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BECOMING AMERICAN, REMAINING ARAB:
HOW THE "HIJABAT" NEGOTIATE LIFE IN TWO WORLDS

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BECOMING AMERICAN, REMAINING ARAB:

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By

Loukia K. Sarroub

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ABSTRACT

BECOMING AMERICAN, REMAINING ARAB: HOW THE "HIJABAT" NEGOTIATE LIFE IN TWO WORLDS

By

Loukia K. Sarroub

I explore expectations for academic and social success at home and at school among Arab American girls and boys who attend a high school that is struggling to accommodate a new immigrant population. In the study, I focus on the hijabat, Muslim girls who cover their heads with scarves. I examine the links between local contexts—the individual, the classroom, and the home and the broader community, district—and school enactment of "cultural" accommodation and stabilization. In other words, I investigate how different ways of "being" (Arab/non-Arab, Yemeni/non-Yemeni, American/non-American, Muslim/non-Muslim girl, Muslim/non-Muslim boy), as revealed in the multiple discourses and the contrasting literacy events students encounter in different settings, intersect and sometimes collide. Within this nexus filled with continuities and discontinuities, students' intentions and evolving sense of themselves as successful cultural agents living between two worlds, home and school, are documented. During 1997-1999, I was immersed in the Yemeni and Arab community in the Detroit area while conducting ethnographic research. Perhaps the most salient implication of this study is that key concepts such as success, identity, ethnicity, and gender must be understood as shifting processes in which the dynamic enactment of culture and religion remain highly nuanced. Even though the hijabat came from low socioeconomic status homes in which

the parents were predominantly print-illiterate, they still succeeded academically and maintained relatively high grade point averages at school. Another implication drawn from this study is that the Yemeni American immigrant relationship to Cobb High School runs counter to the common sense view of "non-mainstream" cultures and public schools in general. Previous research cited above on immigrant and minority populations in the US has shown that schools historically have resisted adapting to the needs of their new "non-mainstream" populations and have not, in general, embraced the notion of multi-cultural curricula. The process of accommodation remains ongoing and illustrates that schools, when need be, can reform both formal and informal curricula in order to meet the needs of all students. School, however, was not a uniformly liberating experience for the hijabat. Home and school worlds sometimes collided. The hijabat's interactive performances and use of language as students, girls, Muslims, Yemeni American daughters, sisters, and wives were all context dependent and highly variable, and that variability in identity impacted their social and academic lives. The high school itself, as an institution, remained highly fragmented because teachers, administrators, and parents' visions for schooling and education differed. At times, the school actually reinforced the hijabat's gendered and religious identities, which could be construed as less than liberating. By describing both the unusual and mundane, by tabulating grade point averages across two years, by conducting interviews and observations, and by synthesizing emerging patterns across contexts and the published literature, especially relevant studies done in Europe and the US, this dissertation attempts to contribute to our knowledge about the intersections of education and religion, home and school worlds, and immigrant students and their teachers.

TO MY FAMILY
IN ALGERIA, GREECE, AND THE UNITED STATES

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INTRODUCTION

Being American, Being Yemeni: Un-covering a Predicament

> Okay, in their eyes, it means you be quiet, you listen, you obey and you go through, you listen to what we say, regardless, because we know what's best for you. Okay, in my eyes, it's not. It's you take what they say into consideration but you also see your own views. You try to, you have to make the decision on your own. You have to go beyond just what they say, what they're demanding and look at it and look at what you want, how do you see it, how do you feel about it, what is the best outcome for you. Because you know yourself best. . . .For me, see, I consider everything in an Islamic point of view. And being Yemeni, that's basically, you listen to what they say. Being Americanized is the fact that you can stand up and say "no," you know. This is what I want. And this is the reason why I want this (Interview, 10/29/98).

Saba's hands and fingers punctuated each thought as she spoke with the slight staccato which is characteristic of English speech influenced by Arabic. Except for her face and hands, Saba's body was completely covered as she sat across from me, explaining how difficult it is to construct an identity which makes sense in the American and Yemeni worlds she inhabits. This was not the first of our conversations on this topic, but it was the most emotional. Saba was tired, stressed to a breaking point, and depressed. Yet she shared her thoughts with me freely as the audio recorder blinked after each pause, recording not only her words, but the strain of her efforts to make sense of her life. As I listened and responded to her comments, I thought of the other Yemeni American girls with whom I had talked. All of them felt the same optimism and desperation Saba expressed; all of them were attempting to reconcile the American lives they experienced at school with the Yemeni lives they knew at home; all of them wanted to succeed at being

good students and good daughters and wives; and, all of them felt as if they were failing at being both American and Yemeni. They each feared the risk of becoming less than "good Muslim women."

In this dissertation, I explore how the Yemeni American girls negotiate their home and school worlds successfully. By school world, I mean their involvement with their public school and school district as institutions, their social relationships to teachers and peers, and their academic interaction with subject content, their peers, and their teachers. I designate home world as much more than the physical space of a house in which the girls have a home. Not only is home a space but it is a set of relationships and ideas which fulfill a different set of expectations than those of school. The home world might mean living with parents and/or a husband and extended family, or it might simply mean the future possibility of a new home either in their US community or in Yemen. Importantly, home is really what the Yemeni American girls envision it to be and how they perceive its connection to school.

I explore expectations for success at home and at school in order to better understand the girls' lives as public school students, daughters of immigrant parents, sisters to their "more important" male siblings, and members of American society. Specifically, I examine the links between local contexts such as the individual, the classroom, and the home. Also, I examine the broader community, district, and school enactment of "cultural" accommodation and stabilization. In other words, I investigate closely how multiple discourses as cultural phenomena at home and school intersect and

sometimes collide with the students' intentions and evolving sense of themselves as cultural agents between two worlds, home and school.

Finding Meaning Behind Success

In this ethnography I focus on the notion of success—what it means for Yemeni American girls such as Saba to successfully negotiate home and school worlds—in order to delineate the various players' (teachers, parents, students) expectations for success in the worlds of home and school. In American public schools, academic performance and social adjustment have been important defining factors of school success. Normative definitions of success such as academic achievement, learning, and GPA have all in one way or another guided students, teachers, and parents in formulating what is expected of students during any given school day in any given year. However, the idea of success becomes more complex when it is woven into a fabric created out of the threads of cultural, religious, linguistic, geographical, national, and even personal forces. For instance, with regard to immigrants, Gibson (Gibson and Ogbu 1991) suggests that "...theories of success and attitudes about the value of formal education have their roots in well-defined cultural processes predating migration" (p. 64). In other words, folk and personal theories of success are as important in the construction of individual and communal identities within traditional boundaries as they might be in promoting socioeconomic mobility, a broader and more general goal shared by many people regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion, or color. Therefore, examining and defining the intersection of home and school expectations for success is one way of categorically

establishing the relationships which govern dispositions, language use, social adjustment, and self-actualization among the Yemeni American high school girls.

Culture is intimately tied to people's conceptions of successfully negotiating home and school worlds. Culture is also a lens for lending significance to human experience because it refers broadly to the ways in which people make sense of their lives. Florio-Ruane (1998) has noted five prevailing notions of culture in the social sciences. She suggests that these rather static conceptions of culture have been the basis of much educational research on immigrant and minority population and should be re-examined.

1. Cultures are unique; bounded groups often stand in conflict of one another.
2. Culture is passed on from one generation to generation.
3. Immigrants have much in common in terms of "static stock of cultural artifacts."
4. The worth of or value of the past sets of cultural practices is measured by the economic success of groups holding these practices.
5. When cultural groups fail to succeed economically, this failure is perceived as due to inadequacies of their values, traditions, and cultural practices.

While these prevailing conceptions of culture are misleading (if not incorrect), they do inadvertently show that there is very little in them that addresses the roles of individuals and the development of identity in different contexts. In the preface to his book, Rosaldo (1993) points out that "questions of culture seem to touch a nerve because they quite quickly become anguished questions of identity" (p. xxi). Saba's comments above about what it means to be American or Yemeni gets at the heart of cultural identity and its politics.

Salient notions of culture have been advanced in various fields and disciplines and have become all the more complex and nuanced. In anthropology, for instance, Ogbu (1988) has defined culture as "a way of life shared by a population. It is the social, technoeconomic, and psychological adaptation worked out in the course of a people's history. [It] includes customs or institutionalized public behaviors as well as thoughts and emotions that accompany and support those behaviors" (p. 11). Culture, as Ogbu describes it, is indexed by artifacts that have symbolic meaning for a population, and the imperatives of culture include people's economic, political, religious, and social institutions, such as schools.

