islamophobic settings of the host society.

Zobias' experience shows a constant struggle within herself on how she chooses to express her religiosity in the host society. Unlike Faiza, she has never been threatened because of the hijab, but she constantly feels that she is being othered in the host society because of her appearance both with and without the hijab. She has had to find courage within herself to represent her religiosity in her appearance, while she is constantly aware that it is viewed in the context of the War on Terror.

Like their female counterparts, Pakistani men also struggle with similar dilemmas. Ahmed was the only male respondent who had a beard. He also had a light skinned complexion. Studying at a college in the Northeast, he struggled constantly with the expression of religious identity and, unlike Zobia, he maintained his religious identifier throughout his stay in the US. His experience embodies the Duboisian notion of double consciousness in that he sees his own religiosity from the Western perspective, as he battles constantly to overcome these negative frames of terrorism.

He had been racially profiled on several occasions, and experienced lengthy immigration processes. He recalls being stopped for questioning by the local authorities after attending the mosque, and his friends told him that surveillance officials had questioned the people at the mosque about him. Ahmed was a graduate student interning in his field, and was frustrated that his appearance immediately categorized him as a threat in the host society. He felt that Americans at large were ignorant about his reality, and he had a hard time finding an internship because he visually fit the terrorist stereotype. While the majority of Americans treated him poorly, Ahmed acknowledged the support of his

American professor who helped and supported him. It was through his professor's connections that he was able to find his internship. He actively participated in conversations that questioned his religiosity and explained that Americans were misinformed, and the social media has harmed the image of Pakistan and Islam in eyes of the dominant group.

Ahmeds' experiences show the process of double consciousness at work in the host culture. He is constantly aware of how the host culture looks at his religious identity as he battles the terrorist stereotypes surrounding him. He engages in dialogues with his friends and colleagues explaining how the terrorists are perpetuating their menacing agenda, which is contradictory to Islamic preaching. His family and friends had asked him to shave his beard so he wouldn't stand out in the host culture, but Ahmed maintained that by doing this he would give into the pressure, and he needed to live by example and contradict the terrorist stereotype surrounding his religious identity. Ahmed battles constantly with how he is categorized as a threat to the host society because of his appearance. He has suffered setbacks both in his professional and social life but he continues to challenge the negative constructs surrounding him.

Absence of Religious Signifiers: Conflicting National Identity in the host society

Both men and women experienced conflicting situations that challenge their national identity in the host culture. Men experienced direct questions about the War on Terror, while women experienced micro aggressions on revealing their national identity. The responses show a constant struggle of Pakistani graduate students, as they understand their own conflicting experiences in the host society, while simultaneously contradicting the stereotypes surrounding their identity in the host culture.

Ali (recalls an incident while visiting a friend in the South) feels *animosity* towards himself from Americans because of his national identity.

"Somebody in my school asked if I had taken military training I was like, no but I thought what kind of a stupid question is that?....I feel the animosity of the Americans towards Pakistan but this is because of lack of understanding .I was in [state x] visiting a friend and we were in a car driving when some guys started shouting slurs and someone threw something on the car so there is racist sentiment here"

Ali pauses while gathering his thoughts, as he sees his nationality from the host cultures' perspective. He realizes that Americans don't have a clear understanding of his realities. He embodies double consciousness and feels conflicted by how his national identity is viewed in the host culture. He notes the prevalence of "*racist sentiment"* in the host culture, and has experienced these conflicting experiences both inside and outside of the American university. His negative experiences are harsher outside of the academic institution. Ali feels that he is racialized in the host society because of his contested identities.

Naveed, a male graduate student, studying at a school in the Midwest, also feels that his national identity is viewed in the context of the War on Terror in the host culture

"People here think that we are very backward and the perception of Pakistan is as if a war is happening all the time, I don't feel offended but they are misinformed, and I tell them that I am also a product of Pakistan and at the same academic level as them. So there is a lot of good in the country also. When Osama was captured my colleagues thought it was very near the capital, I explained that no the demographics can't be compared to that of the US and the war is on the border and not in Pakistan."

Naveed notes how Pakistan is viewed as "*backward"* and war-like in the host culture and takes it upon himself to challenge the negativity surrounding his identity. He is not "*offended*" by these remarks but considers the host society to be oblivious to his reality. Naveed was in the US when Osama Bin Laden was captured in Pakistan, increasing his visibility in the host society. He expresses a double consciousness, as he is aware that in the host culture his nationality is viewed in the context of global terrorism, and takes it upon himself to contradict the stereotypes about war surrounding his nationality. He engages in an open conversation with his colleagues after the incident, clarifying the

demographics of the country. He has developed a counter-narrative to the war-like image of Pakistan and uses himself as an example to show positivity about his nation.

Like Naveed, Saad's national identity is also challenged in the host society. He uses dichotomies of innocent vs. bad as he engages in conversations with his colleagues. He recalls an incident: (located in the Midwest)

"There was a discussion going on (about the) benefits of new research on developing this new technology that could help improve precision in target killing. My American professor said, 'this will kill terrorists in Pakistan." My advisor (Korean professor) interrupted, 'we have a Pakistani student here' and then American professor rephrased the incident 'as oh I meant it will kill the bad people and I am sure you are not from the bad part of Pakistan.' I felt extremely uneasy and frustrated by this and said yes this software is very important because it will improve accuracy and then the drones can stop killing innocent children and people in Pakistan and kill terrorists only."

The American professor rephrases his statement on terrorism when he is reminded of Saad's presence. Though Saad is shocked by the incident, he immediately responds by segregating his nationality from the terrorist stereotype, and carefully challenges the statement of the professor by segregating terrorism from Pakistan. He sees himself from the host cultures perspective and uses the term "*innocent children and people in Pakistan"*, distancing his religiosity and nationality from the terrorist framework. His experience shows the process of double consciousness at work, as Saad sees his positionality from the dominant Western view and is conflicted by it. He engages in this debate by using the binaries of innocent vs. terrorists to challenge the constructs of War on Terror surrounding his country of origin in the host society.

Like men, women also experience conflicting circumstances based on their national identity. However these incidents are not directly in reference to the War on Terror debate, but appear in forms of micro aggressions or/and threatening conversations surrounding their nationality. Seema (Northeast) recalls an incident that continues to unsettle her today.

She was flying back to Pakistan that day, and was dressed in the Pakistani attire i.e. shalvar kameez. Like most Pakistani women she does not wear a headscarf and hence her religiosity is not immediately recognizable.

"Americans have a huge misconception of Pakistanis, even bigger than the Pakistanis misconception of Americans. But not all Americans have these views. I remember once I was taking taxi to airport, and on the radio, there was talk on the possibility of the US war with Iran. The American taxi driver could see I was wearing a shalvar kameez….. He said next will be Pakistan. I was shocked and kind of scared and was very silent through out the ride and thanked God that he is not the one making decisions."

She sees her national identity from the host cultures perspective in relation to War, and is stunned by the whole incident. She embodies double consciousness and is conflicted by the whole experience and is relieved that the future of her nation doesn't rest in the hands of the taxi driver. Though Seema is wearing a Pakistani dress, she is not sure whether the driver could discern her nationality. The experience leaves her feeling uneasy and scared for her future, she is conflicted by how her national identity is viewed from the drivers' view. She exclaims that not all Americans have derogatory thoughts about Pakistan. Though she is shaken by the remarks made by the driver, she justifies them based on the *misconception* of the host culture.

Amna another female respondent shares her troubling experience that questioned her national identity.

"Well once I was in New York with my friend at a train station, and there were some American women sitting next to us. They started speaking to my friend, who is French, so they assumed I was French too, but while I was talking to one of the women, I told her that I am Pakistani and she was taken aback. I immediately felt a change in their behavior they all completely ignored me in the conversation and only spoke to my friend.

In the mean while a guy was running besides the track bare feet, he was well dressed and everyone was puzzled. So I just said that he may have gotten mugged. So one of the women was like, yeah you know everything right! and I felt really awkward… and when we were about to catch our train she muttered something bad about me. It was not a good experience"

Amna experiences demonstrate a covert form of social isolation, and the whole incident has left her with discomfort. Her experience is two-fold, and changes as she reveals her national identity, which is not apparent from her appearance. She feels excluded

from the conversation, as her Pakistani identity is made apparent. This is contradictory to her initial experience, when she was part of the interaction while she was being considered French. She notes that the American women were shocked that they had mistaken her as French. Amna has fair skin, common among Pakistani individuals, but her phenotype breaks the brown color skin tone associated with her South Asian identity.

While discussing the instance of a man running bare foot on the station platform, Amna again experiences conflicted interaction as the American woman exclaims "*yeah you know everything right",* and finds that condescending. At the end of the incident, she is not clear of what was said about her, but the social interaction gives her the impression that the American women slurred.

Amnas' experience shows the processes of the double consciousness at work. First she feels immediately socially excluded on revealing her nationality. Second she is aware how the host culture views her country of origin, and feels animosity towards herself from the American women. The interaction doesn't pose any threat or violence but subjects her to micro-aggressions as her identity is contested in the host society. She experiences discomfort from this whole experience, and she is aware that the host cultures perspective of her national identity shapes this negative interaction.

It is important to mention here that Pakistani graduate students are involved in social and cultural activities with their American and non-American friends. I argue that it is the double consciousness of the Pakistani graduate students that enables them to be aware of how they are being perceived in the host society. None of the students were discouraged to interact with the host culture based on their negative experiences contesting their religious and national identity.

Participants' experiences show that religious markers, i.e. beard for men and headscarf for women, increase the visibility of the Pakistani graduate students in the host society. These markers immediately distinguish them as Muslims and trigger the War on Terror debate surrounding their religious identity. Both men and women experienced othering on the basis of their visible religiosity in the host society. However the absence of the religious markers doesn't absolve the Pakistani students from being othered. When their national identity is revealed, for example in conversation, it again triggers the terrorism constructs surrounding their heritage and they are othered in the host society based on their country of origin. However in order to cope with these circumstances, students have developed a narrative of "*misconception"* among the dominant group, regarding Pakistan and the Islamic world. They process both violent and non-violent forms of discrimination against their religiosity and national identity by adhering to idea of the "*ignorance*" of the host society. Being transnational citizens and geographically closer to the War on Terror, these students have a deeper understanding of this geo-political crisis. This enables them to consider the dominant group as misinformed about their religion and nationality.

1.5 DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Previous research on international students has detailed the discriminatory experiences of the students due to their cultural and national differences from the host society (Lee and Rice 2007; Toussain & Crowson 2010). But such studies often overlook, how the factors contributing to these negative experiences have become more complex

within the realm of the War on Terror, and also fail to note how students conceptualize these experiences in the new culture. In this paper, by using the case of Pakistani graduate students studying in the US, I show that on arrival to the host culture, their national and religious identities are constantly in conflict with the Islamophobic settings of the host society. This research adds a global and transnational frame to DuBoisian theories of double consciousness, as the Pakistani graduate students continuously perceive and challenge their contested identities in the context of the War on Terror. Pakistani graduate students navigate within the constructs of terrorism when their religiosity and nationality is revealed to the dominant group. They embody double consciousness, as they see their identities outlined by the War on Terror framework, and struggle constantly as they challenge and negotiate the negative constructs surrounding them. Their Muslim and Pakistani identity appears as a threat and leads to their otherness in the host society. They rationalize the prejudices and hostility towards them by considering the host society to be ignorant and misinformed about their realties. This narrative of misconceptions by the dominant group enables the respondents to deal with their conflicting experiences. They take the responsibility to negotiate their reality in the US, and contradict the negative narratives surrounding their religious and national identity. While the students experienced othering, prejudice, and social isolation across different regions of the host society, they especially experienced heightened hostility in the Southern parts of the US. This may be because historically the Southern states have enforced the black/white racial divide more strongly than the rest of the US (Elmendor and Spencer 2013). Further research needs to be done to thoroughly examine and compare the prevalence of Islamophobia across Southern and the Northern States of the US. The issue raises important questions about

race and ethnicity and whether, after 9/11, Muslims are undergoing a racialization process in the American main stream.

The findings show that political incidents surrounding the War on Terror interlinking Pakistan also increases the groups' visibility in the host society. However future research should explore whether international students from Central Asia and the Middle East, specifically Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and Saudi Arabia, experience similar discriminatory experiences within the constructs of terrorism, and whether they have developed a similar double consciousness like their Pakistani counterparts to cope with the hostility they encounter in the host society.

In the context of War on Terror, Pakistani students are compelled to prove their innocence to the American society. The American university needs to share this burden, and should establish programs educating community members to help understand the complex ethno-racial experience of students from South Asia and the Middle East. Such programs should collaborate with international students, and need to present the global complexity of the War on Terrorism, and its impact on humanity. These initiatives will provide a wider and deeper understanding of the perplexity of the situation to the dominant group, and help facilitate the experience of international students from Pakistan and the Middle East in the American university. These measures will also improve their social interaction with the host society.

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2.0 CHAPTER 2. GENDERED ACCULTURATION: PAKISTANI INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENTS.

Acculturation theorizes newcomer and native-born minorities' experiences of contact and interaction with the host culture[26]. From a newcomer's perspective, it conceptualizes acculturative processes across their psychological well being as they experience cultural shock and socio-cultural adaption to the new culture[27]. Berry's groundbreaking work on acculturation theory proposes four acculturative outcomes are likely to occur when new migrants come into contact with the new society[28]. Based on newcomers approach towards ethnic retention and associations sought among group, they either integrate (maintain home culture while adapting to the new culture), assimilate (home cultural shedding and adaptation to the new culture), separate (rejection of new culture and holding on to home culture), or are marginalized (enforced cultural loss and exclusion from the host culture) from the host society[29]. However, rather than focusing on

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results of the acculturation process, the question of how new migrants develop acculturative strategies at the intersection of their complex identities across varying elements of the host culture largely remains unanswered.

Acculturation has been studied extensively through the experiences of international students, refugees, and seasonal workers[30]. This paper focuses on acculturation strategies of international students arriving to the US for higher education. International student status is an important gateway to long-term high skilled migration in the US[31]. Depending upon their visa at the point of entry, labor market conditions, and life circumstances these temporary migrants can stay in the US long-term, emerging as first generation, high skilled migrants. This research examines how their acculturative strategies can provide insights into the formulation of earlier integration experiences of similar long-term migrant groups with complex living in the US.

Heavily reliant on Berry's acculturation model, the literature on international student experiences is driven by analysis on their mental well-being pertaining to acculturative stress, ascribed by challenges with the new language, cultural shock, and discrimination in the host society[32]. While disregarding cultural distinctions between the

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home and host society, ethno- racial, and religious diversity of newcomers, their duration of stay, and the degree of individual agentic choice, that can shape their acculturative strategies in the host society[33]. These studies have also long overlooked the gender and migration patterns in the international student experience. Using a sociological perspective, this paper addresses unresolved theoretical issues in acculturation studies arising from intersectional identities (e.g., class, gender, religion, ethnicity, age, and life trajectories) of international students at the cross-section of a new and distinct culture.

The case study of Pakistani graduate students to study acculturation experiences of international students is insightful for three noteworthy reasons. First, theoretically Pakistani students occupy a complex node of intersecting identities, i.e., they are non-white, Muslim, gendered, high-status educated migrants, and their home culture differs starkly from the host society. Coming from pronounced patriarchal traditions, their gendered identities highlight distinct social and cultural positioning and privileges in the home culture. Making the relatively liberal settings of the American society vital to studying the complexity of their acculturation processes. Second, though they are the third-largest Muslim-majority sending nation of international students studying in the U.S. from the Asia[34], their acculturation strategies remain understudied. Pakistan was among the top

[33] Chirkov, Valery. "Critical Psychology of Acculturation: What Do We Study and How Do We Study It, When We Investigate Acculturation*?" International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 33, no. 2 (2009): 94-105; Floyd W Rudmin. "Critical History of the Acculturation Psychology of Assimilation, Separation, Integration, and Marginalization (vol 7, Pg 3, 2003)." *Review Of General Psychology* 7, no. 3 (2003): 250; Zhou, Xinyue, Constantine Sedikides, Tim Wildschut, and Ding-Guo Gao. "Counteracting Loneliness: On the Restorative Function of Nostalgia." *Psychological Science* 19, no. 10 (2008): 1023-029.(2008)

[34] IIE. (2010). Fact sheet by region 2010 Asia: Institute of International Education. http://www.iie. org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors/Data/Fact-Sheets-by-Region/2010 ; IIE. (2011a). Open doors data leading places of origin – 2009/10–2010/11.