Bourdieu (1977) states that the process of education and schooling becomes "the production of the habitus, that system of dispositions which acts as a mediation between structures and practice" (p. 487). In other words, culture is both historical action and the present enactment of that history, and the *habitus* enables the cultural process as Ogbu has defined it. Enactment (and perhaps the intention or un-intentioned reproduction) of one's past (traditions, customs, etc.) is mediated by both behavior and discourse, which can either be an adaptation to or artifact of culture. As will be illustrated within the Yemeni context, past and present are not easily differentiated, since this community continues to live much as they did in Yemen, while the girls continually attempt to successfully adapt to American life at school and Yemeni life at home. Also, the Yemeni American girls show us that classroom life may be surprisingly liberating because the habitus within which gender roles as they are part of the girls' ethnic identity matter less than does school talk. In other words, it is because school talk often rules out students'

non-school discourses that problems of identity arise. In this dissertation, it is precisely the educational "culturalectomy" phenomenon that seems to open new possible identities for young women.[1]

More dynamic conceptions of culture embody the development of identity, which is instrumental in understanding how the Yemeni American girls understand themselves at home and school. Taylor's (1996) phenomenological view directs attention to the self, how the self ascertains how s/he identifies with the world and thus forms an identity:

> To know who I am is a species of knowing where I stand. My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose. In other words, it is the horizon within which I am capable of taking a stand (p. 27).

According to Taylor, identity formation is an ongoing and shifting process, dependent on social, historical and cultural contexts. This view, which is less static than that of Ogbu or Bourdieu and Passeron acknowledges that the self is not tightly time to time or place, and perhaps, it is not tied to status and role, which are negotiated and can shift with situation. Raissiguier (1994), whose research focuses on Arab and French working class women in France, has a particularly germane definition of identity: "[it is the] product of an individual or a group of individuals' interpretation and reconstruction of their personal history and particular social location, as mediated through the cultural and discursive context to which they have access" (p. 26). Thus, it can be argued that the process of identity formation is one of socialization as one gains access to social institutions such as

[1] I owe this insight to Susan Florio-Ruane.

family or school, but it also means that rules can be suspended and that the notion of self shifts with time and location. Taken literally, the modern dictionary definition of socialization implies a coercive force whereby individuals must often conform to the common needs of a social group. However, in a different light, it can also be argued, as Bernstein (1977) has done, that socialization creates a safe place for people. He understands the process of socialization to mean a child's acquisition of a specific cultural identity that becomes a standard which he or she uses to respond to events, actions, and other individuals: "Socialization sensitizes the child to various orderings of society as these are made substantive in the various roles he is expected to play" (p. 476). What happens when a child is socialized in multiple cultures? Does identity become fragmented according to context (home, school, and community)? And, do conceptions of the self also reflect this fragmentation as students remain Yemeni while becoming American?[2] As these questions suggest, success may be somewhat dependent on the *successful* realization of expected selves (or identities) at school, at home, and in the community.

Equally important in the development of identity and its relationship to notions of success is the idea that identity and/or expressions of the self are rooted both in history and in ideology and are often expressed through one's ethnicity. di Leonardo (1984) defines ethnicity as "a phenomenon of state societies, involving the labeling, from within or without of particular populations as somehow different from the majority" (p. 23).

[2] Kondo (1990) explores the notion of fragmentation of the self in the Japanese family and in a Japanese company. As a Japanese American in Japan, she writes about the collapse of her identity in her collaboration with informants and as both 'other,' someone who is American and someone who is the same in the sense that she looks like the informants.

She argues that the labeling itself, as a cultural process, is crucial to the construction of identity and ethnicity as groups interact economically and politically. Her work on Italian Americans showed that it matters where Italians came from, when and why they left, where they went, and how newcomers were received on the basis of economic and social conditions. Ethnicity, in this view, is both cognitive and economic, and as the economy changes, so do ethnic boundaries and ideologies. In the case of the Yemeni as an ethnic group, there is no question that history and economy impact their world view with regard to life in the US and expectations for success at school and at home. As Gordon (1964) comments,

> Within ethnic groups, persons have two types of identification that operate simultaneously: historical identification -- a sense of peoplehood shared with other group members -- and participation identification -- a sense of primary identification with an ethnic group with whom one shares values and behavioral patterns. Primary relationships are normally confined to persons who share both these identifications, persons of the same ethclass, since values and behavior tend to be related both by class and ethnicity (pp. 89-90).

Again, it is clear that identity formation within culture is the enactment of both the past and the present. Identity, then, is dynamic, not static. As di Leonardo suggests, "Focusing on ethnic boundaries rooted in economic and historical processes allows us instead to see that all of daily life, not just family life, is part of the construction and reconstruction of ethnic identities" (p. 24). For example, she found that gender identity as well as religious belief changed over generations in the Italian American families she studied.

The definitional parameters of success—culture, identity, and ethnicity—illustrate the complicated and complex worlds the Yemeni American girls inhabit between home and school. As this is a study which focuses on girls, gender is also a significant concept and analytic tool for understanding Saba and her peers. Gender identification is an important aspect of Yemeni and American cultures, and as such, it is consequential to identity and ethnic formation. Woods and Hammersley (1993), have suggested that it is critical for ethnographers in education to explore the connections between ethnicity and gender rather than rely solely on social class characteristics. El-Or's (1994) work on ultra-Orthodox Jewish women, for example, focuses on the intersection of religion and education and explains the struggles these women face as educated people who are also ignorant within their world. Peggy Finder's (1997) work around the literacy events of young adolescent girls characterizes the girls' literate world as constituting both the official school literacy events and the "literate underlife." Amira Proweller's (1998) examines the identity formation processes among a group of upper middle-class adolescent girls in a private, elite academy. These are ethnographies in which the study of identity is delimited in unusual ways and gendered practices are strongly influenced by school life, religion, ethnicity, and language. The representation of gender today is problematic, especially if and when gender itself becomes an objectified category of socialization within academic and education discourse (Connel 1987; Thorne 1997). I maintain that gender is a rather fluid category which cannot easily be demarcated or objectified because it is indexed by talk, interaction, ethnicity, and in the case of the Yemeni American girls, by religion. In many ways, the Yemeni American girls in this study are "triangulators" of identity and in

so being, culture is enacted in the in-between spaces they occupy in their home and school worlds.

One aim of this dissertation is to argue that these broad concepts described above must be considered together as factors which can help shed some light on the continuities and discontinuities that may exist between home and school.

Research Questions

In light of the continuities and discontinuities that may exist among school, community, and home, for Yemeni Americans, I asked the following questions in analyzing data collected during two years of fieldwork, 1997-1999:

- What are the expectations for success at school and home among Muslim Yemeni American students?
    - How do the girls negotiate the various expectations around them?
- In light of the cultural and/or religious discontinuities that may exist between home and school, how do Yemeni American students make sense of their identities in those contexts?
    - How do the girls develop their identities, between home and school, in a Yemeni and American community?
- What role does gender play in the enactment of cultural norms at home and school?
- How do ethnicity, religion, and socioeconomic standing influence expectations for success at home and school?
    - How are these expectations (from parents, teachers, peers) communicated to the girls?
    - And, how then do they respond?
- How does the school perceive and accommodate cultural and religious differences among its students?
    - How do teachers view their pedagogical roles with regard to these students?

- And, what impact do school and teacher accommodations have on the students?

The five research questions serve as broad, tangible guides. They allow an interdisciplinary approach, and they also reinforce the idea that school and home cultural processes exist and interact in larger contextual arenas. As di Leonardo (1984) suggests, contextualizing identity historically and politically allows for a more dynamic view of the cultural processes that occur as ethnic groups interact with others, themselves, and the institutions they inhabit. In writing an ethnography of California Italian-Americans, di Leonardo examined the varieties of ethnicity among this population by studying the interrelations among ethnicity, economy, kinship, and gender in order to disprove the idea of a single homogeneous ethnic culture.[3] In much the same way, I examine closely, within the broader definitional parameters described above, the relationships that exist among gender, religion, socioeconomic standing, identity, and discourse within the Yemeni population and in particular, among a small number of students and their families, in order to delineate expectations for success at home and school.

I draw mainly from three interdisciplinary perspectives—sociolinguistics, cultural anthropology, and sociology—to explain the relationships and connections among the contexts of school, community, and home. A sociolinguistic perspective is useful in unmasking the notion of 'culture' as discourse (Gee 1989; Goffman 1959; 1981).[4] This

[3] Other pertinent work on immigrant communities in the United States and Europe include Graff1995; Haw and Hanifa 1998; Lewis 1994; Perlmann 1988; Portes and Rumbaut 1996.

[4] Sawyer (Forthcoming) suggests that the use of "discourse" as an intellectual concept is problematic in its origins and its use in various academic disciplines. I use it here as a broad concept to denote *ways of being* which encompass talk, action, and performance.

frame of reference is especially helpful in delineating the contextual uses of texts and language among the Yemeni American students. For example, the use of Arabic in school serves important functional and religious purposes as students attempt to maintain dual identities. It is not clear, however, whether cultural differences in communication style between home and school have a direct cause and effect relationship on school achievement (Erickson 1987). While in the field, I observed that communication style (the discourses used) is important in making social adjustments within the school setting and, in particular, in the classroom but not necessarily in academic performance. For these students, social success in school (behaving appropriately according to cultural and religious traditions) is as important as academic achievement because the enactment of appropriate social mores in and out of school determines status as well as degrees of shame and honor.