25 countries of origin of international students studying in the U.S from 2009 to 2011, and then again in 2018[35]. Third, since the War on Terror commenced, the role of Pakistan in harnessing and fighting terrorists has global prominence. International media has politically portrayed the country as part of the Middle East, despite its geographical location in South Asia. Thus Pakistani migrants embody both a South Asian and politically imposed Middle Eastern ethno-racial identity in the American mainstream. The distinct ethno-racial, religious, and cultural identities in the American context are likely to make their acculturation complex and present an opportunity to study the acculturation strategies of non-white international students from a sociological perspective.

Top 25 places of ori- gin of international students, 2009/10–2009/11. http://www.iie.org/Research-and-Publications/ Open-Doors/Data/International-Students/Leading-Places-of-Origin/2009-11; IIE. (2011b). Fact Sheet by region 2010 Asia: Institute of International Education http://www.iie. org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors/Data/Fact-Sheets-by-Region/2011; IIE. (2012). Fact sheet by region 2010 Asia: Institute of International Education. http://www.iie. org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors/Data/Fact-Sheets-by-Region/2012; IIE. (2013). Fact sheet by region 2010 Asia: Institute of International Education. http://www.iie. org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors/Data/Fact-Sheets-by-Region/2013 ; IIE. (2014a). Fact sheet by region 2010 Asia: Institute of International Education http://www.iie. org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors/Data/Fact-Sheets-by-Region/2014 ; IIE. (2014b). Open doors 2014: International students in the United States and study abroad by American students are at All-Time High. Institute of International Education, http://www.iie.org/Who-We-Are/News-and-Events/Press-Center/ Press-Releases/2014/2014-11-17-Open-Doors-Data IIE. (2014c). Special reports: Economic impact of international students. http://www.iie.org/ Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors/Data/Economic-Impact-of-International-Students

[35] IIE. (2010). Fact sheet by region 2010 Asia: Institute of International Education. http://www.iie. org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors/Data/Fact-Sheets-by-Region/2010; IIE. (2011a). Open doors data leading places of origin – 2009/10–2010/11. Top 25 places of ori- gin of international students, 2009/10–2009/11. http://www.iie.org/Research-and-Publications/ Open-Doors/Data/International-Students/Leading-Places-of-Origin/2009-11; IIE 2019 https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Open-Doors/Data/International-Students/Places-of-Origin(2019)

Post 9/11, Muslims in the US face Islamophobic sentiments surrounding their religious identity, within the contexts of the War on Terror[36]. Pakistani graduate students experience hostility due to their contested religious (Muslim) and national (Pakistani) identities, both inside and outside the American university[37]. These negative experiences do not hinder their acculturation into the host culture, but Pakistani graduate students consider the host society to be misinformed about their realities, and they use their transnational lives, and nuanced lived experiences of the War on Terror to challenge the negative stereotypes surrounding them. For the scope of the study, this paper focuses on how Pakistani international students experience American cultural settings while being aware of their distinct ethno-racial religious identities. I focus on the intersection of their gendered, religious identities, and their life trajectories that influence their processes of incorporation in the host society and present sociological insights into the prevalent psycho-socio-cultural understandings of acculturation.

Acculturation studies on international student experience overlook the quintessential question: What is US culture? This is because US culture is not a singular concept due to the cultural, regional, religious, ethnic, racial, class, and professional variations across the country. Using 28 life history interviews with 13 female and 15 male Pakistani graduate students, I operationalize US culture from my participants' perspective.

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[36] Ruth McDermott-Levy, "Going alone: The lived experience of female Arab-Muslim nursing students living and studying in the United States", *Nursing Outlook*,Volume 59, Issue 5,2011,Pages 266-277.e2 (2011)

[37] Maheen Haider "Double Consciousness: How Pakistani Graduate Students Navigate their Contested Identities in American Universities." In *Understanding International Students from Asia in American Universities: Learning and Living Globalization. Springer International Publishing* AG, (2018)

The following aspects seem quintessentially American to the Pakistani students in their graduate student years: wearing western clothes, going to bars, dating, watching local sports games (college/national), and participating in local celebrations like Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. While I am aware that this is a limited definition of US culture (constructed by my participants) and only provides narrow understandings to the diverse contexts of American society. This appears as a limitation of the study but it is important to point that these cultural elements represent the social and academic lifestyle trajectories of young and mid-life graduate student adults as they live their everyday lives in the host society and characterize the American experience from my participant's perspectives. Furthermore, for the scope of the paper, I purposely do not discuss their experiences selective to Pakistani and Muslim spaces[38] but focus on how they develop their acculturative strategies in light of their distinct ethno-cultural, and religious identities in unfamiliar contexts of the host culture.

Drawing from intersectionality, identity and cultural theories, I conceptualize acculturation processes of international students across a continuum of the explorer and keeper approach, demonstrating how the complexity of Pakistani graduate students intersectional identities shapes their acculturative strategies. Their gendered identity is integral to how they interact with the operationalized cultural elements, followed by their religious identity and their age/life trajectories that inform their explorer and keeper acculturation continuum. Unlike fixed outcomes of earlier acculturation models the

[38] Such as going to Friday prayers, social events at Islamic/ Muslim society, socializing with friends and family from Pakistan.

approach presents insights into the fluidity of the acculturative processes as international students develop their intersectional identities in the contexts of the new culture.

2.1 RETHINKING ACCULTURATION THROUGH INTERSECTIONAL IDENTITIES:

Intersectionality theory helps us understand the complex interactions of racial, classed, and gendered identities in social (public and private) spaces[39]. Pakistani graduate students embody intersectionality in their identity: they are gendered, ethnically South Asians, racially non-white, identify predominantly as Muslims, at young/mid-adulthood life stage, hold short-term (temporary) migrant status, and are high-skilled academics. The intersection of age, gender, and race operate as symbiotic processes informing socialized relations[40]. Their young adult life stage is pertinent to understanding their cultural and social interactions in the host society. I investigate how the confluences of the gendered, religious, ethnic, and academic identities of the Pakistani graduate student function across different elements of the US culture. I show which identities are reinforced across the spectrum of familiar and unfamiliar social and cultural circumstances of the host society.

International students are newcomers to the host society and their intersectional social identities are grounded in the cultural, religious, and ethnic contexts of their home society. They are transnational and have ongoing emotional and social bonds to their

[39] Hill Collins, Patricia. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, And The Politics Of Empowerment*. Rev. 10th Anniversary Ed. New York: Routledge, 2000
[40] Moore, Valerie Ann. "Doing" racialized and gendered age to organize peer relations: Observing Kids In Summer Camp." *Gender & Society* 15, No. 6 (2001): 835-58.

countries of origin [41]. The social and intersectional identities of the Pakistani graduate students have been formed by the continuous influence of the cultural, social, political, national, religious, and structural contexts of the home culture that have informed the self over time[42]. While in Pakistan, these students strengthen their social identities and ensure group commitment. Home cultural and religious norms are constituted and shared knowledge for Pakistani graduate students[43]. These values and norms are internalized, enabling a sense of Pakistani identity and forming pre-existing ideals that serve as a set of codes to navigate the host society[44]. These ideals may vary based on gender, class, age/life stage differences, but serve as shared meanings of home cultural ideals for international students[45]. They embody gendered inequities ascribed in social and cultural contexts of the home society[46] and class privileges across gendered hierarchies. Despite the universality of patriarchal traditions, it is essential to recognize the broader variation across gender

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[41] Levitt, Peggy. "Building Bridges: What Migration Scholarship and Cultural Sociology Have to Say to Each Other." *Poetics* 33, no. 1 (2005): 49-62.
Waldinger, Roger. *The Cross-Border Connection*. Harvard University Press, 2015.

[42] Hogg, Michael A., Deborah J. Terry, and Katherine M. White. "A Tale of Two Theories: A Critical Comparison of Identity Theory with Social Identity Theory." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (1995): 255-69. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2787127. (1995)

[43] Patterson, Orlando. "Making Sense of Culture." *Annual Review of Sociology* 40, no. 1, 1-30; Sahlins, Marshall David. *Culture in Practice : Selected Essays*. New York: Zone Books, (2000).

[44] Lamont, Mich le. *How Professors Think : Inside the Curious World of Academic Judgment*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009;Macy, Joanna. *Mutual Causality in Buddhism and General Systems Theory : The Dharma of Natural Systems*. SUNY Series in Buddhist Studies. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991; Stryker, Sheldon, and Peter J. Burke. "The Past, Present, and Future of an Identity Theory." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 63, no. 4 (2000): 284-97. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2695840.(2000)

[45] Patterson, Orlando. "Making Sense of Culture." *Annual Review of Sociology* 40, no. 1, 1-30 (2014)

[46] Curtis, Richard. "Household and Family in Theory on Inequality." *American Sociological Review* 51, no. 2 (1986): 168.; (2014)

norms in Pakistan and the US. Studies examining gender and migration patterns among immigrants from Latin America and Asia show different experiences of men and women in the host society[47]. Women entering the labor force from lower socio-economic backgrounds experience an improvement in their social status and adapt faster to host cultural norms[48]. But these liberal outcomes cannot be generalized for all immigrant women and may vary across social and cultural contexts, ethnicity, division of labor, access to resources, and pre-migrant class status[49]. Further, the role of women is seen integral to the maintenance and transference of ethnic traditions among first and second-generation Arab, Indian, and South Korean immigrants[50]. This study unravels how ethnic retention varies across the gendered Pakistani graduate student acculturating to the new context.

Globalized processes like prior exposure to American social and mass media (News, TV shows, Hollywood), work and/or leisure travel to the US, and relationships with friends and family in the US, are likely to facilitate the international student acculturative experiences. Despite these transnational links, on arrival, the host cultural norms are

[47] Itzigsohn, José, and Silvia Giorguli-Saucedo. "Incorporation, Transnationalism, and Gender: Immigrant Incorporation and Transnational Participation as Gendered Processes." *International Migration Review* 39, no. 4 (2005): 895-920.(2005)

[48] Nazli Kibria"Household Structure and Family Ideologies: The Dynamics of." *Social Problems* 41, no. 1 (1994): 81; Min, Pyong. "Changes in Korean Immigrants' Gender Role and Social Status, and Their Marital Conflicts." *Sociological Forum* 16, no. 2 (2001): 301-20.

[49] Tienda, Marta, and Karen Booth. "Gender, Migration And Social Change." International Sociology 6, no. 1 (March 1991): 51–72. doi:10.1177/026858091006001004.

[50] Dhingra, Pawan. *Managing Multicultural Lives : Asian American Professionals and the Challenge of Multiple Identities*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2007;Zentgraf, Kristine M. "Immigration and Women's Empowerment: Salvadorans in Los Angeles." *Gender & Society* 16, no. 5 (2002): 625-46 .

external to the Pakistani graduate students and "*unsettled*" in these newcomer lives[51]. The new culture is no longer anchoring prior social identities[52]. They exist in unsettled cultural space and are learning new modes of actions[53]. Norms learned from pre-existing culture, serve as only as benchmarks for selecting new cultural material in the unsettled culture[54]. The new cultural settings, highlight the intersectional identities of newcomers in the foreign environment, and enable the self to be "*active creator of social behavior*"[55]. Pakistani students selectively and strategically use their pre-existing religious symbols, cultural worldviews, and new cultural components to understand their changing lives[56]. Their intersectional identities inform the self and influence how they navigate the new liberal cultural settings while adhering to home cultural ideals. Their acculturation embodies cultural repertoires of both home and host society that are evolving, interactional, and in conflict with each other and influence their transnational identities in the host culture[57]. They embody a repository of cultural norms, enabling ethnic retention while developing associations with the new culture. These processes are influenced by their intersectional

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[51] Swidler, Ann. "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies." *American Sociological Review* 51, no. 2 (1986:279): 273-86.

[52] Colic-Peisker, Val, and Iain Walker. "Human Capital, Acculturation and Social Identity: Bosnian Refugees in Australia." *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 13, no. 5 (2003): 337-60.

[53] Swidler, Ann. "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies." *American Sociological Review* 51, no. 2 (1986:279): 273-86. (279)

[54] Swidler, Ann. "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies." *American Sociological Review* 51, no. 2 (1986:383): 273-86.

[55] Sheldon, Stryker, . "Towards an Adequate Social Psychology of the Self" Contemporary Sociology, *Journal of Reviews*9(3),383-385. (1980, 385)

[56]McGuffey, C. Shawn. "Rape and racial appraisals: Culture, Intersectionality, and Black Women's Accounts of Sexual Assault." *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 10, no. 1 (2013): 109–30. doi:10.1017/S1742058X12000355.(2013)

[57] Foner, Nancy. "The Immigrant Family: Cultural Legacies and Cultural Changes." *International Migration Review* 31, no. 4 (1997): 961-74.(1997)

identities, individual agentic choice, and duration of stay in the host society. I present these intersectional identities in the home and host cultural space in figure 1. Pakistani graduate students may choose to adopt or/and reject new norms and cultivate new acculturative strategies.

2.2 DATA AND METHODS:

I interviewed 28 Pakistani graduate students studying in the US from February to September 2012. I used life history approach to document the social, cultural, and ideological transformations occurring/having occurred in the lives of these students since arrival to US[58]. I draw upon narratives of the participants and use grounded theory methods to inform my theoretical framework[59].

2.2.1 Accessing Pakistani graduate students:

I contacted South Asian groups, Islamic associations, and International student organizations across the US to locate Pakistani graduate students. Word of mouth was most effective in finding respondents and generated a snowball sample of students studying

[58] McCall, M, and Wittner J. "*The Good News About Life History, "pp 46-89 in Symbolic interaction and cultural studies*, edited by H. S. Becker and M. M. McCall, Chicago. University of Chicago Press (1990).

[59] Glaser, Barney G., and Strauss, Anselm L., Joint Author. The Discovery of Grounded Theory; St*rategies for Qualitative Research*. Observations. Chicago: Aldine Pub., 1967.

across different US institutions[60]. I built upon networks of these students to locate my participants. As an insider to the focused population, I am fluent in Urdu (national language of Pakistan) and aware of the norms of the home society. My positionality was advantageous in connecting to my respondents, and understanding intricacies of their lived experiences in the host culture. My participants felt comfortable in using my knowledge of both home and host societies to talk openly about their lives in the new settings. They used both English and Urdu to narrate their experiences. I translated Urdu conversations to English while transcribing.

2.2.2 Interview guide and approach:

The interviews lasted between one and two hours. I developed a comprehensive interview guide framed around lives of respondents before, on arrival, and their current experiences in the host culture. The interview style was informal and conversation-style so they could easily reflect on their lives in the US. My participants are spread across eight states. I conducted interviews in person with respondents living local to me, and used Skype/video-call for interviewing remaining participants. I recorded the interviews and let the participants know when I began and ended the recording. Participants' real names have been replaced with pseudonyms to protect their identity. Only one respondent identified as Christian, and the remaining as Muslims. Despite my modest sample size, I achieved saturation upon hearing repetitive themes (Small, 2009). While I cannot claim that this

[60] Miles, Matthew B., and Huberman, A. M. *Qualitative Data Analysis : An Expanded Sourcebook*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, (1994).

sample is representative of all the Pakistani graduate students in the U.S., my analysis illuminates theoretical understandings of acculturation of the non-white, high skilled, Muslim, short-term migrants. I capture the multiplicity of the Pakistani graduate student experience by ensuring variation across age, gender and duration of stay. Table 2 shows their demographics.

2.2.2.1 Varying duration of stay*:*

Increased familiarity with the host society is crucial to understanding the acculturation strategies. The participants' stay varies from five months to five years. Thirteen respondents have been in the US for less than one year, while the rest have been in the country for two to five years.

2.2.2.2 Gendered perspectives:

Acknowledging patriarchal traditions of Pakistan and cultural, social, and fiscal costs of sending women to the West for tertiary education, I expected fewer women than men to be studying in the US. My participants consist of 13 women and 15 men. It was difficult to locate Pakistani women and to secure their consent to for the study. It may be due to their academic workload and/or hesitation to speak to a stranger about their personal life. Though my positionality as a woman helped them to express their challenges in the host society.