One example of the enactment of language and cultural competencies that cuts across socioeconomic background and ethnicity in schools comes from Luis Moll's Funds of Knowledge project within working class Latino populations and their experiences with non-Latino teachers (Moll 1992; Moll et al. 1992; Moll and Gonzalez 1994). Moll (1992) defines funds of knowledge as "the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (p. 133). The 'funds of knowledge' perspective acknowledges that social class can be an impediment to or a catalyst of learning and achievement. However, "the essential cultural practices and bodies of knowledge and information that households use to survive, to get ahead, or to thrive" (Moll 1992, p. 21) are part of wider social networks

and are required by diverse labor markets. In other words, Moll suggests that if schools could find a way to explicitly privilege cultural tools of minority populations, the range of students who could rely on cultural knowledge to engage in successful school practices would be expanded. Therefore, schools and teachers would do well to become familiar with these funds of knowledge simply because they represent "a *potential* major social and intellectual resource for the schools" (p. 22). Moll's research illustrates that when schools make attempts to understand the underlying social, cultural, and language networks of the populations they service, it is more likely that there will be congruence between what and how content is taught and students' ability to learn, thus broadening the definitions of privileged cultures and tools to include more than just social class distinctions.

An example of this, although not representative of the 'funds of knowledge' perspective, comes from a study in which the researchers observed that there was a mismatch between the teacher's expectations for classroom behavior and her students' (who were Italian Americans) knowledge of the required norms for proper behavior (Shultz, Florio, and Erickson 1982). Shultz and his colleagues found that although the students' social etiquette was perfectly acceptable at home, it did not meet the expectations of the classroom. They concluded that teachers and researchers need to "understand more fully children's socialization into communicative traditions at home and at school, traditions that may be mutually congruent or incongruent" (p. 91). It is clear that researchers who have studied the impact of home cultures and social class on success at home and in school, have concluded that although socioeconomic standing is a useful

tool, it does not always explain how individuals learn, produce knowledge, and sustain cultural and/or social identities in multiple worlds. Heath (1983), for example, showed that the complex language socialization process is "more powerful than single-factor explanations accounting for academic success" (p. 344).

From cultural anthropology, I draw on Ogbu's (1982; 1993) cultural-ecological model, which maintains that child rearing in the family and subsequent adolescent socialization aim at developing instrumental competencies—defined as "the ability to perform a culturally specific task, or a set of functional or instrumental skills"—required for adult economic, political, and social roles. Cultural imperatives vary from one population to another as do the required competencies. Within this model, Ogbu takes issue with views of human development which assume that a child's later school success depends on the acquisition of white-middle class competencies (and sources of cultural capital) through white middle-class child-rearing practices (see Gibson and Ogbu 1991). He argues that all children experience an "initial discontinuity between home and school in language use, contextual learning, and style of learning." A central distinction in Ogbu's (1997) account is between voluntary and involuntary minorities. Voluntary minorities are immigrants who "have generally moved to their present societies because they believed that the move would lead to more economic well-being, better overall opportunities or greater political freedom" (p. 317). Involuntary minorities, on the other hand, were brought to the present society through conquest or colonization.

Ogbu further differentiates among primary and secondary cultural differences. Primary cultural differences are those that existed before two populations came into

contact, while secondary ones are those arising after two populations have been in continuous contact and the minority population has participated in the institutions controlled by the majority. Basically, Ogbu argues that involuntary minorities face cultural differences based on style whereas voluntary minorities face differences in content. This means that voluntary minorities or immigrants "perceive their social identity as *primarily different* from the social identity of white Americans" (p. 323), and involuntary minorities "develop a new sense of *social identity in opposition* to the social identity of the dominant group *after they have been subordinated.*" Ogbu argues that "immigrants see the *cultural differences as barriers to overcome* in order to achieve their long-range goals of future employment and *not as markers of identity to be maintained*" (p. 327). Gibson (1988) calls this strategy "accommodation and acculturation without assimilation." In her study of Punjabi Sikh immigrants, she found that although they are proud to be Americans, they "openly and actively reject the notion that Americanization means giving up their separate identity (p. 24). Involuntary minorities, however, and according to Ogbu's model, perceive cultural differences "they encounter in school as markers of identity to be maintained, not as barriers to be overcome" (p. 331). The cultural-ecological model is useful in assessing what competencies are expected among the Yemeni American girls in the contexts of home, school, and community, and how those competencies will influence future success at work and home. However, Ogbu's model has come under criticism recently on the grounds that it not universally applicable.

Although Ogbu's typology is useful, it falls short in explaining that primary cultural differences can become charged with political meanings in present situations and

actually cause conflict. For example, Elderling and Van Zantan (Eldering 1997; Van Zantan 1997) found that European girls of Arab descent who wore the *hijab* (head scarves) were stigmatized and told to go home by school officials. "The critical factor for the Muslim students seems not to be the origin of the differences — but rather that the differences are viewed as markers of identity" (Gibson 1997). In the case of the Yemeni Americans, they exhibit tendencies that would characterize them as both voluntary and involuntary minorities, and as I explain in chapter one, many families are really sojourners who live two lives, one in the US and a second in Yemen. Furthermore, Ogbu's model does not account for how gender shapes student identity at home and school and with regard to social and academic performance. In the Yemeni culture, for instance, gender is decidedly a fundamental aspect of social differentiation and must be addressed, especially if school represents a form of liberation as it does for young Muslim girls in Europe and for the Yemeni American girls in this study. In addition, perhaps the most interesting finding in the literature on minority populations is that these students do better in school "when they feel strongly anchored in the identities of their families, communities, and peers and when they feel supported in pursuing a strategy of selective or additive acculturation" (Gibson 1997, p. 445). This is important because it may explain why students who come from working class families in which the parents (and usually the mother) are semi-literate or illiterate, still perform well, sometimes outperforming the majority population in the school. Finally, Ogbu's model seriously under-conceptualizes

the power of curriculum and teachers.[5] As the Moll's "funds of knowledge" research shows, and as the evidence I present in chapter four suggests, schools and teachers have an immense impact on student engagement and achievement in school. Schools and teachers are often the catalysts needed to change students' futures and future competencies.

From the literature in sociology, I draw on relevant theories relating to social and cultural capital because school performance has often been linked to them. Cultural capital, according to Bourdieu (1986) exists in three forms: the embodied state (dispositions of the mind and body; in the objectified state (cultural goods such as books, pictures, instruments, dictionaries, machines, etc.) and the institutionalized state (academic qualifications which give the holder a conventional, constant, legally guaranteed value with respect to culture). Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Passeron 1997/1990) maintains that his theory of cultural reproduction "sought to propose a model of the social mediations and processes which tend, behind the backs of the agents engaged in the school system—teachers, students and their parents—and often against their will, to ensure the transmission of cultural capital across generations and to stamp pre-existing differences in inherited cultural capital with a meritocratic seal of academic consecration by virtue of the special symbolic potency of the [credential]" (p. ix). In other words and according to this argument, school knowledge and the values transmitted within the institution are more legitimate in society than pre-existing home knowledge and values. In accordance with the

[5] I owe this insight to Susan Florio-Ruane during a personal telephone conversation on January 23, 2000.

notion of stamping out preexisting differences, Bourdieu & Passeron (1977/1990) have suggested that "every power which manages to impose meanings and to impose them as legitimate by concealing the power relations which are the basis of its force, adds its own specifically symbolic force to those power relations" (p. xv).[6] This theory, then, espouses the idea that widely held norms for success, norms which are imposed by schools, are the most meaningful economically and culturally. In contrast to Ogbu's theory of cultural-ecology, which accounts for different types of minorities and different types of cultural discontinuities between home and school that are not solely class-based, Bourdieu's cultural capital theory instantiates social class as the key factor of success in school. Bourdieu (1977) argues that social class provides individuals with high status roles with the resources to maintain positions of power in society. The home and family contribute certain resources, such as language (and forms of discourse) and other types of cultural experiences which are either in line with or deviate from the middle-class values schools embody. As Labaree (1997) observes, individuals from low socio-economic backgrounds aim at upward social mobility by using school as a necessary credential for status positions in society. However, according to cultural capital theory, upward mobility and the acquisition of credentials are controlled by one's ability to adopt and enact middle-class values, discourse, and dispositions. In other words, some social class ideologies are better suited to schools than others.

[6] Although Bourdieu and Passeron's work has been applied across many contexts, it is important to remember that it is largely based on the education aims of Republican France and may not apply in many situations in the United States.