2.2.2.3 Aged perspectives:

The age of participants in the study ranges from 23 to 40 years old. This variation reflects their wealth of life experiences and captures acculturation processes across their varied life course.

2.2.3 Coding and Analysis:

I transcribed interviews and made notes of the interaction with my respondents. I adopt Miles and Huberman's analytical inductive approach to organize the data (1994). After coding, I collated similar and conflicting patterns in the emerging themes of cultural and social experiences of Pakistani graduate students navigating the host society.

2.3 FINDINGS:

I focus on cultural and social experiences of Pakistani international students that broadly reflect the graduate student lifestyle in the American mainstream. Respondents used both English and Urdu while narrating their experiences. Some expressed difficulty with English on arrival. They all reported becoming fluent over a period of two years. Their ease with the host culture's language is not surprising for three reasons: First, the group reflects the privileged class of the home society, enabling them access to English learning material from elementary school onwards. Second, since Pakistan has British colonial roots, English continues to be the official language in professional and educational settings, giving students an advantage to the host culture's language. Third, prior exposure to the Western culture either by traveling and/or through social and mass media, and increased interaction with fellow Americans assisted their fluent use of English language in the host culture. Unlike international students from Asia (East and Central), Middle East, and

first generation low skilled migrants from non- English speaking sending nations[61], Pakistani graduate students are fluent in English as a second language and their processes of acculturation are not limited by a language barrier. Nevertheless, they find the new social and cultural settings of the host society challenging.

2.3.1 Explorer- Keeper Approach*:*

The acculturation strategy of the Pakistani graduate students falls along a continuum anchored by an explorer approach at one end and a more homebound keeper approach at the other. The explorer approach is facilitated by a select and drop process, as students interact with everyday traditions of the host society. They select or drop different aspects of the host culture, which conforms or conflicts with pre-existing ideals of their home society. Students embracing the keeper approach are hesitant in interacting with new cultural elements and choose to adhere to the norms of the home society. The keeper approach stems from conflicting values and traditions of the host and home societies.

Using Hughes conceptions of master status that is a key determinant of social situations[62]. Across the international student intersectional identities gender emerges as the master status shaping their explorer-keeper acculturation strategy. Women are likely to adhere to their pre-existing ideals, while men have an exploratory attitude towards the new culture. However, this gendered bifurcation is not so simple. Their religiosity, and age/life trajectories are integral to how they situate themselves on the explorer-keeper spectrum.

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[61]Andrade, Maureen Snow. "International Students in English-Speaking Universities: Adjustment Factors." *Journal of Research in International Education* 5, no. 2 (August 2006): 131–54. doi:10.1177/1475240906065589(2006).

[62] Gonzales, Roberto G. *Lives in Limbo: Undocumented and Coming of Age in America*. University of California Press, 2016.

Hence, it is essential to look at the intersectional identities of the Pakistani graduate students across different cultural and social elements as they evolve their understandings of the host society. Respondents may adopt explorer approach across one cultural element and keeper across the other. The themes from the interviews surrounded the topics of a) transition to the western attire, b) socializing in bars, and c) socializing- romance and dating.

2.3.1.1 Transition to the 'western attire' men and women:

The national dress of Pakistan is shalwar-kameez (loosely fitted shirts of varying lengths worn with loosely fitted trousers) and is popular among men and women across the country. Women may or may not accompany the dress with a scarf across the chest. Pakistani's consider jeans, pants, t-shirt, skirts, and shorts as belonging to the Western culture, i.e., worn by Europeans and Americans. Men in Pakistan are more accustomed to wearing the 'Western wardrobe' in their professional and personal lives as compared to women. But all these distinctions vary across class, age, social, cultural, urban and rural contexts.

On arrival to the host society, gender is key to how Pakistani men and women transition to the host culture's dressing norms. Men found no differences in their wardrobe choices and continued to dress in their so-called Western clothes. Conversely, women go through a deliberative process of choosing how to dress in the host society. Clothes are an important cultural symbol as women acculturate to the host society. Their experiences present their struggles as they adapt to the new change and find a comfortable place on the explorer-keeper continuum. With the passage of time in the host society and increased familiarity to relatively new wardrobe, Pakistani women evolve their style and identity in

contexts of the American society. Their religiosity and age play an intersectional role in making this transition. As an insider to participants' cultural norms, women expected me to be aware of their religious and cultural predispositions informing their decisions as they adapted to the new wardrobe. I present four cases of how their intersectional identities and pre-existing ideals inform their dressing styles in the new culture.

Seema has been in the US for four years, and her duration of stay and religiosity influence her transition to the new wardrobe.

Seema*: (31 years) I never wore pants at home, I insisted on wearing shalwar-kameez with dupatta here. I did that for a long time. So I felt comfortable in wearing shalwar-kameez. It took me three years to transition into the life here; slowly I found myself wearing kameez with pants and then t-shirts but it took me three years to adjust. I don't wear anything revealing.*

She had a keepers approach for the first three years and adjusted slowly to the new wardrobe. She selected and dropped different aspects of American clothing while adopting new styles that fit her religiosity and home culture ideals. She is explicit about her choice of clothing "*to be not revealing"* thus adhering to her religion while simultaneously embracing new styles. On the day of the interview, she wore jeans and a sweater.

Contrastingly, Tanzeela had been in the host culture for two and a half years and experienced a smoother transition to the new wardrobe.

Tanzeela: (36 years) *I don't think I had an issue. I used to wear trousers/jeans with kurta in Pakistan. Not daily but quite often. So wearing trousers and jeans with half sleeves or full sleeves top is ok for me, as per the weather conditions. Yes wearing these heavy coats in winter seems hard.*

Her transition is facilitated by her prior exposure to wearing Western clothes in the home society. Both Seema and Tanzeela represent the privileged class of Pakistani society, yet their different social and family backgrounds influenced their transition to the relatively

new wardrobe. They use both cultural and religious repertoires of home society to inform their dressing styles in the new settings.

Sara finds no difficulty dressing in the host cultural context.

Sara: *(26 years) I am just the same person as I was in Pakistan, the things I do in Pakistan I do the same here, the things I didn't do in Pakistan I don't do here. I wear the same clothes as I did in Pakistan. I don't wear anything revealing it is just the way I am. It's not that, I am too Islamic or something (and pauses)…so by the way my family is a very liberal family, My mother is far more liberal than most people I know, I wore jeans till the last day I was there I didn't have a restrictive life over there.*

Having been in the US for two years, she associates her clothes to her identity and considers no change in herself in the host culture. She distances herself from her religiosity and doesn't wear anything revealing because of her personal choice. Sara acknowledges the liberal upbringing of her mother, which made this transition easier. She explains her choice by challenging the oppressed brown Muslim woman stereotype in the host society by adding: "*I wore jeans till the last day I was there. I didn't have a restrictive life over there".*

Similarly, Monas' transition to the new wardrobe is facilitated by her prior exposure to the clothes in her home society. She uses the select and drop process to adjust her style to her identity.

Mona: (25 years) I used to wear jeans with frocks in Pakistan. Normally I wear, t-shirts here. Rarely I go to campus in a long frock & tights. I didn't use to wear t-shirts in Pakistan though.

Younger respondents, as in the case of Mona and Sara both in their mid-twenties were more familiar with the Western clothes than their older counterparts. Other factors like prior exposure to the Western wardrobe and family backgrounds of the respondents influence how they dress in the host society. Mona, Sara, and Tanzeela quickly transition into the new culture's wardrobe while adhering to their religious ideals. They adopt

explorer and keeper approach simultaneously. However, Seema finds the transition difficult, because she was not as familiar with the new cultures' wardrobe in Pakistan. She adjusts to it slowly and transitions from a keeper's approach to an explorer, selectively evolving her clothing style while adhering to her religiosity.

Religiosity is implicit in all the responses, if not explicitly stated. Women respondents adhere to their Muslim identity while ensuring they don't reveal any skin considered promiscuous by the cultural and religious standards of the home society. They use the term non-revealing, to reaffirm their modest styles and continuously use their pre-existing ideals to navigate the new cultural settings.

2.3.1.2 Socializing in Bars- Alcohol:

Going to happy hour is a familiar ritual in graduate student lives. Age-related trajectories are integral in situating the Pakistani graduate student experience of socializing in bars. All respondents considered going to bars essential to socialization. This is contradictory to their home cultural and religious (Islamic) values, and publicly endorsing the idea of drinking alcohol in the predominantly Pakistani Muslim society is frowned upon, and more so for women than for men. However, alcohol is legally served to non-Muslims at prominent hotels and can be accessed through legal and illegal channels[63]. Despite the religious norms and the social stigma it is carefully served and consumed in private spaces. Respondents were aware of the availability of alcohol in their home culture through these channels.

[63] Murtaza Haider. "Alcohol Consumption in Pakistan: Don't mix sin with crime" *Dawn News* Updated Oct 29, 2014, http://www.dawn.com/news/1141153

Once in the host culture, the respondents are free from the social control of the home society, and may or may not choose to consume alcohol. The notion of religiosity is implicit in respondents' narratives and being an insider to the participants' culture they expected me to be aware of the norms, as apparent in the conversations below. Gender emerges as the master status and determines the explorer-keeper approach of the respondents. Men adhered to the former while women preferred the latter. The approach is further influenced by the religiosity of the students as they navigate the cultural element of socializing in bars.

Female responses:

Women mostly adhere to the keeper approach of not going to bars and were hesitant about the subject. They associate going to bars with drinking alcohol. It is not always explicitly stated in their responses, but their hesitation towards this cultural element is a way of distancing themselves from social stigma associated with drinking alcohol in the home culture. This may be why some Pakistani women refused to be part of the study and found questions regarding drinking alcohol intrusive. I present five cases that reflect their predominantly keeper's approach.

Zobia (31)

There is social hour here, Thanks to Allah, I don't drink, I do my prayers, there is no concept of alcohol or going to bars for me, (smiles) I don't want to go to a bar

Zobia embodies the keeper approach and strictly adheres to her religiosity. She associates the act of going to bars to drinking only. In her interview, she complained of being lonely and acknowledged that going to bars was a casual way for graduate students to socialize.

Similarly, Mona is surprised by my question. She does not expect a fellow Pakistani female to even ask about going to bars. Despite her curiosity, she has never stepped into one.

I: Have you ever been to a bar?
Mona (25): Why should I go there for? Even the two friends (Nepalese and Indian) I know also avoid going to the bar. … Its right outside my apartment I have never been …. when at 3:00 am I hear someone loud that's when am really curious: What is going on in there?

Though not explicitly stated, Mona uses her pre-existing cultural and religious ideals that inform her keeper approach as she navigates this cultural norm. She refers to her two other South-Asian friends that use a similar logic of staying away from bars. It also confirms earlier research on Indian immigrants in the US that show women were more likely to refrain from drinking alcohol as compared to men[64].

In contrast, Tanzeela has a relatively exploratory approach and chooses to go to the bar but doesn't drink alcohol.

Tanzeela(36): *I do not drink, but I have been to a bar only twice. If I am going with friends, I won't mind. It just happened that we never went very often.*

She is relaxed about going inside the bar. Tanzeela has been in the US for three years, and it was only recently that she has stepped into one.

Faiza was the only female participant who had tried alcohol in the host culture.

Faiza(23): Well I tried once less than a sip, I remember I was trembling when I asked to try my colleague's drink at a bar. I couldn't really do it you know, it's just that we are so set in habits and values now that we can't change.

The expression "*trembling*" and "*set in habits and values"* demonstrate her challenge of stepping away from her pre-existing ideals and moving into the new cultural

64 Dhingra, Pawan. *Managing Multicultural Lives : Asian American Professionals and the Challenge of Multiple Identities*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2007

norms. She had never tried alcohol in Pakistan and was nervous in taking a "*sip*." She acknowledges her habit of not drinking due to the norms of the home society.

Contrastingly, Mehwish had a very different understanding of the pre-existing ideals regarding consuming alcohol.

Mehwish(31): I don't drink not at all,
I: Have you ever tried?
Mehwish: Yes I have tried it that was a long time ago when I was a teenager (laughs)
I: so that was in Pakistan?
Mehwish: Of course (and laughs) all vices happen in Pakistan. One adopts these bad habits in Pakistan; when you go abroad, you stop smoking, stop putting sugar in tea. Well, I guess my friends used to drink, so I used to drink with them vodka mostly, I hadn't tried wine or beer, only when we went to parties there.

Mehwish used to drink alcohol at parties during her high school in Pakistan but has never consumed it in the host culture. Her response to drinking in the home culture is different from other female respondents. Her social and family background in the home society provided a different context to her choices in the U.S. As a young adult in the host culture, she refrains from alcohol and seldom frequents the bar with her colleagues. Though she has an explorer approach towards the host cultures wardrobe, she follows a keeper's approach towards socializing in bars in the host culture. The response is unique to other female participants who had refrained from alcohol both in the home and host society. Class privileges in the home society may allow some women access to cultural and social resources inaccessible to women belonging to other strata's of society. This response also shows that there may also be Pakistani women that drink alcohol in the host society but refused to be part of the study because of the stigma of the home society.

These responses reflect diversity across the backgrounds of Pakistani women studying in the US, and though religiosity appears to be a refraining factor, the narratives

of these women present a complicated story. Pakistani women in the sample were not isolated in the host society because they don't socialize in bars with their peers. But their reluctance decreased their chances of expanding their social circles. Instead, women preferred to interact with their friends in other social spaces like café's, restaurants, parks, etc.

Male responses:

Conversely, male respondents have an exploratory attitude towards socializing in bars and drinking alcohol. They use the select and drop strategy to navigate this cultural element by going to bars to socialize, which may or maybe not be accompanied by the act of drinking alcohol. I present three cases showing a deliberative explorer approach.

Mahmood(25):

Drinking, I have never tried it even once. I have strict rules for myself, and I stay within the boundaries of these rules. They are not flexible, and they are my principle, and I will not drink. I have been to clubs, and they are not sure what's happening to them when they are drunk. I don't understand that if you are not in control of your senses in two hours then why do you drink? I am really close to a female, white American friend, and when we go to a bar, she always asks me to drink. I don't drink so I feel bad, and it becomes socially awkward. It's like when I invite her over for dinner, and I want her to try a particular food (Pakistani cuisine) but she won't, so I understand it's a different culture.

Mahmoud embodies explorer approach and goes to the bar to socialize but drops the element of drinking. He follows "*strict rules"* referring to the religious and cultural norms of the home society that inform his values, and uses them as a reference point to abstain from drinking alcohol. He considers his predicament towards not drinking as a cultural difference between the home and host society and compares it to his friends' experience who is hesitant in trying Pakistani food at his home.

Similarly, Zohaib also adopts the explorer approach but is explicit about the norms of the home society.

Zohaib(38): No, I don't drink, I am married, I have never tried and have never been tempted to try, my friends from Pakistan they do drink, but I don't look down upon them. It's not that am a religious person not at all, I didn't even go to my Friday prayers, but I just chose not to drink. I go out with friends. I just don't drink.

He draws upon the stigma framework from Pakistan and doesn't judge his friends who drink in the home and host society. He doesn't drink alcohol due to moral concerns, and his choice is independent of the religious norms of the home culture. Nevertheless, he opts for explorer approach, drops the element of drinking alcohol, and socializes with friends in bars.

Hayyat adopts a keeper approach in the beginning but develops an exploratory attitude over time. He considers socializing in bar integral to networking and making friends.

Hayyat(25):
In the beginning, I didn't usually go to the bars because of school priorities. But later I realized, that international students, as well as Americans, like to socialize in bars. So, after that, I go almost once every other week. But of course, I never go alone. I check whether my friends are going, I go with them. And that's how I got to know more people. I occasionally drink, so you can consider me as a social drinker. I might have a drink or two when friends are gathered to celebrate. But on a typical night, I would not drink at all. Because, frankly speaking, it doesn't attract me that much. So despite going to bars fairly often, I would say maybe I would drink 1 out of 10 visits to a bar. At a bar, everyone seems to be a bit more relaxed, of course, drinks affect as well. The same person if you meet during the day on campus will be different at a bar. During the day, everyone is rushing with their schedule. But at night, everyone is relaxed and exchanging ideas.

He has been in the US for two years and drank alcohol in bars only to socialize with his friends. He considers himself a "*social drinker"* and finds the space of the bar vital for social connections.

Similarly, Ali considers going to bar imperative for networking.

I: Do you drink?
Ali (29): yeah when am outside Pakistan, I drink

I mean I used to drink when I was in London, and then I went to Pakistan for three years I didn't drink and had left it, and then I came here. I have started drinking here socially, to socialize only I just drink

I: so you don't buy alcohol at home?

Ali: No not at home

I: Is your wife ok with this?

Ali: Well umm yeah she is ok with it. I mean our policy is that I will never drink at home and bring it there because there is no point drinking alone at home; it's just depressing alone. I gave her a simple logic when I came here that I am drinking because at a place like this a lot of people who are here now will be in powerful positions in a matter of 10 to 15 years and hence networking is very important and to build connections. I call people at the bar and buy a drink. Every weekend there are international nights at the bar, so I get to meet people and Americans from all over.

Ali abstains from alcohol in Pakistan but considers it essential for networking and socializing in the host culture. In his *"home"* Ali doesn't drink alcohol. He uses the context of the host culture and engages in drinking alcohol and socializing in bars only.

Both Ali and Hayyat have an explorer approach but don't like drinking alcohol. They consider socializing in bars essential for broadening their professional and social networks. They are outsiders to the host society, and by choosing to drink, they may replicate an insider perspective. However, to what extent a non-white, Muslim, Pakistani temporary migrant is successful in establishing his/her insider status by drinking alcohol at a bar, raises essential questions of acceptance into the dominant group.

There is a consensus among male and female respondents that going to bars is vital to socializing with peers in the host culture. Like their female counterparts, men were aware of the social stigma associated with this cultural element in the home society. But unlike women, they were more likely to develop an adaptive strategy and used the select and drop process to navigate this experience. This confidence of men stems from their privileged status in their home society enabling them to adapt their actions based on their new contexts.

2.3.1.3 Socializing - Romance and Dating:

Romance and dating is a universal cultural norm in young adult lives and the respondents' life circumstances influence their experiences. Ten respondents were in relationships, of which seven (five men and two women) were married, and three (two women and one man) were engaged. Of the remaining eighteen respondents, only three male respondents have girlfriends.

According to the Islamic doctrine, Muslim men are allowed to marry women from other Abrahamic faiths, whether Muslim women have the same right remains disputed in Islamic theology[65]. The gendered identity of the respondents influences their explorer-keeper approach, as they consider dating and romance in the host culture. Life stage and religion influence how Pakistani graduate students navigate this cultural element. For Pakistanis pursuing intimate relations outside their group in the host, society can be intercultural, interfaith, and interracial as well. I use the term interracial as my participants have done, and operationalize it as a generic term that includes romantic relations across religious, cultural, ethnic, and racial lines.

View of Male Respondents:

Men mostly had an explorer approach towards the subject but felt challenged by the interracial context of the host society.

Naveed (25): *Well I have been on several dates if you count going to dinner with a girl as a date. When I was new here, I went out with an American girl, and she was quite interested in me, but I was afraid of interracial stuff at that time. So it basically never worked out. After that, I went out with another American and later two Chinese girls, but things didn't progress further. I don't have any issue with interracial relationships, but I will prefer to marry a Muslim girl, even better if she comes from Pakistan.*

[65] Alex B. Leeman. "Interfaith Marriage in Islam: An Examination of the Legal Theory Behind the Traditional and Reformist Positions." *Indiana Law Journal* 84 (2009): 743-1449.

Naveed's' experience presents a continuum of explorer-keeper approach. Initially, he was hesitant to the "*interracial stuff"* but with the passage of time has grown accustomed to it. He remains conscientious of his religiosity and would prefer a Pakistani Muslim woman as a partner.

Similarly, Saad adopts an explorer approach but feels conflicted while using the home cultural norms in the host society.

Saad (25): *Well I have been involved with girls in Pakistan before, but it didn't work out. I was approached by two American girls and a Chinese girl, but you see the problem is that when I got romantically involved, I couldn't take the next step… it's complicated because I have these limitations….and I can't take the next step. For me, if the girl is of the Abrahamic faith, I am willing to marry her if things become serious. But to be honest Pakistani girls are the best, and then there is the issue of my parents also.*

Saad is open to the idea of an interracial relationship for dating and marriage. He battles with his religiosity and his values that conflict with the host cultural settings. He was unable to "*take the next step"* in the relationship, referring to physical intimacy, and acknowledges the limitations that are defined by his religiosity on the matter. Though he is free from the social control of the home society, he uses select/drop strategy and chooses to be romantically involved but is conflicted in aspects of physical intimacy.

I next discuss an outlier male response. Qasim is the same age as Saad and Naveed. But has contrasting views on the subject. He acknowledges dating in the home culture, but the liberal settings of the host culture have challenged his ideas.

Qasim (25): Well I had opposite and much different views on this in Pakistan but not anymore though. If I date, then she is not a Muslim, or I am not a Muslim. The marriage will be arranged the implications of mixed marriages will be worse, even if she is a Muslim because if the language is not shared, then relationship is not long lasting.

He has been in the US for eight months only and has had a drastic change of

opinion. He considers the act of dating as un-Islamic, and views dating women regardless of their religion against his religiosity. He also finds the difference in language problematic for a long-term relationship. His response is unique and stricter to all other respondents. It may be because exposure to the liberal settings of the host culture threatens his ethnic identity and he feels compelled to assert his version of the Pakistani Muslim identity to retain his identity.

View of the Female Respondents:

Only two women in the sample spoke of their prior relationships. Women were shy and past research has shown that it is more difficult for women to disclose their personal life to strangers[66]. Moreover, in the Pakistani society for women, there is a stigma associated with a relationship with someone other than a husband or fiancé. Female respondents used these norms while talking about dating romance and marriage in the host society. The findings predominantly reflect a keeper's approach among women. However, it is likely that Pakistani women studying in the US may be dating interracially and interculturally in the host society, but feel hindered by the stigma framework of the home society to share their views. Unlike their male counterparts, none of the women have dated anyone in the US, but have been approached romantically on several occasions.

Age of the women affected their responses on dating and marriage in the host culture. Women in their mid to late thirties were open to the idea of interracial dating and marriage within the Abrahamic faith, contrary to the views of their younger counterparts. Life circumstances of the respondents further influence how they approach this cultural

[66] McGuffey, C. Shawn. "Rape and racial appraisals: Culture, Intersectionality, and Black Women's Accounts of Sexual Assault." *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 10, no. 1 (2013): 109–30. doi:10.1017/S1742058X12000355.

element. Younger women tend to couple the topic of dating to marriage directly. They adopt keeper's approach and are willing to explore the concept of dating with the possibility of marriage and with the consent of their families.

Humera has a keepers approach.

I: Has anyone ever approached you romantically?
Humera (23): Yes, several Indian guys have approached me. However, I am not interested in them, as I want to be with someone from Pakistan. Whenever someone asks me out, I say I have someone in Pakistan is waiting for me. I say this because you can't tell someone that you are not interested in someone because they are from a specific religion or country. It's clear in my head that I have to go back to Pakistan and get married there. No American guy has approached me though.

Though no American men have shown any romantic interest in her, several Indian men have. She has countered their efforts and created a narrative of a fake Pakistani boyfriend to refuse romantic advancement towards her.

Similarly, Faiza adheres to a keepers approach and values her family's input.

Faiza(25): Well there have been guys who have been romantically interested in me. There were two American boys, but I politely refused. One Pakistani guy that I know here proposed to me respectfully through his mother, but I declined because I have a pact with my mother that I will marry according to my family's wishes. I recently got engaged, and it's a complicated situation.

Both American and Pakistani men have pursued Faiza for romance, but she prefers marriage to a Pakistani man only with the consent of her family. She has recently committed to someone her family chose for her. She is conflicted about the situation but upholds her religiosity, nationality and the consent of her family on the subject.

Sara presents her views (and not her experience) across the explorer continuum on the subject.

Sara (25): I think that interracial marriages produce the prettiest babies in the world. I think if you like somebody and he is a good human being, and your parents are not completely against him, then you should be able to marry him, it does not matter what race, as long as he is Christian or Jew it can be ok .....but maybe I have liberal views,

But religion tells you that men can marry Christian and Jewish women. I wouldn't marry a Christian or a Jew but had it been. It would have been ok as long as he believes in God.

Sara talks about marriage and not dating. The issue perplexes her. She is open to the idea of "*interracial"* relationships and struggles with her religiosity. She considers her views to be "*liberal"* and goes back and forth as she frames her religiosity in the new cultural context.

Unlike her younger counterparts, Tanzeela is open to the idea of long-term interracial relationship only if he (male partner) shares one of the Abrahamic faiths.

Tanzeela (36): "I haven't been approached by anyone, but I am open to the idea of dating for marriage as long as he is from the Abrahamic faith, my family has rested this decision with me.

She also associates the subject of dating to marriage only. Relatively young in her mid-thirties, Tanzeela has more agency in her choice of marriage than her counterparts in their mid-twenties.

These women are privileged, independent, and flourishing intellectuals living in the US. They voluntarily acknowledge the desire to adhere to their family values in deciding their romantic life and are inclined to date for marriage alone. Women subscribe to the keeper's approach while expressing their views on dating and romance negotiate their gender identity grounded in their cultural and religious context of the home society.

2.4 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION:

This paper provides unique sociological insights into acculturation strategies of the non-white, high skilled, Muslim, short-term migrant experience in the US. I make four contributions to the study of immigration theory. First, this paper goes beyond the psycho-socio-cultural understandings of the international student experience. Drawing from intersectionality, identity, and cultural theories, I present the explorer-keeper acculturation framework for studying experiences of international students in the American mainstream. Pakistani graduate students experience acculturation across the explorer-keeper continuum and use the interplay of their intersectional identities, i.e., gendered, age (life stage), religious identity, and temporary migrant status to navigate the host society. They negotiate these complex identities across different cultural and social elements of the host culture, defined by their young and mid adult graduate student lives. The explorer approach is facilitated by an active select and drop strategy, enabling them to maintain their ethnic heritage and adapt to the host society. Second, the approach removes fixed outcomes of earlier acculturation models, presenting insights into the fluidity of the acculturative processes of culturally distinct international student population at the confluence of their complex identities across different elements of the host culture. Moreover, it highlights that Pakistani graduate student over the life course are continuously evolving their sense of selves and their intersectional identities in the contexts of the host cultural settings while using cultural repertoires of the home society. Thus their transnational lives are a repository of cultural knowledge of both the home and host societies that they selectively adopt and/or drop across the explorer-keeper continuum.

Third, using an intersectional approach in studying acculturation of non-white, high skilled, Muslim, and temporary migrants present theoretical insights into the cultural contradictions and challenges faced by a distinct population as they experience the host society through the American university. The confluence of gendered, religious, ethnic (South-Asian), and academic identities of Pakistani graduate students at the cross-sections of US culture illustrates a gendered acculturation strategy. Gender operates as a master status in influencing the explorer-keeper acculturation continuum. Men, predominantly embody an exploratory approach towards the host cultural elements of going to bars and dating. Meanwhile, women are likely to adopt a keepers approach towards the social interactions considered controversial in the home society (going to bars and romance/dating) and rely on the values of their home society to navigate the new terrain. This may or may not be coupled with the religiosity of both men and women as they assert their sense of selves and use their pre-existing ideals in the host culture. Both men and women considered going to bars integral to socializing and networking in the host society, whether their explorer-keeper approach impacted their professional outcomes remains unexplored.

The gendered notions of acculturation are unique to our prior understanding of short-term migrant experience with diverse backgrounds and complex identities and shed light on the gendered inequities among Pakistani graduate students. Their social identities and internalized cultural norms have been informed by the contexts of the home society embodying gendered hierarchies at the intersection of their complex identities. These gendered privileges become evident across the host cultural elements and while both Pakistani men and women use norms of home society to navigate the new settings, men

are likely to adopt an explorer's approach to navigate the host cultural elements that may be frowned upon in home cultural contexts, while women rely on a keeper's approach, preferring to use the home cultural ideals as they acculturate into the American society. This also confirms previous findings on the role of women in the maintenance of ethnic heritage among first and second-generation Asian and Arab immigrants[67]. Gendered acculturative differences will likely affect their integration strategies if this group chooses to stay in the US long-term. As their life circumstances will become complex (child rearing, family, and employment), men and women are likely to position themselves differently along the explorer-keeper continuum, and their strategies of incorporation will be framed around residential mobility, school choices, transferring ethnic and religious traditions, marriage, and political integration. As part of my future research, I intend to look at long-term, non-white, high skilled, Muslim immigrants and evaluate the explorer-keeper approach in light of their lived experiences in the host society. Furthermore, how the duration of stay in the host society influences the gendered acculturation strategy of migrants with complex identities remains to be explored.

Fourth, the degree to which the acculturation experience is mediated not only by gender but also by life trajectories. Age and life stage are integral in defining the cultural and social interaction of international students. This paper uses a limited definition of US culture based on the participant's (graduate student) life perspectives. These cultural and social elements would change over time if respondents chose to stay long-term, raise families, pursue professional careers, and live their everyday lives. It is likely that with the

[67] Read, Jen'nan Ghazal. "Cultural Influences on Immigrant Women's Labor Force Participation: The Arab-American Case 1." *International Migration Review* 38, no. 1 (2004): 52-77.

passage of time, increased familiarity, and positive experiences in the host culture, the unsettled space of the host society may become part of their settled lives, and individuals may choose to internalize the new norms selectively, knowingly and unknowingly. These interactions across the explorer-keeper continuum might influence their long-term adaptive strategies if they decide to stay in the host society as permanent first generation high-skilled migrants.

The explorer-keeper framework demonstrates acculturation as an ongoing process and can be extended to illuminate the challenges experienced by diverse temporary populations (international students, refugees, and low /high skilled temporary workers). The approach acknowledges the racial, social, cultural, political, ethnic, religious, and national distinctions between sending and receiving contexts, and uses them as a backdrop to analyze acculturative strategies of diverse populations at the confluence of their intersectional identities. Thus presenting unique theoretical understandings of the experiences of minority groups in majority domains.

More recently, in light of Trumps anti-immigrant politics such as, enforcing the travel ban (aka Muslim ban), USCIS-2018 policy restrictions on granting visa to international students that includes increased application fees and intense scrutiny over work permits for international students, has raised concerns for non-white foreign students choosing to come to the US for undergraduate and graduate degrees[68]. Such recent political changes are likely to have adverse effects on the processes of acculturation and explorer-keeper acculturation framework of incoming and already prevalent international students

[68] Marnette Federis. "Visa rules are restricting the future of international students in the US", *PRI's The World.* June 20, 2019 · 11:00 AM, https://www.pri.org/stories/2019-06-20/visa-rules-are-restricting-future-international-students-us (2019)

in the US. This may impact their decision to stay in the US long-term on completion of their Bachelors, /Masters, and Doctorate programs and the future of high-skilled immigration. Furthermore, with the recent decline in the number of international students coming to the US from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Iran [69], whether the American university will continue to be the top destination for tertiary-level skill development remains to be seen, and how will these changes influence the operations of giant tech-hubs like Amazon, Microsoft and Google that grant the largest H-1B work permits to international students in science and technology is an important question for the contemporary changes in US immigration system and the high-skilled labor economy.