For example, in her work on social class and its relationship to parent involvement in schools, Lareau (1989) maintains that the relationship between working class families and schools is characterized by separation (parents and students think of school and education as a job which stops when the children arrive home). The relationship that middle-to-upper middle class families have with schools is characterized by interconnectedness, such that the business of school and education is an ongoing endeavor in everyday home life. Meanwhile, schools are thought to accept, reproduce, and reflect societal hierarchies. This was corroborated earlier by Bowles and Gintes (1976) who suggested that schools are class-based institutions which often reproduce the advantages and deficits of class-based consciousness and knowledge. Deterministic in nature, Bowles and Gintes' argument proposed a one-to-one relationship between schools and societal structures, such as the home. Fortunately, this may not really be representative of the levels of congruence and discontinuity between home and school environments. In fact, the main thrust of Lareau's argument is that although cultural capital theory improves upon other existing explanations of why middle-class families seem to be more involved in school than working-class families, it needs to be modified if it is to explain that in fact, "possession of high status cultural resources does not automatically yield a social profit [unless] these cultural resources are activated by the individual" (p. 10). In other words, social class is a potent and at times an accurate predictor of student success in schools, but it may not always account for the enactment of competencies which can cut across social class barriers.

Although cultural reproduction theory provides a strong framework for what schools expect from students in the context of national and/or societal goals, it does not necessarily address the realities of schools and teachers' accommodation of students' differences whether they be cultural, religious, gender specific, etc., (Cummins 1997; Eisikovits 1997; Eldering 1997; Gibson 1997; Gillborn 1997). If cultural reproduction is viewed mainly as a recursive event, it is challenged by students who have virtually little cultural and/or social capital seem to be meeting and reaching beyond expectations for academic success at school. In the chapters which follow, I document the religious and cultural traditions that are in fact reproduced and reconstructed within the Yemeni family, and by the girls, and then explore their impact on social and academic performance in the school setting. The evidence will suggest that cultural tools and traditions may have little bearing on learning and achievement but may serve the purpose of easing cultural or religious tensions as home and school worlds collide.

The Hijabat

As I stated above, the narrative which follows focuses on six Yemeni American high school girls.[7] I met these girls at the community center in a suburb of Detroit and followed them in and out of school and home for two years. They all wore the *hijab* (head scarf) and were therefore called *hijabat* (the plural feminine noun denoting those

[7] In addition to the six high school informants, I got to know and interviewed two Yemeni American young women, Mariam and Sabrina, who attended college. They introduced me to some the high school girls and provided support and answered questions about the community. I also interviewed two high

who wear the scarf) by other Arab Americans in the community and in their school. In Table 1 below, I list the girls' names, grade levels during 1997-1999, and their level of achievement in school. High achiever denotes a grade point average of 3.5 or above; above average means a grade point average between 3.0 and 3.5; average denotes a grade-point of 3.0; below average denotes a grade point average of 2.0 or below.

Nadya (Grades 9 and 10)	Below average-average
Aisha (Grades 10 and 11)	High achiever
Layla (Grade 10 and 11)	Average
Nouria (Grades 10 and 11)	Average
Saba (Grades 11 and 12)	Above average
Amani (Grades 11 and 12)	Above Average

Table 1: The six high school hijabat

Throughout the chapters, these girls' personalities emerge as highly individualized voices who, as Brown and Gilligan (1992) suggest in their study of adolescent girls, find themselves at a crossroads of girlhood and womanhood. The hijabat's individualized voices merge and blend into one story about a group of people whose history, ethnicity, religion, school and home lives, and gender delineate social and physical boundaries.

Nadya was a ninth and tenth grader who was characterized by her teachers as having "a lot of potential if only she could settle down." She enjoyed socializing in school

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school boys, Fateh and Malek, from the Yemeni community. Please see Appendix A for more information concerning fieldwork, data collection, and analysis.

and her school counselor suspected this was so because there were cultural and social constraints in the Yemeni community and at home. Nadya hated to clean and cook at home and knew that her older sister would do her chores. Nadya's parents were careful not to ask her to do too much because she had had a seizure once which frightened her family. So, unlike most of the hijabat, Nadya was often excused from her chores, until her sister was married and moved out of the house.

Aisha was called "very sweet" by all of her friends. She was quiet and rarely spoke. An exceedingly bright student, Aisha dreamed of going to college when I knew her as a tenth and eleventh grader. She tutored at the community center near her home until her parents no longer allowed her to work there. She helped her parents manage their finances and paid the bills. Her biggest worry was whether she would be able to stay in school because her parents wanted to send her to Yemen to marry as her sister had done when she was fifteen. Aisha was afraid to marry one of her cousins because her parents were first cousins, and she worried that there would be phenotypic aberrations, such a missing limbs or blindness. She worried all the time about school and her grades and often changed her classes to be with other hijabat.

Layla was the most outgoing and talkative of the hijabat. She identified strongly with her mother who grew up among the British when South Yemen was a colony. Layla thought that her mother was more open-minded than most of her friends' mothers. Like many of the hijabat, Layla wanted to cut her long hair short and go to college. She kept her marriage a secret at school and planned on getting a divorce. Layla resented learning to cook Yemeni dishes and to maintain a household for her own future home. She had

dreams of becoming a teacher, a nurse, or a politician. She tutored at the community center near her home.

Nouria was always dissatisfied with her home and school life. She complained incessantly about her household chores and having to take care of her siblings. More than once, Nouria threatened to commit suicide because she was so unhappy. She kept to herself at school, when I knew her as a tenth and eleventh grader, but she did tutor at the community center. Most of her energy was spent on finding ways to divorce her husband, also a student in the high school, and trying to persuade her father to let her divorce him. Nouria's older siblings were all high achievers in school, which furthered her disgruntlement.

Saba was known as a leader among the hijabat. She could recite the *Qur'an* (Muslim holy book) in both Arabic and English and gave lectures at the mosque and even organized a weekly lecture and reading group called *Muhathara* (lecture). Saba, as an eleventh and twelfth grader, was a student leader as well and a noted "trouble-maker" by the administration and some teachers. Saba tried desperately to obtain permission to choose her own husband and refused to go to Yemen when her family insisted. She tutored and worked in the community health center clinic. She was committed to furthering her education and becoming a teacher or nurse, marrying someone of her choosing, and being a good Muslim.

Amani was quiet and shy. During the eleventh and tenth grades she enrolled in all the preparatory nursing classes and interned at a clinic with her classmates. Amani wanted to become a nurse and planned to attend college. She sometimes wished she could

wear short sleeves and take off her scarf but did not think this would be possible in her neighborhood. She drove her brothers to school but was not allowed to work anywhere other than the community center, where she tutored with the other hijabat. Amani had to learn how to cook Yemeni dishes at home and was often judged as a worthy cook and housekeeper by relatives and neighbors.

The hijabat, much like American women at the beginning of the twentieth century, found themselves hoping to become nurses and teachers—acceptable occupations in their culture. In their community, such occupations preserved their primary roles as mothers and the same time, allowed them to entertain the notion of being educated mothers. For these adolescents, the prospect of a high school degree, if not a college degree, enhanced the role of the mother in the family. Education is valued by the Yemenis in the US and, and it is especially valued in girls.[8] It is useful to draw an historical contrast between these young women and women at the beginning of the century in the US. The shift in women's work roles in the nineteenth century, for example, inspired new definitions of womanhood and eventually led to the feminization of occupations such as teaching. The urbanization and industrialization of the American economy also redefined, to a certain degree, the role women played at home and in society. In tandem with these changes, the advent of universal public education further transformed notions of womanhood, woman's sexuality, and woman's work. I draw attention to this history because Yemeni immigrants also move to the US from a mainly agricultural village setting in Yemen to a

[8] The hijabat were often not allowed to finish high school if they did not maintain their Yemeni cultural and social norms. I address this issue in several of the chapters.

labor market based in industry in the US. The lives of Yemeni women as homemakers parallel those of many women at the turn of the twentieth century. Today, these transformations, which lead to the recognition of teaching as a "woman's profession," are characterized by historians as the "cult of true womanhood" (Clifford 1989; Degler 1980; Ryan 1981); domestic femininity" (Clifford 1989; Degler 1980; Grumet 1988; Hoffman 1981; Rury 1989); and "domestic/woman's sphere" (Clifford 1989; Ryan 1981). The construction of woman as mother and the paragon of domesticity allowed her to receive an education, but restrained her in work opportunities. This dialectic of opportunity and constraint illuminates the conflicting private and public roles of women in the last century (Rury 1989). Interestingly enough, I observed that same dialectic among the six hijabat and their peers as they attempted to establish their identities both at home and in their community and at school.