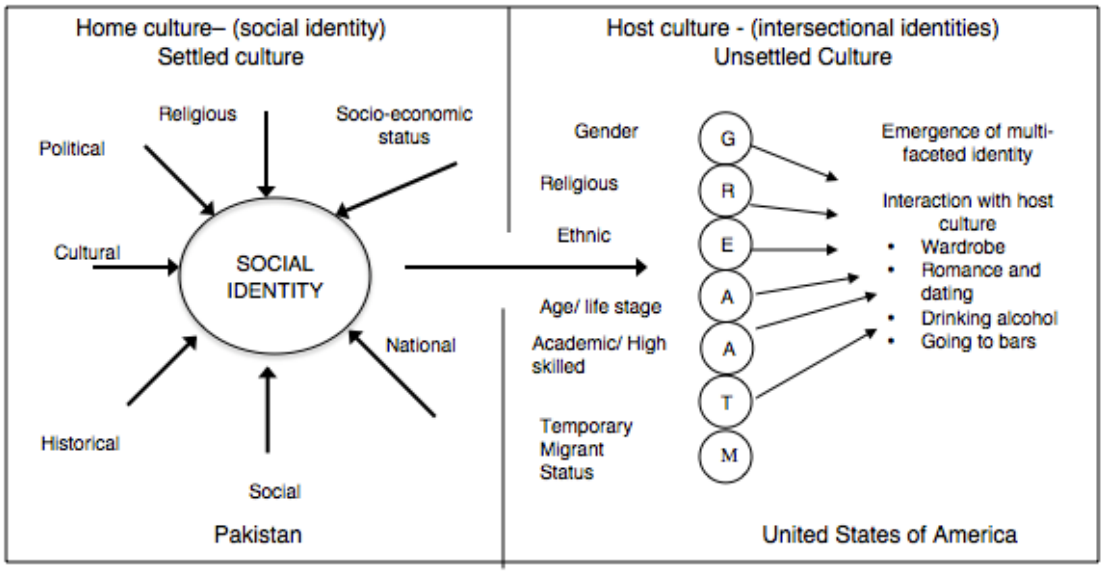
[69] Nadine El-Bawab "Trump's tough student and work visa policies are pushing legal immigrants to Canada" Published Mon, Feb 25 2019, Updated TUE, FEB 26 2019 9:44 AM EST, *CNBC News,* https://www.cnbc.com/2019/02/25/trumps-student-and-work-visa-policies-push-legal-immigrants-to-canada.html

Table 2: Participants' Details:

No.	Name	Gender	Age	Duration of stay (Year.Month)	Relationship-status
1	Faiza	F	25	2.4	engaged
2	Hafeez	M	35	0.8	married
3	Junaid	M	38	3.7	married
4	Ahmed	M	30	2.4	single
5	Raana	F	40	1.8	single
6	Shaista	F	36	2.6	single
7	Talha	M	25	0.8	single
8	Ali	M	29	0.8	married
9	Tanzeela	F	35	2.6	single
10	Naveed	M	25	1.6	single
11	Mahmood	M	27	0.8	engaged
12	Irum	F	23	0.8	single
13	Omer	M	25	0.8	romantically-attached
14	Saad	M	25	0.8	romantically-attached
15	Humera	F	23	1.8	single
16	Mehwish	F	31	0.8	married
17	Mohsin	M	24	1.8	single
18	Rohail	M	27	0.8	married
19	Hayyat	M	25	1.8	single
20	Mona	F	25	0.8	engaged
21	Zohaib	M	38	0.101	married
22	Qasim	M	25	0.8	single
23	Sara	F	25	1.6	single
24	Seema	F	31	4.101	engaged
25	Hina	F	35	2.101	single
26	Amna	F	26	0.5	single
27	Zobia	F	31	4.11	married
28	Raahim	M	27	5	romantically-attached

Figure 1: Intersectional identities

The box on the left shows the formation of the social identity of the students, formed by the religious, cultural, social, historical, gender, political and national ideals of home society. However, on arrival to the US, the intersectional identities of the Pakistani graduate students shape their interaction across different cultural elements of the host society.



3.0 CHAPTER 3. FROM 9/11 TO MUSLIM BANS: THE CONTEMPORARY ETHNO-RACIAL, HIGH-SKILLED MUSLIM EXPERIENCE.

Diversity across immigrant experiences around ethno-racial location, skill levels (high and low), issues of illegality (undocumented status), and temporary/permanent migratory status, etc., have generated a plethora of immigration scholarship on the trajectories of immigrant incorporation (Alba & Nee 2003; Gonzales 2011; Marrow 2013; Portes & Zhou 1993; Portes & Rumbaut 2014; Rumbaut & Massey 2013; Telles and Ortiz 2008; Waters and Kasinitz 2020; Waters 2020). Additionally, the reception of American society's political, structural, and cultural contexts can facilitate or impede immigrant progress (Portes & Rumbaut 2006). For example, due to the criminalization of undocumented immigrant status in the labor market, the intersection of illegal status and racialized identities among Latin American immigrants result in their downward mobility and social exclusion from American mainstream (Gonzales 2016; Menjívar 2006). On the other hand, studies on high-skilled immigrant identities exclusively focused on the Asian American experience demonstrate their upwardly mobile trajectories attributed to their hyper-selective educational success (Dhingra 2007; Lee 2002; Lee and Zhou 2015; Tran 2016). However, the question of how do the intersections of politically charged religious identities and upwardly mobile class trajectories of ethno-racially othered immigrant groups are incorporated into the American mainstream largely remains unanswered.

The September 11 terror attacks on US. soil, followed by the War on Terror (WOT) era, and the ISIS terror attacks across Europe and the US., were used as justifications for weaponized forms of Islamophobia, naming the religious identities of Muslims as threats

to Western and American national security (Cainkar 2009; Haider 2020; Mamdani 2004; Rana 2011; Selod 2015; Swiney 2006). For example, legislation like the USA Patriots Act (2001), National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (2002), Absconder Initiative Program (2002), and the Countering Violent Extremist Program (2014), were put in place targeting the religious identities of Muslim immigrants of South Asian and Middle Eastern North African (MENA) origins (Alsultany 2012; Bayoumi 2006; Cainkar and Selod 2018; Mamdani 2004; Maghbouleh 2017; Love 2017; Rana 2011). More recently, three successive travel bans (aka Muslim bans) were imposed on travelers from Muslim-majority countries, alleging connections to Islamic extremism (Council on American-Islamic Relations 2017). Additionally, blatant anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant speech during President Trump's tenure provoked a surge of hate crimes targeting Muslim and Muslim looking individuals across the US (PEW 2017). This paper investigates how the Islamophobic conditions of contemporary US society, embedded in its institutional and cultural settings, impact the everyday lives of ethno-racially complex Muslim immigrants who are highly educated and hold professional jobs.

The study theoretically contributes to understanding the intersectional relationships of upwardly mobile classed, gendered, and racialized immigrant identities that conflate the issues of race and religion. Bringing together racialization theory, intersectionality theory, and the concept of master status, I demonstrate how high-skilled Muslim immigrants present their understandings of the Islamophobic contexts of the American mainstream. I show that while their religious identity serves as a master status to their racialized experiences, the intersectional dimensions of their complex identities are crucial to how they experience overt and covert forms of Islamophobia in their personal and professional

lives. Relying on life history approach, I present the case of the highly-skilled South Asian Muslim immigrant, who arrived to the United State between the years of 1965 and 2013, to pursue their graduate education, and chose to stay permanently emerging as first-generation Muslim American citizens. More specifically, I discuss the immigration incorporation experiences from Pakistani professional migrants' point of view, located at intersections of their geographic South Asian origins and geo-political Middle-Eastern identities defined by the Western rhetoric on the War on Terror, whose valued skill sets, educational backgrounds, and upwardly mobile success-oriented class identities diverge from their criminalized ethno-racial religious identities underlined by a hostile political environment and immigration policies.

3.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: - THE MUSLIMS CONTEXTS OF IMMIGRATION:

Long before 9/11 terror attacks, that strategically established extremist Islamist jihadist ideologues as a threat to the Western world, Christian identity was always deemed superior to Muslim identity (Desmond and Emirbayer 2010; Grosfoguel 2012; Werbner 2005). The Muslim in the United States experienced Islamophobic ethno-racial othering that prized White Christian supremacy, and they were subjected to anti-Arab, anti-Muslim, anti-Asian, anti-Black, and anti-immigrant sentiment based on their foreign and diverse Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) and South Asian origins (Alsultany 2007; Rana 2011; Swiney 2006; Frederickson 2002; Goldberg 2005). For example, in 1921, John Mohammad Ali, a South Asian Muslim from India, who was granted citizenship for posing

as a "high-caste Hindu" and hiding his Muslim identity, found his citizenship status revoked under the Immigration Act of 1924 that made Asians ineligible for citizenship (Devan 2011). Moreover, the exclusionary and anti-citizenship practices of the Asiatic Barred Zone Act of 1917 and the Johnson Reed Act of 1924 banned Asians, including East Asians and Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims of Indian heritage, from acquiring citizenship (Bayoumi 2006; Raana 2011). Similarly, in 1942 Ahmed Hassan, a Yemeni immigrant in Michigan, was refused American citizenship under the 1940 Nationality Act, because the judge considered his Arabic origin in the Mohammedan world to conflict with the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant way of living (Bayoumi; 2006; Hassan 2002).

On the other hand, the emergence of the US as a global political hegemon after WWII facilitated the ethno-racial acceptance of previously marginalized groups and laid the foundation for the liberalization of immigration laws that developed in the mid twentieth century (Grosfoguel 2012). Muslims found acceptance for their previously marginalized religious identity and contrary to Hassan's case, Mohreiz Mohammed, an Arabian who arrived to the United States in 1921, found citizenship laws in his favor, despite his Islamic roots (Bayoumi 2006). The judge declared his Arab heritage as a continuation of the European and Greek traditions, granting him citizenship status in 1944 (Bayomi 2006; Hassan 2002). More liberal contexts enabled white passing among white looking assimilated Muslim, Christian, and Jewish Arabs of Lebanese, Moroccan, Syrian, Jordanian, and Egyptian descent. In contrast, their darker counterparts were socially looked down upon as Blacks (Cainkar 2009; Haider 2020; Zopf 2018). Thus, the issue of conflating the Muslim ethno-racial identity with their religious identity in their inclusion and exclusion from the American mainstream carries historical significance, and is integral

to the contemporary contexts of US immigration.

The post-1965 Immigration Act, favoring high-skilled immigration, brought new waves of non-white immigrants from Latin America, Asia, and Africa (Chiswick 2011). Similar to the experiences of other immigrant groups, the ethnic complexities of South Asian and MENA immigrants were collapsed into three US. Census racial categories, i.e., Black, white, and Asian (Brunsma. 2005; Feliciano 2016; Kibria 2002; Lee and Been 2007). For the most part, Muslim immigrants lived their everyday lives against the backdrop of pre-9/11 orientalist othering. These othered experiences were fed by the unsettled politics between the Middle East and the West, playing out in US foreign policy around the Arab-Israeli conflict, Iran-Iraq war, and the Iranian hostage crisis (Said 1978; Cainkar 2009; Haider 2020). The politics of the Middle East also fueled negative Orientalist stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims across popular media representations as exotic, troublesome, greedy Sheikhs, savage Bedouins, desert bound, and evil jihadists, etc., emphasizing their outsider and othered status from the modern Western ways of life (McAlister 2005; Said 1978; Shaheen 1987, 2001; Terry 1983).

On the other hand, like their Asian and African counterparts, non-white Muslims were beneficiaries of demands for racial equality by the Civil Rights Movement, family reunification policies of the 1965 Immigration act, and employment-based sponsorship of the 1990 Immigration Act (Raana 2011; Lee 2015; Shams 2020). These systemic changes to immigration provided access to defined legal pathways to American citizenship. Moreover, their American acquired higher-skill sets often concentrated within STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Medicine) fields were valued by the capital-intensive labor markets and facilitated their upward economic mobility (Chen et al 2020;

Kausal and Fix 2006; Chiswick 2011; Prashad 2000). Consequently, over the past decades, there has been a large influx of Muslim immigrants from Iran, Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Kuwait, Bangladesh, and Saudi Arabia, arriving as doctors, engineers, lawyers, scientists, international students, and entrepreneurs (Haider 2018). Like their African counterparts, these non-white, high-skilled Muslim professionals became essential to the innovative prosperity of technologically superior Fortune 500 companies that rely on their highly-valued skill sets for their global economic expansion.

South Asian Muslims in particular benefitted from the "model minority," and 'good immigrant" tropes (Kibria 2002; Prashad 2000; Shams 2018). Their experiences were read to reaffirm meritocracy and winning the American dream through hyper-heroic work efforts. Thus, emerged a class of Muslim immigrant professionals integrated by virtue of their specialized skill sets in the capital-intensive American workforce, often becoming naturalized American citizens in the process. Their experiences demonstrate the interplay of race relations, US foreign policy, and, more recently, the political context of the WOT (Cainkar &Selod 2018; Haider 2018, 2020; Yazidah 2021). Their work experiences thus become an important site for studying contemporary Islamophobia.

3.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE RACIALIZED MUSLIM EXPERIENCE:

Scholars studying the contemporary Muslim immigrant experience use Omi and Winant's (1986, 1993, 2015) conceptualization of racial formation theory to demonstrate the criminalized understandings of the religious (Muslim) identities as the terrorist,

strategically marked by the Western political logics of the War on Terror era. Racial formation occurs over time through the processes of racialization, *"reflecting the changing meanings of race within different political, social, and economic contexts producing a more expansive and complex discussion of race*" (Selod and Embrick 2013:648). Race theories consider political contexts of racial formation as a sociocultural-historical process of constructing, oppressing, transforming, and destroying racial identities in service to ideological motivations of white supremacy (Barot and Bird 2001; Bonilla-Silva 2014; Fredrickson 2002; Goldberg 2015; Harris 1999; Omi and Winant 2015). These processes of racial othering function within systems of oppression, ensuring domination of one group (whites) over the rest (non-whites), and racialize the Islamic world and Muslim identities of both South Asian and MENA origin, regardless of their American citizenship status, within the political constructs of terrorism (Gans 2016; Goldberg 2015; Omi and Winant 2015; Selod 2015). Marked by their phenotypes, i.e., visible brown skin tones, accompanied by cultural and religious markers associated with Islam, i.e., hijab for women and beards for men, and established as threats to the Western and American way of life, the racialization of the Muslim and Arab communities overtly established Muslims as dangerous, evidenced by the surge of hate crimes targeting Muslim and Muslim-looking individuals (Zopf 2018).

Furthermore, these racialized processes are legitimatized by the CIA[70] and FBI[71] surveillance targeting Muslim identities in their private and public lives i.e., homes workplace, and airports (Selod 2015; Bayoumi 2006; Rana 2011). Recently evident in

[70] Central Intelligence Agency
[71] Federal Bureau of Investigation

forms of the recent travel bans aka Muslim ban, and reinforced by derogatory popular representations of the Muslim as the terrorist (Asultany 2007, 2012; Haider 2020; Shaheen 2001, 2008). These Islamophobic dispositions of the American mainstream racialize the Muslim immigrant experience and are crucial to conceptualizing how ethno-racially ambiguous–Muslim identities emerge from the contradiction between enormous class (educational and vocational) success and massively devalued ethno-religious identities. I examine how both overt and covert forms of Islamophobia woven in the politics of US immigration and reverberant across the American mainstream impact the lived experiences of South Asian Muslim professionals.

3.2.1 From the Racialized Muslim Perspective: Intersectional Analysis and the Master Status:

While intersectionality theory talks about mutually constitutive identities i.e., gender, race, class, and nation revealing systems of inequality and oppression (Collins 1998; Crenshaw 1991), the concept of master status signifies an exclusive identity defining a social experience (Hughes 1945; Becker 1963). For example, illegal immigrant status serves a master status that characterizes the basis of social and economic exclusion of undocumented youth immigrants from the American mainstream and dominates other attributes as in race, ethnicity and, gender, that are considered auxiliary in the individual's multiple identities (Gonzalez and Burciaga 2018). On the contrary, Valez and Golash-Boza (2020), are critical of looking at undocumented status superseding race, ethnicity, and gendered identities, and demonstrate that these identities serve as intersectional, shaping the sense of belonging and educational incorporation among undocumented college

students. Moreover, Perez (2020, 4) uses the concept of nested contexts of reception that looks at the "*nested*" relationships of the state immigration policies, and societal and structural receptiveness to undocumented immigration that assign changing meanings to the ethno-racial LatinX identities in contemporary contexts of US immigration. The South-Asian immigrant embodies immigrant advancement attributes i.e., language fluency, American citizenship status, and college level education (Pitkins and Myers 2011[72]) and face Islamophobic racism based on their religious identity, making their Muslim identities crucial to understanding their lived experience in light of the changing political contexts.

My study shows that Muslim immigrants exist in racialized contexts that treat their religious identity as a master status that constitutes a threat to Western national security. Thus, the social construction of the "terrorist" constitutes a master status that criminalizes the Muslim identity, and racially maps the intersectional dimensions of their cultural, gendered, and ethnic heritage as an extension of Islamic terrorism. These identities mark who belongs to and who is to be excluded from the nation state i.e., the United States (Selod 2015). The conception of Muslim identity as a master status helps us understand how ethno-racially visibly distinct desi looking South Asian identities experience their precarious ethno-racial membership as model minorities associated with their Asian American heritage (Kibria 2011; Rana 2011 Shams 2020). Moreover, bringing both the concepts of master status and intersectionality together unravels how ethno-racially complex-looking and criminalized Muslim identities experience Islamophobia in different

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realms of their lives, including their everyday interactions at airports, work environments, grocery stores, and schools, etc.

3.3 METHODOLOGY:

This research focuses on the 40 life history interviews with high-skilled Pakistani professionals, spread across different waves of immigration from 1965 to 2013, arriving as international students for undergraduate/ graduate studies and medical school, pursuing careers across STEM and non-STEM professions, experiencing upward economic mobility, and growing into families over the course of their lives. Using grounded theory methods, I draw upon narratives of the participants' life histories to depict the experience of high-skilled immigration from a non-white and Muslim perspective (Glaser and Strauss 1967), and to document the social, cultural, and ideological transformations occurring/having occurred in the lives of these immigrants since their arrival to US (Thomas & Znaneiecki 1927; McCall & Wittner 1990). I pay special attention to politics of the WOT on immigration policies that shapes the evolution of their transitory migrant status to permanent residency and their experiences with the naturalization citizenship process, emerging as first-generation Pakistani immigrants into the American mainstream. The participants in the study are spread across different incoming immigrant cohorts, and existing research from demographic perspectives on cohort effect demonstrates the differences across migrant experiences based on age groups and historical era (Ryder

1995)[73], I focus on the first-generation Pakistani immigrant experiences spread across different cohorts to understand the varied ways Islamophobia shapes diverse realms of their life: school, work, and public encounters since their time of arrival to the US.

3.3.1 Data collection:

I began the groundwork for the data collection in the fall of 2016, during the politically charged environment of President Trump's election campaign that often targeted non-white immigrant and Muslim identities and created intense uneasiness and fear among Muslim populations. Despite being an insider to the research population, my positionality as an academic in a predominantly white majority institution and an American-centric field, I was a socially an outsider to the broader Pakistani community. My activities were limited to participating in professional, academic, and cultural events focused on Muslims from South Asia and Middle East across the Boston area to locate the first-generation high-skilled Pakistani professionals I sought. These networking and social events helped establish connections, and I built upon the networks of my prospective participants to reach out to Pakistani professionals across the country.

This period didn't include data collection but was limited to building trust in the community, which was integral to a safe and secure data collection process. Word of mouth was most effective in finding respondents and generated a snowball sample of diverse Pakistani high-skilled immigrants scattered across thirteen states, but largely concentrated

[73] Ryder, Norman B. "The Cohort as a Concept in the Study of Social Change." *American Sociological Review* 30, no. 6 (1965): 843-61. Accessed March 26, 2021. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2090964.

in the tech hubs around Boston and Silicon Valley, CA. (Miles and Huberman, 1994). My positionality was advantageous in connecting with my respondents, who felt comfortable knowing our shared experiences of home and host societies. After pin pointing my focused population, I started the interviews in January 2017 after Presidents Trump's election to office and ending in September of the same year. The politically charged environment of the travel bans and heightened hostility towards immigrants is crucial to understanding the lived experiences of the participants in the study, whose religious identities were front and center of American politics at the time of data collection.

3.3.2 Interview guide and approach:

I developed a comprehensive interview guide framed around lives of respondents before, on arrival, and *in* their current experiences in the host culture. The interviews lasted between one and two hours depending upon the lived experiences of the participants. Due to the busy schedules of some respondents, I conducted their interview*s* across multiple meetings. I recorded the interviews and let the participants know when I began and ended the recording. Participants' real names have been replaced with pseudonyms to protect their identity. The interview style was informal and conversational so they could easily reflect on their lives in the US. All participants were bi-lingual and used both English and Urdu to narrate their experiences. As a native Urdu speaker, while transcribing, I translated the Urdu conversations to English.

3.3.2.1 Diversity across Participants Perspectives:

I ensure multiplicity across Pakistani immigrants living in the United States. I use a theoretical approach to include distinct voices of Pakistani immigrants meticulously selecting respondents from different ethnic backgrounds, age groups, professional interests, location, marital status, religious affiliations, political affiliations and year of arrival. The within group ethno-cultural distinctions are a reflection of the diversity of their country of origin, presenting unique insights to their aspirational stories that are crucial to understanding their decisions to pursue high-skilled professions and subsequently becoming American citizens.

3.3.3 Coding and Analysis:

I translated and transcribed the interviews in English and took notes on the interactions with the respondents. In particular, the notes kept track of the frustration and discomfort experienced by the participants while sharing their discriminatory experiences in the host society. I also noted at the time of the interview whether the respondents had visible religious signifiers—hijab for women and beard for men— that could contribute to their racialized Muslim identities in the host society. I rely on Miles and Hubermans' inductive approach to carry out data analysis that also informs my theoretical framework for the study (1994). After coding, I collated similar and conflicting patterns as the respondents described their ethno-racial and religious in the host society.

3.4 FINDINGS:

In this section, I present narratives of how my respondents Muslim identities functions as a master status shaping their everyday lived experiences under the social and political constructions of Islamic terrorism. I present a brief biographical context, positioning them within the dynamics of their intersectional identities encompassing their histories of immigration, their life course stage, gender identity, family structure, and changes to their ethno-racial cultural appearances. My respondents' point of view shows how they experience contradictions and adversity in their environment and how they respond. The eight episodes stretch across a) Islamophobia in the broader contexts of the American mainstream, b) Islamophobia at the work place, and c) experiencing Islamophobia through family.

3.4.1 Islamophobia in the broader contexts of the American mainstream

The participants use the events of 9/11 terror attacks to rationalize the rise of hate crimes and discriminatory incidents targeting their religious identity. I show that their Muslim identity functions as a master status to the ethno-racial, gendered, and cultural visibilities around their Pakistani identities subjecting them to both overt and covert forms of Islamophobic conditions in the American mainstream. Existing research on Muslim immigrant experience of South Asian and MENA origins demonstrates that Muslim men are more likely to experience racist incidents targeting their religious identities, while women wearing visible religious markers as in hijab are subjected to hate crimes (Selod and Embrick; add one. more). This study adds nuances to these earlier findings, and shows

that brown Muslim women at the intersections of their multiple identities i.e., immigrant, gendered, cultural, and ethno-racial status are as likely to be a target of Islamophobia. The visibility of South Asian cultural markers i.e., colorful long shirts also referred to as kameez/ kurta in respondents native language Urdu, along with their brown skin tones ensure their outsider status to the American experience. I show that Pakistani women in this study are as likely as their male counterparts to experience overt and covert Islamophobic incidents both in their professional and personal lives. Thus, their gendered experiences are further underlined by the presence of both cultural and religious markers bolstering their master status i.e., Muslim identity within the logics of Islamic terrorism. Also, highlighting that in post-9/11 and Trumps contexts, the intersectional identities of South Asian, brown, Muslim women put them at risk of Islamophobic contexts. Thus, the absence of religious signifiers doesn't absolve them of their Muslimness but their intersectional ethno-racial and cultural visibilities are underlined by the social constructions of terrorism surrounding their Muslim. Thus, making their gendered Muslim identities equally as threatening to the American contexts. Moreover, as I elaborate further on the experiences of Muslim professional immigrants, I show that Pakistani men working in tech bubbles often populated with diverse East Asian, South Asian, African and European immigrants of transnational backgrounds are less likely to experience Islamophobia in their work spaces as compared to women.

I present the case of Ms. B for the former that presents insights on both overt and covert forms of Islamophobia.

i) Ms. B. 35-year-old- female, business, professional:

Ms. B was a 35-year-old single woman, and had arrived to the US for her graduate studies in her business centered field. She graduated in 2008 and landed a job in a mid-size

firm as a consultant. Her employer sponsored her work permit, leading to her permanent resident status aka. green card in 2016, and she was in the process of receiving her citizenship in the near future. I met Ms. B in 2017, when she had recently left her consultancy work and was focused on pursing her work on peace activism full-time. Her social circle comprised of a racially diverse set of friends including Pakistani and close white American girlfriends, reflecting her multi-cultural and racially diverse social experiences. She preferred to speak English during the interview, and had a neutral accent with hints of American enunciation illustrating the past nine years of her life in the USA.

Ms. B, like her immigrant counterparts, experienced a precarious immigration status and was subjected to scrutiny targeting her Muslim identity and national heritage. Ms. B's fear of not getting a visa to travel back to the US-imposed her decision to not travel outside of the US until she received her permanent resident status. Over the years, her immigration status transitioned from F1-student visa to OPT (optimal training permit) allowing her to temporarily work for her employer, who sponsored her H1-B work permit that was renewed twice before she received her green card recently. Though she was always in touch with her family in Pakistan, she visited them 8 years after her arrival to the US. Moreover, the politics in Pakistan impacted by the War on Terror, and unpredictable suicide bombings in her home town also contributed to Ms. B's worries of going home. She was also unsure about economic prospects in her home town, so despite of her desire of "*going back home*", the economic instability and political precariousness of her country of origin tipped the balance against her travel. Thus, the politics of the WOT era engulfing her country-of-origin and her new home country to be i.e., the United States, shaped her decisions of not going home and immigration experiences, and like her counterparts she

travelled widely and frequently inside the US for both personal and professional reasons.

Throughout our interview, Ms. B recognized that her visual appearance in a headscarf shaped her experiences of her ethno-racially othered Muslim identity

"it was early 2007, someone on the street shouted at me, "Get out of my country you piece of shit!" and I started walking faster. But travelling with head scarfs is even more problematic, "I always get screened at the airport and get a pat down. I was travelling with my roommate, who is a white, and her experiences are normal, but I always get stopped for special screening. Also, TSA agents are not relaxed in Boston and NYC, and in Chicago and DC, they are different. What is funny is that I know they are doing it because I wear a head-scarf so I noticed that when I am wearing a woolen hat in the winter instead of the scarf, I don't get a pat down!"

She chuckled and added:

"I have experimented with hats and head scarves while travelling and head scarf always get me a pat down., I didn't know if they will treat hat differently but people react different, be it a bike ride, or when I am walking with a hat vs. a ***head****scarf. Their body language is different, I can't believe that it's because I am not wearing a head scarf, it's still me..."*

After 9/11 and in light of the recent travel bans, there has been a rise of hate crimes targeting Muslim women wearing headscarves, often of South- Asian and MENA descent. Ms. B's experiences demonstrate the variety of settings in which she encounters the Islamophobia that insists on viewing her as a potential terrorist. She is exposed to both threatening and non-threatening situations in forms of micro-aggressions that target her ethno-religious identities. These experiences are beyond the racial surveillance of her religious identities at the airport which overtly targets her Muslim identity established by her head scarf. She is aware of the perceptions around her religious identity and experiments with a woolen hat, and finds stark differences in her everyday interaction. She is cognizant to how people respond differently in both the absence and presence of the head scarf, and is perplexed that even though she is still the same, the perceptions around her

change, both her non-white and immigrant identit~~i~~es expose her to anti-immigrant sentiments.

Moreover, Ms. B alludes to her experience with TSA officials. She notes a distinction between her treatment from the Boston and NYC TSA officials versus the ones in Chicago and DC. Her observations across the cities aligns with terror attacks that occurred in Boston during the Boston Marathon in 2013, and sporadic terrorist threats in NYC followed by the 9/11 terror attacks, demanding that TSA agents be more alert around travelling Muslims, while Chicago and DC's agents were more relaxed.

The political contexts around her Muslim identities greatly shape her experiences as evident in her most recent Islamophobic incident in light of the travel ban. Despite experimenting with different styles of covering her head, and using a hat at the airport relieved her from additional surveillance in forms of a pat down. She was not exempted from Islamophobic remarks of the white man while wearing a hat at a travel ban protest. She added:

> *"Recently, around the time of the travel bans protest, and it was cold, and I was wearing a hat, one person was like "fuck Muslims" it was a white poor working-class man, I am non-white and an immigrant, I am an easy target. Some people are good at hiding it, my friend noticed and people stare at you awkwardly when we were visiting a place (North East), sometimes it's just curiosity and they stare at u and if they strike a random conversation out of curiosity then they always ask why do wear the head scarf, and I respond that I wanted to wear it and decided to wear it after 19 (age) and it is not the most important thing about me there is more to me than the head scarf and they don't know what to do with that answer"*

The white man is explicit in his sentiments "*fuck Muslims*" on seeing her and his sentiments are parallel to the political rhetoric during Presidents Trump's Presidential campaign and his executive order of the travel ~~bas~~ ban that targeted Muslims. *His conduct* legitimized the rise in hate crimes against Muslims around the country. Ms. B had recently

taken off the head scarf, and mentioned that she was adjusting to taking it off, and would sometimes wear it. Her decision was based on the rampant and rising Islamophobia in the country.

Ms. B was very proud of her accomplishments, and her life in the US, as an independent soon to be an American citizen. But her lived experienced located at the intersections of her complex identities are underlined by her Muslim master status and her ethno-racial identities within the constructs of the WOT era.

ii) ***Mrs. N, 53 years old, female:*** (now a stay-at-home mom, but worked in the field of social sciences for a decade, and left her job to raise her children).

Mrs. N arrived in the US in 1988, to pursue her undergraduate education in a renowned institution in the North East. Unlike the experiences of earlier waves from Pakistan, Mrs. N's acculturation into the US society was facilitated by the presence of already prevalent Pakistanis and Pakistani organizations in the city. Her school had established the first Pakistani student organization in the region, bringing Pakistani students and professionals together from across the city, and creating a sense of community for new comers. While she was studying, she met her now husband at one of such events, who was American born of Pakistani decent, and pursing his studies at a local medical school. She graduated in 1992 and was unable to find a job due to the recession at that time. She decided to pursue her graduate education in the UK, and moved back to the US in 1993 after marrying her American born Pakistani husband. Mrs. N received her citizenship in 2000, noting "*it took a really long time."* Her family moved across the US. because of her husband's work, and the necessary updating of her address for the Department of Homeland Security, resulted in delays in her citizenship.

On arrival to her school, Mrs. N was shocked at the diversity in her school, "*I expected*

to be studying with blue eyed blonde looking Americans, but there were so many Chinese, Indians, and a few Pakistanis in the program. It was a very multi-cultural environment."

This diverse environment was due to the specific area of her social science related field that attracted international students. These diverse transnational environments were also a common occurrence for Pakistani immigrants in STEM fields who arrived from the 80's onwards, exposing them to multi-cultural experiences through their academic programs and work environments. These histories reflect the expansion of the American mainstream that included non-white immigrants from privileged and high-skilled backgrounds fueled by the liberalization of immigration policies and the capital-intensive market conditions of the US economy that valued high-skilled labor.

Mrs. N's life in her city X after her marriage revolved around her job as a consultant at an academic institution. Her social circle included young American and Pakistani professionals while her husband pursued his career in the Medical profession. It was after the birth of her second child that she decided to become a stay-at-home mom, but stayed very active in fields of arts and culture that she felt most passionate about. The family relocated to the West coast in a white suburban neighborhood and it was after the September 11 attacks that she became cognizant of her ethno-racial Pakistani identity.

"I remember I once was running a quick errand at the post office, casually dressed wearing shalwar kameez, and I had both my kids with me, they were both very young at that time and one of them could not stop crying. So, I was trying to calm him down and I spoke in Urdu to my toddler son. The white lady at the post office looked at me in a fierce manner and said if you can't control your kids you should just leave. I felt hurt, I stopped speaking Urdu in public after that, and nothing has ever happened since then."

Mrs. N was aware of the perceptions around her ethno-racial Muslim identity after the 9/11 attacks. She didn't wear a head scarf but the intersectional interplay of her identities, visible through her gendered, distinctive brown appearance supplemented by her Pakistani

clothes, established her otherness even though her Muslim identity did not explicitly come into play. Her immigrant and cultural identities establish her ethno-racial Muslim otherness in the political contexts of the aftermath of 9/11. She recalled that her experience at the post office left her frazzled and vulnerable, and served as a cautionary tale for years to come and she knew that in order to avoid such incidents she needed to keep her identities under wraps. Moreover, she adapted to the Islamophobic contexts and never spoke Urdu in public and dressed in regular American clothes to avoid any more disconcerting experiences.