The Structure of the Study

In chapter one, I describe where the hijabat lived through a case study of Layla. I argue that she and the other hijabat and their families were sojourners, with one foot in the US and the other in Yemen. As such, the notion of space becomes a relevant construct for demarcating religious, ethnic, and gender boundaries. Although I had access to the girls' homes, in this chapter I rely on the girls' descriptions of their home lives because as a woman researcher, I did not always have easy access to the men in their families. In chapter two, I examine the hijabat's school and classroom lives. It is clear that the classroom was a special and safe place for them socially, one which allowed them to be

both American and Yemeni. However, in relation to subject content in the classroom, levels of engagement were not uniform and really depended on teacher interaction styles or on the specific content of text the teacher introduced. In chapter three, I show that the hijabat generated "in-between" texts which allowed them to partake in both American and Yemeni social and cultural norms. This chapter along with chapters two and four clearly show the difficulties in reconciling folk, in this case Yemeni American, and school notions of success both at academic and social levels. Chapter four is an analysis of how the hijabat's teachers, high school, and school district accommodated their growing Muslim Arab population. As I explain, this was a complex and complicated process which continues to develop over a decade. In chapter five, I discuss the hijabat's dispositions toward school and their futures as they neared graduation from high school. One critical finding is that they tried to maintain their GPAs in order to stay in school, but at the same time, they did not have much input in the decisions made about their futures. In Conclusion, I synthesise the main elements of each of the five chapters and draw some implications from the study. In Reflection I reflect on my own role as a researcher in the field.

Why an Ethnography?

In the narrative I focus on a group of Yemeni American high school girls whose families settled in the US in the early 1970s. In my attempt to understand the lives of Saba and her peers, I find that meaning is both uncovered and recovered. At times this is as simple as wearing or removing the *hijab* (scarf) from one's head. In other instances, actions, words, the cast of one's eyes—these index the undercurrents of meaning. Telling

this story means being able to navigate among meanings, and therefore, it is no coincidence that I chose to write an ethnography. As James Clifford (Clifford and Marcus 1986) notes:

> Ethnography is actively situated *between* powerful systems of meaning. It poses its questions at the boundaries of civilizations, cultures, classes, races, and genders. Ethnography decodes and recodes, telling the grounds of collective order and diversity, inclusion and exclusion. It describes a process of innovation and structuration, and is itself part of these processes (p. 2).

Miles and Huberman (1994) describe ethnography as "extended contact with a given community, concern with the mundane, day-to-day events, as well as the unusual ones, direct or indirect participation in local activities, with particular care given to description of local particularities; focus on individuals' perspectives and interpretations of their world; and relatively little prestructured instrumentation, but often a wider use of structured observation than in other research traditions" (p. 8). To understand the Yemeni American girls in the context of a "Yemeni village" in the US, it is important to focus on the quotidian as well as the unusual occurrences in that community. Therefore, the methods in this dissertation espouse a 'naturalistic' perspective. In order to understand as much as possible the lives of the Yemeni within the contexts of school, home, and community, I apply a broad methodological approach which relies on *thick* description (Geertz 1973) based on rigorous observation, participant and non-participant observations, formal interviews, and informal conversations. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1996)

> The value of ethnography as a social research method is founded upon the existence of such variations in cultural patterns across and within

> societies, and their significance for understanding social processes. . . . Naturalism proposes that through marginality, in social position and perspective, it is possible to construct an account of the culture under investigation that both understands it from within and captures it as external to, and independent of, the researcher: in other words, as a natural phenomenon. Thus, the *description* of cultures becomes the primary goal. The search for universal laws is downplayed in favour of detailed accounts of the concrete experience of life within a particular culture and of the beliefs and social rules that are used as resources within it (pp. 10-11).

By describing both the unusual and the mundane and by synthesizing emerging patterns across contexts and the published literature, especially relevant studies done in Europe, I attempt to contribute to our knowledge about the intersections of education and religion, home and school worlds, and immigrant students and their teachers. US scholars in education tend, for the most part, not to focus on issues such as religion and its impact on education and schooling.[9] This study proposes to do so.

Wolf (1992) has said that "an anthropologist listens to as many voices as she can and then chooses among them when she passes their opinions on to members of another culture. The choice is not arbitrary, but then neither is the testimony" (p. 11). In many ways there is really nothing arbitrary about the site or the participants chosen to participate in this study. They are not representative of all schools or teachers or students across the US. They were chosen because they are unique. At the same time, however, they belong to larger communities which are not at all unique in that their geopolitical relations are similar to those of others. The children go to public school as

[9] A notable exception is Alan Peshkin's (1986) work on schools and Christian fundamentalism.

other children do. Their teachers deal with cultural and linguistic differences as do teachers in different settings. Their parents worry about their children as do other parents. Without exhausting the list of congruencies and similarities, it is important to note that like many other ethnographies, the value of this study will be in its ability to develop further constructive ideas and theories about larger issues and problems with which educators and researchers grapple. This will be done by paying attention to the particulars. The point is to get to the "heart of the matter," if possible (Geertz 1983; Wolcott 1994).

In writing this ethnography I hope to broaden and to add to our understanding of immigrant families in the United States. As the twenty-first century unfolds, we must not forget that a new generation of Americans is in the making. It is often easy to overlook that American children of immigrants often straddle two worlds and must negotiate various systems of belief which may not complement each other. That this process is further complicated by a combination of factors such as religion, ethnic identity, gender, language, social economic standing, and school socialization norms emphasizes how much we need to know to make decisions for improving schools and relations among schools, communities, and homes. Saba's comments at the beginning of this introduction foreshadow the importance of uncovering the predicament of being an "either/or" and becoming American in the public schools.

ONE

Between Honor and Shame: The Sojourner Experience of Yemeni American High School Students

In this chapter, I focus on the relationships which existed between the Yemeni American high school students and their land of origin. These relationships can be described as "spaces," both social and physical from which networks and identities emerge (Metcalf 1996). In other words, these spaces, whether they be religious (Muslim) or cultural (Yemeni and American), describe people whose personal and community lives were engaged with one another at multiple levels at different sites and on different continents. The mechanisms for such engagement are examined as are the impact of these multiple spaces on the students' school lives.

Classic sociological theory maintains that a sojourner is one who remains attached to his or her own ethnic group while simultaneously living in isolation and staying apart from the host society. The sojourn itself is conceived as a "job" during which one travels back and forth during intervening years to the homeland (Siu 1952). While this definition is compelling and often describes the migratory movement of immigrant populations in the US, it is difficult to operationalize, especially when certain immigrant populations, such as the Detroit Yemenis, not only travel back and forth to Yemen but also settle in the US. Most Yemenis enter the US legally and become naturalized citizens and, importantly, settlers. Yet, the notion of "sojourner" is a useful analytical tool in the case of Yemeni Americans because, as with most immigrant populations, the desire to return

to the homeland is pervasive among settlers. Unlike other immigrant groups, however, Yemeni Americans travel back and forth to Yemen often, and in the Detroit area, the Yemenis do in fact remain geo-politically, linguistically, religiously, and culturally isolated from American life while maintaining those same ties to their homeland.

Yemeni migration is part of a larger historical trend. Arabs from the Middle East have immigrated to the United States for over a century. The early Arab immigrants assimilated American cultural norms and the English language easily, especially since they came from Judeo-Christian traditions and immigrated with the intent of making new lives for themselves and their children (Naff 1985; Naff 1994). The most recent immigrants, those who have immigrated in the last twenty-five to thirty years, are Iraqi or Yemeni in nationality and represent the "peasant" class in their countries. They moved to the Detroit area because they could find work in the large shipping and auto industries. Unlike earlier Arab immigrants, they have persisted in preserving both their Muslim ways of life and their Arab identities in the United States. Most of the Yemeni immigrants did not have any kind of formal schooling in Yemen and are illiterate or semi-literate in Arabic and in most cases, English. These immigrants have kept strong ties with their motherland—they are sojourners—buying land in Yemen with the intent of going back, visiting for long periods, and sending their children there for marriage. Consequently, the children of these immigrants straddle two worlds, the literate world of school and the home world of religious and cultural values where text (the *Qur'an*) sanctioned behavior, certain language use, disposition, and cultural norms.

Living in two worlds was both difficult and constraining for the Yemeni American Muslim girls. The Yemeni American students, and particularly the girls, were successful at school academically, even as they struggled to negotiate their Yemeni and American selves in various contexts. Studies conducted in Europe among students of North African origin show the same type of school success among high school girls (Hassini 1997; Haw 1998; Raissiguier 1994). In the case of the Yemeni girls in the US, their responsibilities were three-fold: they were responsible for upholding the honor of the family; they learned to be good mothers (most are engaged or married at the ages of 14-15); and, they strived to be successful in school. As I illustrate in this chapter, these broadly defined responsibilities did not complement each other and did in fact present incongruities between the students' personal aspirations for success and their community and/or school's demands for participation and learning in those contexts.

Making Space in America

In order to understand the Yemeni girls and boys' lives, it is important to understand the spaces which they inhabited. Davis, a suburb of Detroit, had approximately 95,000 residents during 1997-1999. Because of its shipping and auto industries, Detroit and its suburbs had been a natural destination for immigrants seeking employment for over one hundred years. Right across the border of Davis, Detroit has a population which is more than 80% African American. There is considerable poverty there and a lingering memory of the 1967 riots which contributed to White flight from Detroit. Since the 1970's, southeastern Michigan, which includes the Detroit

metropolitan area, had become the place with the highest concentration of Arabic speaking people outside of the Middle East—it was estimated that 300,000 Arabic-speaking people resided there. The Davis school district had a population of approximately 16,700 students, 49% of whom were Arabic speaking, and 15% were of Yemeni origin. The school district was ten miles long, with the Yemeni community residing primarily in the south end, about six miles away from the focal school site in the study, Cobb High School.

Davis was considered a nice place to live because of its low property taxes and its reputation of being "lily white" (Abraham and Abraham 1983). The Yemeni community occupied a ghetto-like neighborhood in the south end of Davis, where the Ford plant's "smokestacks [were] forever spewing clouds of smoke." The south end of Davis was populated mostly by Yemeni and Iraqi immigrants, while the Lebanese moved to more affluent areas in and near Davis. Lebanese Americans constituted the majority (about 41%) in Davis, while the Yemeni (about 18%) were the second largest group in the area. The median household income in the south end of Davis was $20, 125 while the mean income is $24, 541 (Zogby 1995; Zogby 1990). One third of the population did not speak English and many first generation immigrant women were illiterate in their first language. Less than half of the population could read and write English (Kuliwicki, 1987). The south end was a working-class community with two established mosques and several small coffee houses. The mosques played a vital role in people's lives, and the coffee houses were traditional Middle Eastern social institutions in which men interacted socially and politically. In some coffee houses in Davis, a traditional village hierarchy was

maintained and certain tables were held in reserve for the elderly village heads and were avoided by the younger men (Abraham 1978; Abraham and Abraham 1983). Also, the men discussed community problems in the coffeehouse and family feuds often surfaced there as well. These social institutions were distinguished both on the basis of nationality, i.e., Palestinian, Lebanese, or Yemeni, and also by the village in the Middle East that the owner represented. Virtually no women were ever seen on the streets of the south end. The few Muslim women whom I observed on the streets in the area all wore the hijab and the *abaya* (a shapeless, ankle-length dress). Some Iraqi women covered their faces so that one could only sees their eyes.

The Davis school district included twenty-eight schools, three of which were high schools. Davis High School's students were predominantly white and middle-to-upper middle class. Finkle High School's students were predominantly (about 75%) Arab American and Lebanese in origin. At least 15 out of 80 of Finkle's teachers were Arab American. These students came from both working class and middle-class families. Cobb High School, the school on which I focus, had approximately 1,420 students and ninety teachers. Forty to forty-five percent of the students were Arabic-speaking and 41% were of Yemeni origin. During the 1998-1999 academic year, there were eleven Arabic speaking teachers and staff, the majority of whom worked in the bilingual program, which served mainly of newly arrived Yemeni and Iraqi immigrants. Cobb's mission was to be "committed to preparing [its] students to be responsible and well-informed." Historically, Cobb High School began to receive students from Middle Eastern origin in the mid-1980s. Before that, it was a predominantly "White" school. I chose Cobb as the

site for my study because in making initial contact with the community, I learned that the school and its students were experiencing difficulties adjusting to one another as the number of Arabic-speaking students increased. I wanted to learn more about the process of accommodation in this site. Also, the high school students who lived in the south end were bussed to Cobb, rather than Finkle or Davis.

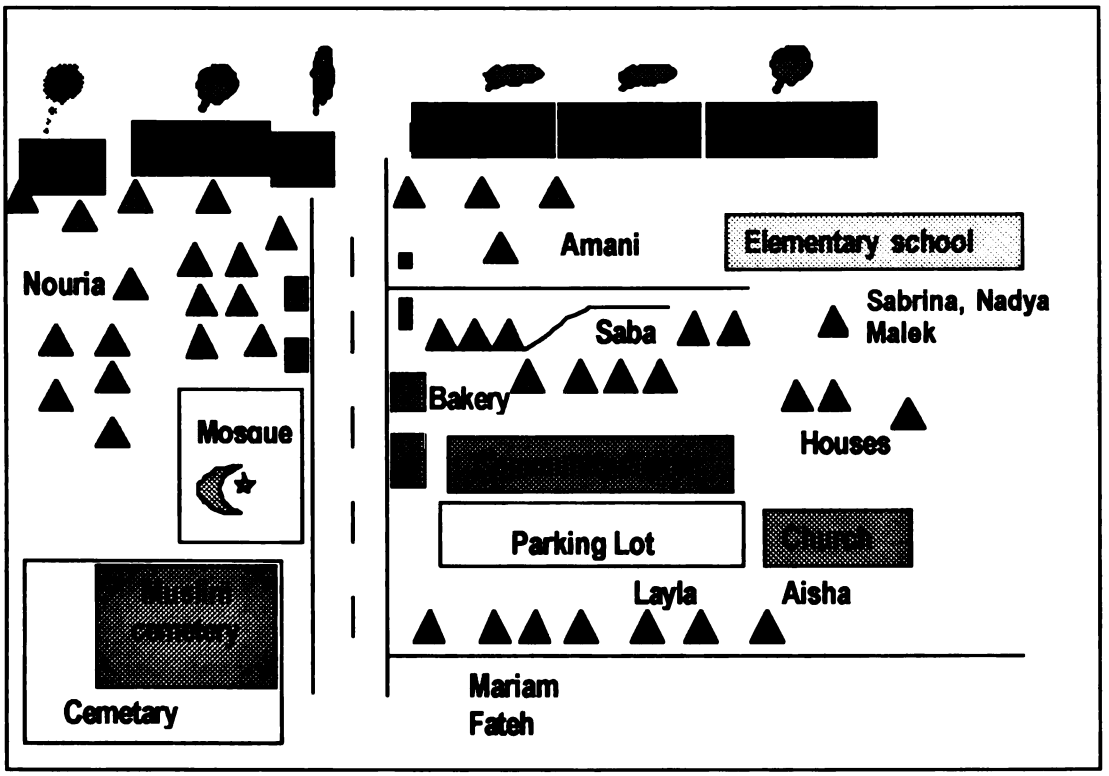

Figure 1: The Southend

In many ways, the south end of Davis existed apart from the rest of the city (see Figure 1). Local people even called it the "Southend" to denote its separate identity, and henceforth, I use that label. The Southend was blocked from Davis by a wall of factories and smoke stacks, and the people who lived there formed their own cultural and linguistic spaces which they traversed cautiously and usually through an intermediary, such as the local community center which provided social, educational, and economic services. The

centrally located community center was the only place where the hijabat gathered as paid tutors from three to six p.m. each day to work with mostly Yemeni elementary school children from the neighborhood. During 1997-1999, rarely did I observe the girls alone in any other context. All of the girls in the Southend walked a block or so to the community center and back home each day. On the weekends, they went shopping at the mall with their older brothers, or married sisters, and/or their parents. Whereas one might have seen non-Arab teenagers walking in groups throughout the mall, the Yemenis went out as families—going out to eat or shop was considered a family outing. That was always the case for the hijabat, but, for boys, this varied because parents tended to be more lenient with them, allowing boys more freedom of movement farther away from the home. For example, many of the boys worked after school and were allowed to work at the airport or in restaurants in downtown Detroit. A girl was rarely allowed to distance herself from the home and to be seen in public working in what is considered to be male domains. The reason for this was that public notice could ultimately lead to the loss of her good reputation and the onset of gossip as discussed in chapter two. Therefore, if girls worked at all, they did so in the community center and rarely stepped outside the boundaries of the Southend. They left the Southend only to go to school or during family outings.

The Southend was a dynamic and lively enclave. There was much visiting among the families who lived quite close to one another. Many of the houses were actually duplexes which were shared by two families who were related or, in some cases, part of the house was rented out to newly arrived Yemeni boys and men from the same village in Yemen. People in the Southend tended to socialize with family members such as cousins

or with people from the same village back home. There were two good reasons for this: first, there existed dialect differences from village to village in Yemen. One of the girls told me that she and her neighbor were not related, "We don't even understand each other when we talk—we're from different villages." Second, political alliances were important and parents associated with people with whom they had a connection back in Yemen. This was useful for marriage purposes and for increasing one's status in the village upon returning to Yemen for a long-term stay. In effect, this meant that both boys and girls lived in two very different worlds and by different rules at home and school; the distance from Southend to Yemen appeared to be much closer than the six-mile distance from the Southend to Cobb High School.