Upon inquiring about her experience at the airport, she mentioned that while she had been mostly okay

"my daughter who was 9 years old would always get SSSS, and my husband always gets randomly selected, and he gives his business card to security officers, we had to contact the DHS to get our daughter off the list"

Getting Secondary Security Screening Selectee SSSS on a boarding pass was a common experience for most of my male respondents and women who wore a head scarf. Moreover, respondents with popular Muslim names or names that were similar to the names of terrorists were also subjected to secondary security checks.

Mrs. N's husband shared his medical professional card with the TSA officials to prove their non-threatening good immigrant identity. They were finally able to get their daughter off the SSSS list, but Mrs. N was very puzzled by the racial surveillance of her 9-year-old daughter, *"who was a minor and even her name is not that popular."*

She alluded to the San-Bernardino events and mentioned an incident that invoked her Muslim identity as:

"*there was an old German couple in my ceramic class, probably they were 80 or something, and they were generalizing Muslims as bad, and they didn't realize that I am also Muslim, and when I mentioned that I am Muslim, the whole conversation got awkward*

and they said "but you don't cover your head?" But I had been fasting in front of them, and they didn't register before that I am Muslim."

To Mrs. N, *her fasting was an obvious mark of Muslim* identity (heightened by the accented English she spoke) and she was surprised that people failed to pay attention because of the absence of religious markers. She mentioned that she didn't realize at that time that the German couple was being Islamophobic to her also. It was only when she recalled the incident later that she felt that they were also talking about her. The subtleties of covert Islamophobia were a common element in Mrs. N's life.

3.4.2 Islamophobia at the work place

My respondents' experiences of Islamophobic incidents at their work places illustrate the relationship of race, religion and class across different time periods. They include narratives of those who arrived closer to or after the 9/11 terror attacks, and older high-skilled participants who arrived in the earlier waves of migration from Pakistani, post 1965 immigration. These experiences at the workplace reflect the multiple dimensions of how high-skilled Pakistani Americans are made aware of their religiously othered Muslim identities, part of a larger racialized Muslim constructs underlined by the Islamophobic prejudices of the American mainstream. While being aware of the controversies surrounding their national and religious identities in both global and local contexts, I show that the response of Pakistani immigrants is deeply impacted by their understandings of their non-white and Muslim identities and their rights as American citizens.

As a political consequence of the WOT era, Pakistani immigrants experienced visibility around their Muslim and national identities and were subjected to CIA and FBI surveillance

regardless of their citizenship status (reference). These experiences are further inflected by their temporary or permanent immigration status contingent on employment or family sponsorship, impacted by political changes in US immigration. Additionally, those at the cusp of these changes, right after the 9/11 terror attacks, regardless of their gendered identities, experienced longer wait times, and cumbersome issues as they transitioned from H1-B work permits (temporary) to citizenship status (permanent).

issues as they transitioned from H1-B work permits (temporary) to citizenship status (permanent).

iii) Mrs. T: 36-Year-Old – Female, STEM Professional:

Mrs. T came to the US in 2003 and settled with her husband, a tech professional from Pakistan, in the West Coast. She enrolled in graduate studies that lead to a career in the tech industry; meanwhile she also had two daughters, and she and her husband shared domestic responsibilities while pursuing their tech professions. Unlike the older participants in the study, Mrs. T arrived to the US after the September 11 terror attacks, and rampant Islamophobia was her introduction of the American mainstream. She and her husband went through rigorous security checks at airports, subjected to racial surveillance by the FBI, cumbersome immigration processes from the Department of Homeland Security targeting their Muslim identities, and finally became naturalized citizens in 2016. Mrs. T's lived experiences demonstrate how her Muslim identity functions as a master status, shaping her experiences at the airport, professional spaces, and broader contexts of the American society. Her life story in the US is marked by this juxtaposition of Islamophobia and opportunity.

She has advanced greatly in her career while constantly facing challenges surrounding her complex and intersectional identities. Though she doesn't wear a headscarf

or any other religious or cultural marker, she has often been a target of anti-Muslim hate speech. However, she conceptualize*s* these experiences not *as* traumatic, but as part of reaction of the American society to 9/11. She alluded to her tech industry as a diverse space maintaining a multicultural environment including immigrants from Eastern Europeans, Indians, Asians, and Pakistanis that were equally shocked by the events and who helped to insulate–her and her husband from the trauma of post-9/11 events. These multicultural practices of the tech field resonate with the experiences of older immigrants (men and women) in the study, whose work places sheltered them from rampant Islamophobia.

Mrs. T talked about how she and her husband's last name were one of the reasons that they were subjected to racial hyper-surveillance during immigration processes and were also subjected to special screenings while travelling. She mentioned that similar to the experience of other Pakistanis in her community, she and her husband had been interviewed by FBI twice, and when they came to her house for the second time, she jokingly asked

"hey listen did you forget that you interviewed us already, don't you have a data base that has our name? The FBI agent left us a card and told them to get in touch with him personally if they were subjected to any further screening or questioning"

She dealt with her religiously othered experiences as part of being an outsider to the host culture as both Muslim and Pakistani immigrant. While talking about these incidents she acknowledged that it's just how things were:

"*You just went through this without giving it more thought but in retrospect they were troubling times for the community, and at that point we took it as a friendly fire and not hostile but it's a big deal when FBI comes to your house though."*

Mrs. T acknowledged that looking back at all this now, she would not have known what to do if the agents had taken her husband away for more questioning, and she went

along with the flow of the things that targeted their ethno-racial Muslim identity. She recalled one incident that deeply shook her to the core:

"Before I got my green card, I was working at a tech company X, and I found out a disgruntled male colleague had filed a complaint to HR about me for being a terrorist and that I had terrorist connections. This was really shocking; my company informed me afterwards and I didn't know that I was under investigation by HR and the Department of Homeland Security. The Vice-President of the company called me personally and shared the details of the events, and showed me all the letters regarding the investigation, and they found nothing, of course, but I just didn't know all this was going on without my knowledge. Everything was fine, but I remember when the workday ended, I cried in the car and couldn't believe that people could be so menacing to each other. I cried a lot, but then I realized that this had nothing to do with me, it was not personal but that these people were misinformed about our religious and Pakistani contexts"

She talked about how difficult this was for her, and after that she became actively involved in local politics calling her senators and local representative to help fight the misconceptions surrounding the Muslim identities. She acknowledged that regardless of her personal religious inclinations she will always be perceived as a brown Pakistani Muslim woman. Moreover, she mentioned that she is now aware of her rights as an American citizen and appreciated the freedom she had in the United States that enabled her to grow both professionally and personally. It is important to note that *in* the post-9/11 contexts many others like Mrs. T didn't resist the interrogations and hyper surveillance despite their innocence, and conceptualized these encounters as a reaction to the September 11 attacks.

Mrs. T's experiences are similar to the experiences of other women who arrived after 9/11 and were subjected to Islamophobic interactions at the work place by other male and often white male colleagues, regardless of their STEM or non-STEM focus. The absence of religious signifiers and cultural markers did not protect them for being subjects of hate crimes and covert Islamophobia, but the presence of these markers greatly increased

the likelihood that Pakistani Muslim women would experience hostility in their everyday life.

iv) <u>Mr. Y – 32-year-old, male business professional:</u>

Mr. Y arrived in the United States in 2003 as an 18-year-old, and went to a small liberal arts college on the East coast. He enjoyed his liberal life in the United States and as a successful business professional in his day job, he pursued his passion for music collaborating with local American and non- American artists. Despite his agnostic religious beliefs, Mr. Y's brown skin tone and stubble, established his perceived Muslim identity as a master status, reinforcing his ethno-racial otherness in the host culture, and subjecting him to Islamophobia in his personal and professional life

Mr. Y recalled that he didn't experience anything problematic regarding his Muslim identity during his under-graduate life and was protected in his mostly white American social circle. But he was used to the surveillance at the airport. He was a brown Muslim man from Pakistan, and was mindful of the political contexts surrounding his identities and expected to be "*randomly selected"* at the airports. Moreover, Mr. Y came to the US after 9/11 and had experienced immigration delays regarding his student visa before his arrival. In his view his young male identity was prone to surveillance at the airports. He expected me, an insider to his ethnic background to know and understand these underlying themes of his life.

Mr. Y valued his freedom in the United States and realized that he needed a lucrative job to stay in the country, and pursued a career in business to ensure his employment prospects. He pursued a graduate program that was paid by his fortune 500 firm that also sponsored his work permit as he transitioned from student visa to work H1B employment. However, Mr. Y mentioned that he was working all the time and barely got

any sleep and it was his "*unsustainable life style"* that made him switch his job. This impacted his permanent residency prospects and as a high-skilled migrant Mr. Y felt precarious about his immigration status until he received his green card in 2015 after marrying his long standing Asian American girl friend of two years.

He shared incidents that represented the worst of his ethno-racial experiences in the American mainstream Mr. Y recalled:

"Once, I was visiting a client in Florida with my work colleagues and we were working till 11 pm and were on our way back, and this white trash dude came up to me and started making personal attacks on me, he made reference to me as a terrorist, I was felt shocked and hurt that people have the capacity to be so mean .. I was 22 at that time"

He recalled another incident "*Another guy once made a joke that I have a bomb, he was drunk. I took this as an assault to a much lesser degree, but I avoid problematic places in my city x for safety reasons and my conception of the self is much more powerful now"*

The incident in Florida as a young adult was deeply hurtful and unexpected to him and as he had grown older, he had understood the complexities of the United States and also gained an understanding of his self. He considered himself to be more cognizant in recognizing and stronger in responding to the negative evaluations surrounding his ethno-racial Muslim identity. He was explicit about not being a practicing Muslim and identified as a Pakistani.

Mr. Y had grown from a young under-graduate to a 32-year-old man in the political contexts that treated his ethno-racial and religious identity as a threat, and though he protected himself by carefully selecting spaces that minimized his exposure to blatant Islamophobia, he was aware of the social constructions surrounding his identities. Moreover, he deliberated: "*Trump is a symptom of long-standing racial violence in this country".*

Mr. Y's lived experiences and duration of stay in the US enabled him to understand

the political, racial, and economic landscape of the country providing a deeper understanding of his life as a Pakistani in the US. Furthermore, he felt a stronger sense of belonging to the U.S, context and found his sense of self as an aspiring musician and finance professional, despite the rampant Islamophobia in his professional life.

Mr. Y's life was deeply impacted by the immigration process that rested on his employer and his managerial staff's good will so he could be considered for his green card and permanent residency. He went through extremely stressful times due to the unpredictability of the process and came across numerous exploitative incidents from his boss due to his transitory immigration status. Moreover, as a young graduate in 2008 he was impacted by the recession and felt his immigration status in peril. He was lucky enough to keep his job and put in extra work to make sure he was indispensable but also felt the burn out of his profession. He eventually switched jobs and though he was able to create a work-life balance, his temporary immigrant status put him in precarious situations and he found the process extremely stressful.

"The stress of being an immigrant and the process of getting a green card has been the most difficult thing and psychologically very very challenging. My boss I think was racist, and she put me through unimaginable stress, when my work permit was being sponsored, it was emotionally debilitating, I didn't know what to do, like my life was here, I didn't fit in Pakistan anymore."

Mr. Y went through rigorous immigration process. He didn't say whether the delays to his work permits were due to his Muslim identity. But he experienced stressful conditions at the work place and his boss as he calls "*racist*" subjected him to precarious conditions that could have put his work sponsorship in jeopardy. Moreover, he alludes to his identity and state of belonging. Despite his Pakistani identity, he had lived a large chunk of his life in American society and he felt more at home here than back in his country

of origin. Mr. Y was a long way from acquiring American citizenship and felt more proximate to his new destination despite the problematic perceptions surrounding his identities and the grueling immigration system. Similar to Mr. Y's stressful experience with immigration processes, other participants who also arrived closer to or after the 9/11 terror attacks and during WOT era and who received their green card through work sponsorship, shared their anguish around their precarious migratory status, and the fear of becoming illegal in the United States.

v) Ms. B. 35-year-old- female, business, professional:

I mentioned Ms. B's lived experiences earlier. As a professional young woman, she was subjected to several Islamophobic instances at the work place:

"My co-workers were very prejudiced. Even though, I did huge projects they assumed that because I am Muslim, I can't even speak English, but my clients really liked my work and they always respected me for my work and my expertise but my co-workers just couldn't get over their prejudices"

Ms. B wore a head scarf during that time, and she work for company X, that also sponsored her work visa leading to her permanent residency and she mentioned that she experienced difficulties with her co-workers for being Muslim. Moreover, despite her professional recognition from her clients, and her work on "*huge projects",* she was unable to debunk their stereotypes that Muslims can't speak English. When I asked her about her working relationship with her boss, and whether that impacted her immigration process. She mentioned:

"*Bosses –oh I was very lucky to find good bosses; one was and originally from Brazil, immigrant like us, and the second one was an older white male second one pushed for my H1-B, and then I had a female boss, who also helped. They were wonderful"*

Contrary to the harsh immigration sponsorship experiences of Mr. Y and many of the Pakistani professionals in the study, Ms. B's had a smooth immigration experience of

employment sponsorship and was grateful to both her bosses at her company for helping her with the process. The immigrant heritage of her Brazilian boss and the good will of her American white boss both facilitated her sponsorship, demonstrating a variety of American professional contexts that rewarded her hard work versus being focused on negative interpretations of her complex identities.

vi) Professor Z: 64-year-old –female retired academic:

Professor Z arrived to the US long before 9/11, to pursue her graduate education in 1976, and was among the initial waves of non-white, high-skilled immigrants from Pakistan to the US. Her life experiences reflect changes to the perceptions around her ethno-racial and religious identities in the American mainstream before and after the events of the September 11 terror attacks. Embodying exotic looking light and dark brown skin tones, and shared desi South Asian cultural heritage, Pakistani immigrants fewer in number and scattered across the US, were not marked as a global terror threat until after 9/11, and were type-cast–as politically docile and hard-working immigrants like their Asian counterparts, while retaining their foreign status to the American mainstream (Kaalra 2009). Moreover, South Asian immigrants were often victims of hate crimes for their distinct heritage, especially Indian hindu women red dot say (ADD ref). My older respondents experienced ethno-racial othering but were not victims of any hate crime in pre-9/11 contexts.

Professor Z described herself as a rebel, who wanted to pursue her academic interests rather than choosing a traditional life of finding a spouse and getting married, a common life trajectory of South Asian women of her generation. She graduated with a PhD from a renowned institution in the Midwest and pursued her academic career in the East coast. She had a lighter skin tone, not an uncommon phenotype among Pakistanis, spoke fluent

unaccented English, and embraced her ethnic heritage visibly, often wearing her cultural wraps and Pakistani shirts in her everyday life.

While talking about how her life had changed after the September 11 attacks, she reflected on her pre-9/11 experiences. She talked about how Americans were oblivious to her country of origin. Like her South Asian counterparts, her ethno-racially ambiguous phenotypes seemed obscure, mysterious to the American mainstream. Often when she told people that she was from Pakistan, they often replied, "*you mean Boston!"* "*Nobody knew where Pakistan was*"

Like Professor Z, the older respondents in the study echoed similar sentiments about their unknown origins to the American *audience* in pre-9/11 America. When I asked her about how her life had changed after 9/11, she recalled, she was shocked how she her immigrant and Muslim status was subjected to hateful slurs.

"*Well, my husband and other people told me not to wear Pakistani clothes and I said no, I can't live in fear all the time and I will wear whatever I want. So, one day I was walking from my apartment to campus and I was wearing a Pakistani kurta (shirt) and someone shouted at me "go back to your home and I replied, "I would love to but I am late for class". Someone once threw stones at me. Islamophobia was quite rampant."*

This particular incident occurred at a renowned academic institution on the East coast. Her ethno-racial identity is visibly apparent through her distinctive dress. While she doesn't wear a head scarf, the shirt's presence is an embodiment of her outsider and threatening status. She is calm in how she responds to the person, but she is personally aware that she is being subjected to hateful slurs because of rampant Islamophobia. Professor Z consistently came across Islamophobic incidents challenging her Muslim identity, visibly identified by her Pakistani clothes.