The Influence of Yemeni Spaces in the US

What connections did the girls experience with Yemen? How did these connections, this mingling of spaces within and without the US, impact their school lives? In order to answer these questions, it is worthwhile to consider migratory patterns in Yemen and from Yemen to the US, for it is clear that life in the US, particularly in the Southend, was often mitigated by events in Yemen. According to Molyneux (1998), a transitory period occurred between 1990 and 1994, during which time the commonly known states of North Yemen (Yemen Arab Republic) and South Yemen (People's Democratic Republic of Yemen) were united into what we currently know as Yemen. Coincidentally, it was at this time and during the several preceding years, since 1985, that the Southend received record numbers of Yemeni immigrants, mostly high school-aged

boys and young men. When Yemen became unified in 1990, South Yemen (formerly controlled by the British), which had had one of the most egalitarian secular codes in the Arab world, came under the heavy-handed and more religiously conservative influence of North Yemen. For example, South Yemen had adopted a "scientific socialism" when the British withdrew in 1967. Their family law stated explicitly the equality of men and women. In addition, free choice marriage was established and the minimal age for marriage was age 16 for women and 18 for men. Polygamy was prohibited except in cases of disease and barrenness, and bride price was reduced to 100 Riyal (approximately twice the average white-collar monthly salary) in 1974. Both spouses would bear the cost of supporting their family and unilateral divorce or *talaq* by the man was banned. Divorce could only take place in the courts, and men were also not automatically given custody of the children.

North Yemen family law was different. In 1979, for example, polygamy was permitted and the man had the right to unilateral divorce. Islamic law or the *shari'a* was the source of all laws as it had been for many years. During the transition period of unification (1990-1994), the family law was rewritten and women's rights, according to Molyneux, appeared in a section called "social problems" after sections devoted to illiteracy, tribal vengeance, and the use of the popular, mildly hallucinogenic narcotic, *qat*. By 1992, Yemeni law had been revised to permit men four wives and to reduce the minimum marriage age for both men and women to fifteen. Forced marriages were illegal, but silence from previously unmarried women constituted consent—a woman who had already been married had to give explicit consent. Marriage could be dissolved through

the courts, but the husband had unilateral right to divorce. A woman had the right to petition for divorce, if her husband did not treat her as he did his other wives, if there was an addiction to drugs or alcohol, if he refused to work, or if there was a prolonged absence by the husband. All in all, North Yemen's influence in South Yemen was made easier by the fact that South Yemen's more liberal laws had never been fully implemented, especially with the migration of North Yemeni men who wanted to find work in South Yemen. Furthermore, families in South Yemen had protested against women's residential colleges, and Saudi Arabia had also criticized South Yemen's "atheistic" legal reforms, especially the appointment of women judges in the family courts (Molyneux, p. 139). Control over bride price was no longer enforced and increased to from 8,000-10,000 Riyal ($1, 780 to $2, 225) to 55,000-60,000 Riyal ($12, 225 to $13, 335) in the 1970s and 1980s (Stevenson and Baker 1991, p. 42). All of these legal changes, in addition to civil war in the two Yemeni states, motivated men to travel elsewhere to find work then return to buy land or to marry.

Although the Yemeni are relative newcomers to the US, they have emigrated to other countries for centuries. Historically, North Yemen and, to some extent, South Yemen, have depended on labor as their primary export. "The strategy based on remittances channeled back to the mother country continues to be at the heart of the labor-intensive migration for Yemenis" (Friedlander 1988, p. ix). In fact, as much as one-fourth of the Yemeni male population emigrates, especially during times of political unrest, thus forcing Yemen to rely heavily on remittances, which account for one-third of Yemen's gross national product. Unfortunately, money sent back to Yemen has not been

invested productively; it was has been spent on consumer goods such as cars, VCRs, and inflated bride-prices instead of long-term development of industry or better farming technology. Therefore, men generally have tended to make long sojourns for work once the funds they do bring back to Yemen are depleted.The women have been left behind to tend to the land and to farm qat, one of the most popular farm crops and a national pastime that is uniquely Yemeni in the Arab world.

From 1975 on, families began to emigrate from Yemen to the US. According to the 1980 Census, at least twenty thousand Yemenis immigrated to Michigan, California, New York, and Ohio. Most of these immigrants came from North Yemen. The majority of emigrants were men who, after a productive work period in the U.S., went back to their villages to give money, buy land, finance weddings, and build homes. However, the increase in the number of Yemeni families immigrating to the US resulted in a growing Islamic conservatism as men struggled to preserve their families' cultural integrity within American society (Swanson 1988). This increased conservatism in the US mirrored that of the North Yemen's influence on South Yemen, which also continued to be steadily influenced by Saudi Arabia, where many Yemeni men emigrated to work in the oil fields. Historically, Muslim men had been reluctant to bring their families to the US (Naff 1985), and for those who have remained here, the concern for their children's futures had increased such that relationships between Yemen and the US were closely maintained.

> One difference between the American ethos and the Yemeni ethos is in the attitude toward moral responsibility. Americans emphasize that the individual is ultimately responsible for his own behavior. By contrast, Yemeni culture insists that it is the community that is responsible for evolving a social and political system that at once protects the individual

> from temptation and ensures his conformity to group values (Swanson 1988, p. 63).

In Davis, the Yemenis gained control of the mosque from the Lebanese community in the Southend, and with funding for the mosque from Saudi Arabia, they struggled to maintain traditional, cultural, and religious norms, especially among the youth. Barth (1969) observed that a person's maintenance of an ethnic identity depends upon both the perceived advantages of membership in the ethnic group and his or her ability to perform in his or her ethnic role. Invariably, it was to the girls' advantage to maintain cultural mores in the Southend, otherwise the consequences were dire. The loss of one's good reputation resulted in parents pulling their daughters out of school, forcing an early marriage, and sending them to Yemen. Sometimes, if in grave situations in which the family's honor was at stake, fathers and brothers killed their daughters/sisters (Aswad and Bilgé 1996). For the boys, many of whom lived with extended family members while their parents remained in Yemen, life in the US meant an opportunity to earn money and to send it back home. Unlike the boys, girls always lived with their parents who immigrated to the US, and in this study the girls were either born here or immigrated from Yemen at a very young age (infant to age four). In general, for both boys and girls, being Yemeni and American was problematic, especially for the girls whose good reputation reinforced a family's status both in the Southend and in a village in Yemen.

The Case of Layla: A Representative Portrait

Over two years, I learned much about Layla and her family. We communicated at school, at the community center, at parties and weddings, and by written correspondence and telephone when I was away from Davis. I interviewed her mother and met all of her friends in different contexts, such as in the mosque during Arabic school and at school, in the "Ramadan room," where all the Muslim students fasted during the holy month. Layla's story is not unique. She had much in common with the other five girls in the larger study. Her story, however, illustrates concretely her negotiation of the two worlds she inhabited, and especially her role in relation to the village in Yemen and her family in Davis.

Layla was a sojourner. She wanted to live in the US, but she also enjoyed going to Yemen because her family enjoyed a high status there as American Yemenis. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a sojourner is one who lodges in another's house—one's living space is temporary. In many ways, Layla and the Yemeni girls in this study lived in suspense, not knowing explicitly which space they were likely to inhabit in the near future. She navigated multiple spaces and found a "home" in managing the liminal spaces she occupied. In addition, it was not always clear to Layla whether she was American or Yemeni and her attitude towards her home and school lives reflected her consternation with both. Undeniably, she was a Yemeni Muslim, and her Muslim space, governed by ritual and sanctioned practice, permitted a view of the world which was not always satisfying, at least not to a young adolescent girl with dreams for a bright future and who was exposed to alternative images of what she could become.

Layla's story illustrates the irreconcilability of the spaces she inhabited. It is possible that in two or three generations from now, Americans of Yemeni or Arab origin will not experience such tension or the intensive and constant negotiation of home, school, and "old country" worlds. But for the moment, the Yemeni girls lived lives full of uncertainties, not knowing whether they would finish high school or get married, go to Yemen or perhaps attend college. In all likelihood, the girls would marry early. The early marriages of daughters and sons to Yemeni nationals (although boys were usually not married as early as the girls) was the mechanism by which these Arab families preserved and maintained their ethnicity. The advantages of such marriages were three-fold: 1)young men from Yemen obtained residency in the US and were able to send remittances to their families, thus continuing Yemen's successful economic dependence on emigration; 2)particular family or village affiliations grew larger in the Southend, bringing increased status and wealth to the family on both continents and ensuring that the girls ere supported; and 3)religious and cultural traditions were, to a large extent, reproduced—Arabic remained the language of the home because one of the spouses was usually illiterate in English. Under such circumstances the girls from the Southend grew up remarkably fast. In light of these governing factors, Ogbu's (Ogbu 1982; Ogbu 1982a; Ogbu 1993) cultural-ecological model is useful for understanding what is required for such adaptation and the successful realization of cultural mores. In Layla's case, regardless of the events which occurred outside her home culture, she still had to learn to become Yemeni in the same manner her parents were Yemeni. Consequently, because the hijabat shared their parents' lives, they were also sojourners, with each foot planted in a different

space. However, even the intimate spaces of domestic and ritual life, meaning and behavior, were shaped by the contexts of the larger society.