Professor Z recalled 9/11 as a worrisome and fearful time for Muslims. She shared

that she was in place X, a remote location, and received a phone call from a relative from Pakistan, who couldn't find their son who worked close to the World Trade Center. She was eventually able to track him down but elaborated on the rise of Islamophobia and how having a Muslim name was extremely problematic in post-9/11 contexts.

Her experiences illustrated that after the September 11 terror attacks, the rise of Islamophobia was evident in her personal life and in the lives of other Muslims around her. She experiences a distinct difference: once oblivious and invisible to the American contexts, her present day ethno-racial Muslim visibilities are linked to the after-math of 9/11 terror attacks.

vii) **Dr. P: 56-years old – male, medical professional**

I present the case of Dr. P a successful medical professional belonging to the earlier waves of immigrants from Pakistan. His transitions of life from a newly arrived male, Brown immigrant 25-year-old struggling and sleep deprived doctor in the US, to a 56-year-old renowned Pakistani American surgeon, illustrate the complex relationship of his upwardly ~~class~~ mobile trajectory and his problematic Muslim identity that becomes visible after the 9/11 terror attacks.

Due to their hyper-selective educational backgrounds, Pakistani immigrants experience upward mobility in the STEM-related labor market. In this they resemble other Asians who benefit from colorblind ideologies about immigrant success and the American dream (). However, the success is limited and again, like their Asian American counterparts, they are often stuck in middle management unable to break glass ceilings. Worse, they are at risk of exploitation due to their employer's power to grant or withhold support for their work visa and green card applications. Some, competing for economic and professional advancement previously reserved for Anglo-Americans, decide to set up

their own businesses even knowing the potential costs in clients or credit ratings of their distinct ethno-racial immigrant identities. Several of my respondents became entrepreneurs, owning small to mid-scale size businesses, creating employment prospects for Americans and reinforcing capitalist systems.

Early on in my data collection process, I found that the medical profession was a popular field among earlier waves of Pakistani immigrants. Realizing the inequitable conditions of the labor market, they had carved out lucrative careers for themselves by establishing their own medical practices, contributing to their local communities, and setting up networks and organizations like Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America, helping incoming medical professionals from Pakistan in their professional and personal lives. Moreover, these medical professionals had on-going connections to Pakistan serving under-privileged communities and providing their specialized expertise to anyone who needed care.These transnational connections extended to low-income countries across Latin America, helping provide medical care and assisting other doctors in their home-country endeavors.

Dr. P had arrived to the US in 1986 as a 25-year-old single doctor. After qualifying his US Medical License exam, he pursued multiple fellowships in his specialized field. At the end of his second fellowship, he dated a white American woman nurse and they were married after a year and eventually had children. He worked 90 to 120 hours a week and realized very early on that this was necessary for his success, making him very competitive and sought-after in his medical profession. This work ethic is common among most first-generation professionals who were trying to establish their roots in the foreign land. Dr. P was aware of his immigrant and outsider status and decided to open his own practice in a

small town in a Southern State. When I asked him why, He said, "*I didn't want some community college white dude telling me what to do, so I decided to open my own practice*."

Dr. P was long aware of this immigrant and othered non-white identity. This recognition was particularly acute for Pakistani professionals, visiting or living in the Southern parts of the US. Regardless of gender or occupation (STEM vs. non-STEM professions), all felt hostile sentiments. These findings are not surprising but illuminate racist pre-dispositions of Southern contexts since the time of slavery.

Dr. P recalled the September 11 attacks as a problematic time for him and the Pakistani community in the area that was subjected to frequent FBI and CIA investigations. *"We were hit hard.*" He lost a lot of his patients, one patient personally called his office to say "*I love Dr. P, but I can't be his patient anymore"*. This was similar to the experience of other medical professionals in the study who reported a surge in Islamophobic incidents targeting their Muslim identities.

At the time of 9/11 terror attacks, Dr. P was away with his children in DC and was staying at a hotel a few miles away from the pentagon that was hit by the third plane.

"*My ex-wife called and started shouting what the hell did you people do? Where are my children? I didn't know what was going on, I was helping my children with their homework and I turned on the television and we were all shocked"*

The experience was both shocking and excruciating for him and his children. The terror attacks of 9/11 were conducted by Muslims of Saudi, Lebanese, Egyptian, and Emirati origin. Despite Dr. P's Pakistani origin, his Muslim identity is central to the political constructions of a threatening Muslim identity. Moreover, Dr. P faced excruciating treatment during his divorce proceedings in the same time period that criminalized his religious.

Similar to Prof. Z., Dr. P feels the shared criminalization of his Muslim identity with the experiences of other Muslims and became very active in his community to fight the constructs of Islamic terrorism surrounding his religious identity. Dr. P worked closely with the Pakistani medical community across the Association of Physicians of Pakistani Decent in North America to fight the terrorist stereotypes surrounding Muslim identity. He also worked closely with inter-faith groups and the local authorities to fight the rise in anti-Muslim sentiment and help clarify any suspicions.

3.4.3 Experiencing Islamophobia through family

Gender identities and gendered roles are also integral to understanding the South Asian Pakistani immigrant experience. The earlier high-skilled cohorts of non-white immigrants were predominantly men due to the cultural, social, and economic advantages associated with the patriarchal traditions of Asian societies ().These gendered and class inequalities in the earlier waves of high-skilled Pakistani immigrants, allowed men to pursue their professional and intellectual interests across the West, regardless of their marital status, Only a handful of single women professionals, like Professor Z, belonging to upper and liberal echelons of Pakistani society pursued higher education in the West, unlike to women of her generation that pursued their educational and professional ambitions in Pakistani only, and came to the US as trailing wives of Professional Pakistani men. Giving rise to socially ascribed gendered roles among earlier cohorts; men were the major income providers pursuing careers driven by the capital-intensive markets, while women performed domestic functions. Unlike men, these women engaged widely with a variety of elements of the everyday American life, for example shopping for groceries, dropping

children to school and social activities, and interacting with neighbors etc. Thus, the trailing wives often had more interaction with the American racial landscape outside the neo-liberal economic contexts of the work place that sheltered their husband's lives. I present below the lived experiences of Uncle X who experiences his racialized Muslim identity through the events in his family.

viii) **Uncle X: 66-year-old – Male, Retired Tech Professional**

Uncle X was 66 years old at the time of the interview, and had lived more than half of his life in the United States. His wife currently works, while he does part time consulting as a retired professional. While describing his life in the United States he alluded to his family's experiences as enlarging his understanding of American race relations in post 9/11 Islamophobic contexts.

He came to US in 1974 as an international student to pursue his Doctoral Studies in a STEM focused field at a renowned institution in the East coast. He was married within a few years of arrival to a Pakistani woman who arrived to the US as his young bride; they raised three children together and are now grandparents. He excelled in his career, being part of a team of pioneers that developed advanced technology. Uncle X and his wife experienced upward economic mobility and became homeowners. They chose a residential location that offered the best schools in the city. He was the breadwinner of his family, and though he shared domestic responsibilities, his wife was primarily responsible for raising their children, while also pursuing part time jobs.

In his initial years, he recalled only a handful of Pakistani individuals in his university and in the city. Moreover, he recalled the racially charged contexts of his city and the unjust treatment of African Americans. But as a new immigrant and a graduate

student, Uncle X worked around the clock to finish his doctoral program, devoted to research projects that demanded all his energy and time. He was aware of his non-white identity but found a nourishing multi-cultural environment among fellow academics who welcomed him and his new wife into their lives.

His contexts of reception revolving around academic life was crucial to his introduction into the American mainstream. While he talked about the challenges of raising his children in the American culture and the effort of trying to maintain their ethno-cultural and religious traditions, his life as an immigrant and an outsider revolved around his professional aspirations and his groundbreaking role in technological innovation. Moreover, he was appreciative of his friends from different background***s***. He and his wife were pioneers for establishing an Islamic community center to maintain and transfer their religious and ethno-cultural traditions to their children

He recalled the September 11 attacks as an extremely troubling time for his family. While he was unscathed by the rise of Islamophobia, he talked about the disturbing incidents that his family experienced that shook him to the core. Moreover, it was then that he realized his outsider status to the American mainstream more than ever before and how their lives as Muslims had changed for the worse.

"I still remember, I was at work and it was 1 pm, and I saw the 9/11 attacks online inside my office. I was shocked and opened the door and my office was empty, everybody had gone home. I also went straight home, that day schools had also shut down early. So the next day I came back to work and everyone was fine with me. But when I got home my wife told me about my son's *disturbing day. My son who was in grade 10th was bullied in school, and kids… you know they are honest, they don't hide feelings, so these young boys bullied my son and used filthy language at my son and said to him what the hell did you do in New York. My son came home went straight into his room and didn't talk to my wife and after a few minutes called her inside the room. She saw him crying and shaken by his incident. So my wife calmed him down and we talked about it at night. We were very shocked because this was the first time and after taking advise from my Jewish Professor, we decided to talk the principal. Talking to the school's principal was very helpful but the*

boys who had bullied by son somehow found out and harassed my son again."

Similarly, we found out about an incident about our daughter from our friends. My youngest daughter who was in class 3 at that time and in her sharing circle she said "I am afraid that since my father runs the Islamic center, they will take him away" Can you imagine my daughter who was in grade 3 was so worried. Also, let me tell you what happened to my wife. So recently after 9/11 at her retail place, she was helping customers and this couple a husband and wife, the husband couldn't talk so he was using a board to write to communicate with her. So, as his wife was trying out the dress, my wife was talking to him and she told him that she was from Pakistan and a Muslim. So as soon as she said that to him, he wrote on the board "I hate Muslims" and they both immediately left, leaving my wife shocked. Somebody also spit on my middle daughter when she was on the train. Things changed and they have experienced a lot of these disturbing incidents. I on the other hand have never experienced anything

Uncle X uses the events of 9/11 terror attacks to mark the criminalization of the Muslim identity. While he is aware of the political contexts surrounding his religious identity, he is personally impacted by these negative constructs through the experiences of his wife and children. It is important to note that he recalls the incident terror attacks. Moreover, he doesn't mention any interaction with his work colleagues on the day of and the day after the catastrophe. While his shared anecdotes are insufficient to make claims on his isolated identity at the workplace, and that he finds out about attacks through the internet, it seems odd that his colleagues evacuated the building without telling him. Yet he makes no reference to how his work environment but refers to his family's experiences to signify their troubling lives in the aftermath of the terror attacks.

Based on the Uncle X's insights, it is important to note that tech focused work-places largely shelter him from any Islamophobic incidents. He is made aware of the visibility of his brown and Muslim identities through the experiences of his family who face racist incidents on a regular basis. For instance, his wife's retail-oriented work place environment exposes her to overt Islamophobia and her interaction with broader groups of the American mainstream, making her more prone to experiencing hate speech surrounding

her religious identity. These contrasting workplace environments shed light on the possible colorblind cultural practices of the tech work places that sheltered Uncle X from overt Islamophobia.

Uncle X's son is deeply impacted by the events and is bullied for his Muslim heritage, similarly his daughter in the third grade is scared for Uncle X's safety in light of the rampant Islamophobia. She is aware of her father's problematic Muslim identity and his work in the Islamic school that puts him at high risk of surveillance and the fear of being taken away for questioning. These insights from his daughter illuminate the intensity of Islamophobia that impacted Muslims in the US. While the research is focused on the first-generation experience, these findings allude to the problematic life experience of the second-generation Muslim Americans who are directly impacted by Islamophobia and grow up in an America that redefines their Muslim identities in the political contexts of 9/11. Uncle X used the advice of his Jewish friend to navigate the problematic times that his family experienced. These incidents surrounding his family motivated him to play an engaged role in the community, and to bring in more interfaith groups and open the conversations around Muslim identities and help debunk the terrorist stereotypes.

3.5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:

The study makes five contributions to understanding the Muslim American experience located at the intersections of their upwardly mobile class trajectories and racialized Muslim constructs in the American mainstream's Islamophobic contexts. First, it highlights how political contexts are crucial to shaping the non-white immigrant experiences regardless of their social class. The Muslim immigrant's case is underlined by racialized construction of the Muslim identity strategically located within the Western political rhetoric on the War on the Terror era, followed by the ISIS terror arracks and the recent travel bans. Thus, the politics around Islamic terrorism has laid the foundations of both the social and political constructions of a terrorist identity reinforced by the Islamophobic sentiments of the American mainstream. The Pakistani immigrant's lived experiences demonstrate both covert and overt forms of Islamophobic sentiments around their racialized Muslim identity in different realms of their lives. Thus, their experiences debunk the ideals of the good immigrant South Asian identity associated with their Asian American model minority status.

Second, the paper goes beyond the racialized understandings of the Muslim immigrant identities. It illustrates how the concept of master status and intersectionality theory bridged together helps us understand how Pakistani immigrants experience Islamophobic sentiments subjected at the intersections of their complex identities. Instead of taking an either/or approach to the two concepts, the use of Muslim identity as a master status highlights the racialized contexts of the Muslim religious identity that is mapped on to the intersectional ethno-racial, cultural, gendered, immigrant dimensions of their South Asian Muslim selves. Thus, the two concepts show that while Pakistani identity is a

national origin and not a racial status, it exists in a racialized context of the Muslim and Muslim American experience underlined by the politics of Islamic terrorism. Thus, their mere presence establishes them as a threat, and their visibly distinct brown skins tones, accompanied with foreign South Asian style clothes, gendered identities, and Middle Eastern constructs in relation to the WOT era, serve as intersectional dimensions in demonstrating the overt and covert systems of oppressions of Islamophobic sentiments targeting their Muslim master status.

Third, the study brings together the high-skilled immigrant experience from the experiences of the Muslim immigrant. It illustrates that while they develop their careers, translated into upward economic trajectories, the impact of Islamophobia does not deter them from integrating into the American mainstream. All 40 respondents in the study chose to pursue their American citizenship, emerging as First-generation Pakistani Americans, and were engaged in inter-faith work to deconstruct the terrorist stereotypes surrounding their identities. This is integral in demonstrating that despite challenges linked to their lives, they are growing into families and laying the foundations for the second and third generation of Pakistani immigrants. Further raising questions for future research on how the understandings of citizenship and belonging vary across the different South Asian Muslim immigrant generations.

Fourth, the (eight) narratives expand our prior understandings on the impact of Islamophobia on gendered identities, specifically the lives of Pakistani professional women who are more likely to be subjected to Islamophobia regardless of the presence or absence of the religious signifiers that their male counterparts in the study. Thus, their cultural markers of ethno-racial otherness associated with their Muslim identities exposes them to

hostility across the American mainstream and racial surveillance at the airports. Moreover, the diversity within the tech professionals dominated by high- skilled Asian immigrant men further protect the Muslim male professional from overt Islamophobic sentiments. The case of Uncle X, who experiences Islamophobia after the 9/11 terror attacks through the experiences of his wife and children, demonstrates how the intersectional dimension of the family is crucial to his lived realizations of the changes to his ethno-racial religious identities.

Fifth, the study illuminates the impact of the employer's relationship on the processes on immigrant sponsorship crucial to the high-skilled immigrant experience. Mr. Y's boss's exploitative relationship in his immigration sponsorship processes caused him deep stress and uncertainty in the US despite his high-skilled educational skill sets. Making him vulnerable to exploitative conditions of his workplace. On the other hand, Ms. Bs cordial relationship with her Bosses enabled a smooth experience of her receiving permanent residency in the US.

Moreover, the recent pandemic and the Chinese Origins of the Covid-19 virus have triggered a stark rise in hate crimes against Asians and Asian Americans across the US. Invoking centuries-old anti-Asian sentiment, thus illustrating how a global political event can trigger long-standing racist traditions of the white supremacist leanings of the US. on minorities. Problematizing the experience of non-white Asian immigrants, despite the good immigrant tropes and honorary white status associated with their economic achievements and social mobility in the American mainstream. Similarly, the racialized Muslim experience has been invoked by the acts of Islamic terrorism by terrorist and jihadists groups, threatening the Western national security, thus subjecting all Muslim

immigrants of South Asian and MENA origins to social constructions of terrorism surrounding their identities regardless of their class and skill levels. These experiences demonstrate the vulnerable status of non-white immigrant groups that can experience ethno-racial inclusion and exclusion from different American mainstream contexts depending on the global politics around their complex identities. Raising questions on the changes to the integration trajectories of non-white immigrant groups.

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