Layla and the other hijabat experienced a primary affiliation with their Yemeni family, village, Arabs in general, and their religion. Their secondary affiliation was to America, but here the boundaries were not very clear, for America was their country while Yemen was their *imagined* homeland, at least until they traveled there to visit and to marry. For the girls, the sojourn was really a feeling of impermanence, a disembodiment with the local environment and a simultaneous intellectual and emotional connection with a familial root of origin. Layla's story illustrates in detail the sojourn nature of her life at home and school.

Layla, like all the other Yemeni American students, identified herself as Yemeni, Arab, and American, in that order. She thought of herself, as the others hijabat did, as Arab and not "White," a category reserved for "Americans." Both of her parents were "Yemeni, just like me," even though she was born in the US. Her father was born in "the village" in North Yemen where there were not many work or education opportunities. He arrived in the US at age 16 in the late 1960s. Her mother was born in the city of Aden, the old capital of South Yemen and lived alongside the British. She arrived in the US in the 1970s with Layla's older brothers. Layla's father had immigrated some years before and worked in the auto factories. Layla's parents make an unusual couple—they were not cousins and one of them was from a city and from the South, which most northern Yemenis considered to be of lower status and too liberal. However, Layla's parents met through common family friends and lived in relative social and economic security among

their north Yemeni neighbors in the Southend. Layla's father worked at the Ford River Rouge Plant, and her mother did not work outside the home, although she did volunteer work for a while at the nearby elementary school on the playground during recess. Layla's parents had some elementary education in Yemen. Her mother went through sixth grade in the city and was exposed to English. Both parents had minimal fluency in English (they did not read or write or speak English much) and an overall fair fluency in Arabic (although I could not confirm whether the father read and wrote in Arabic). Layla was a fair reader and speaker of Arabic and her writing ability was minimal. Layla's family income was about $1200-1600 per month. Her two older brothers, both in their mid to late-twenties, attended college and worked at jobs away from the neighborhood.

Layla was married at the age of 15 in Yemen to her first cousin. Marriages were important events in the Southend. They signified a girl's coming of age, a time during which her role as a Yemeni woman rather than a high school girl was reinforced. Some of the girls were reluctant to admit that they were married. They preferred, instead, to continue with school as other teenagers did. During the 1997-1998 school year, which was her sophomore year, Layla's family spent six months in Yemen visiting relatives. Layla was married then, and upon her return, she attempted to keep her marriage a secret from her friends, who nonetheless were made privy to the information because her father was so proud of the union between her and her first cousin from her father' side, a *sayyid*,

a direct descendent of the prophet Muhammad.[10] Her father told most of the community about the happy event. Her husband paid a bride price of 200,000 Riyal (approximately $1,333; today $1≈150 Riyal), but Layla believed that she was worth much more and that this was not enough for her. The marriage was not consummated immediately, but the *ahked* (loosely translated as a binding betrothal of marriage) took place in Yemen, and in the US, this constituted a legal marriage. Layla did not wear a ring and never discussed her marriage at school. She wanted to divorce here twenty-year-old husband—whom she said she had not seen since their return—because she knew that marrying one's first cousin was "bad." He worked in a factory in Davis and did not live with her family. Layla insisted that she married in order that the young man could enter the country as a legal US resident. Helping cousins or village friends from Yemen enter the US was often a bi-product of marriage for many of the girls, including Layla and Nouria, another of the hijabat in the study. Unfortunately for Layla and Nouria, they could not obtain divorces while their husbands awaited their naturalization papers from the US Immigration and Naturalization Service. And, in fact, they could not initiate divorce proceedings at all because, as was their custom in Yemen and in the Southend, only the man had the right to unilateral divorce, or *talaq*. To bypass immigration restrictions, both girls were willing to travel back to Yemen and have their husbands declare the divorce[11] and quickly return to

[10] I did not know that Layla was married until a year later. Throughout my interviews and "shadowing" of her during the first year of fieldwork, she never mentioned the fact and did not wear a wedding ring. She told me she was married during the second year of fieldwork and explained then that she wanted a divorce.
[11] During talaq, the husband declares three times, "I divorce you." Once that is done, according to the shari'a, the divorce is final. However, there is a legally prescribed period, *iddat*, after the divorce and during which neither husband nor wife can marry. During that time the wife cannot reverse the talaq, but the husband has the right to return (see Molyneux 1998, for a more detailed explanation).

the US and worry about a legal divorce at a later time. In other words, the girls were much more concerned with the Islamic laws governing their marriages than with US law which bound them legally to their husbands. They were very careful, as in Nouria's case, not to be seen associating with their husbands at school or in the community. This validated the marriage even further and perhaps would destroy their reputations, since the marriages had not been consummated. Nouria confessed that she had done everything—from insulting her husband to asking him to talk to her father directly—to "get him to divorce [her]," but nothing worked. Layla was not as forceful, but she, too, wanted to do the same. She did not want to disappoint her family. The union between her family and her husband's family was a difficult one to break, especially since her husband's family was related to her through her father. Marriage for these girls was an unsettling process, but there was often no exit once the ahked took place.

Marriage was in many ways an obstacle. Importantly, the institution of marriage brought to the surface cultural tensions which were not easily reconciled in the Yemeni girls' American spaces. Layla recognized that daughters in the US have doors open to them and more opportunities than do the girls in Yemen. A friend who was a 4.0 student told her, "I really don't want to go to high school no more cuz I know my mom, my parents won't let me go to college" (Interview, 10/14/98). This depressed Layla, who was a good student herself, and made her angry because her friend was intelligent and had a bright future ahead of her. "And that's what makes me mad," she emphasized, "we're not like the girls in Yemen. We have a chance to do something with our lives and they just wanna think, oh, no. You're going to get married and do this. That's not how it is. I

mean, I would never do that to my kids" (Interview, 10/14/98). In Yemen, according to Layla, even though she considered it to be a primitive place, a good education was respected. Many of women regretted not going to college, and "a lot of them wanted to do something with their lives." Layla had a cousin in Yemen, for example, whose father stopped her from going to school in the sixth grade even though she wanted to continue. Now, at twenty-one, Layla's cousin wanted to train to be a seamstress, so that she could at least make a living sewing clothes for people, since ready-made clothes were so expensive to purchase. Layla could not come to terms with her cousin's situation; it seemed somehow alien, even though it reflected her own fears for her future during and after her last year of high school.

Despite its minor role in Yemen, education was important, perhaps as important as marriage, to the Yemeni community in the Southend.[12] Although the parents of the hijabat in this study had not received much formal schooling, they took seriously their daughters and sons' education. They sent their children to public school and to Arabic school on the weekends—most of the Yemeni community children attended school seven days a week. At the same time, however, the Southend community feared the social aspects of public schooling and limited their children's experiences there. For example, there were certain classes, such as gym, which caused anxiety and frustration among the Yemeni girls, an anxiety mirrored by their parents. The girls had requested their own classes with a female teacher, but because of the lack of space, they still shared the same

[12] See Shamsavary, Saqeb, and Halstead (1993) for an historical analysis of Islamic education and scholarship in the Arab world.

gym with the boys. The girls worried about being seen in t-shirts, and Layla did not feel right when a boy watched her as she ran on the track or inside the gym. Her arms showed and her chest jiggled, she often said. She commented that at lunch, the school accepted who they were. The girls went their way and the boys, the other. In class, socializing with boys was fine because they talked about school work; elsewhere, it did not feel right, and in gym it was wrong. Sabrina, one of the two hijabat in college clarified Layla's uneasiness with gym, ". . . a sport is jumping and running and doing. . .a girl should be, because of the way I'm raised and the way it is, you know, a girl is supposed to sit, you know, legs crossed" (Interview, 1/27/98). Although only three semesters of gym were required at Cobb , some girls enrolled in the class for four years, continually failing it each time because they did not dress in gym clothes or participate in class. This situation was exasperating for them and their teachers.

Social life in school was monitored as well as curtailed by family members. "She's supposed to be quiet, walk in the halls like nobody knows her...," Layla explained the girl's role in school (Interview, 2/11/98). Layla's brothers told her not to hang out with the "loud ones, the ones who always laugh, the ones who always play around." If Layla was too loud, then people would say that she was trying to draw attention to herself from the boys. This was a common thread in all the girls' interviews and in my observations of school life. At Cobb the gendering of common spaces by both Yemeni boys and girls was reinforced at home and school. For example, when Layla was required to take Technical Education, her brothers questioned her about it because was not a "girl's class." They did not want her to take auto shop either. She enrolled in the same

classes as her friends, i.e., home making or clothing. One of Layla's best friends, Aisha, a high achiever, refused to take classes in which she was the only hijabat and dropped them and took other ones. The Yemeni boys generally stayed out of classes such as clothing or home making as did almost all of the boys at Cobb. These were girls' spaces, and as a teacher observed, these classes were the only places in the school where the Arab girls felt safe enough to remove their scarves sometimes.

Ironically, school was still an actively social place for the hijabat, even when they experienced cultural tensions between American/Yemeni and female/male spaces. Layla liked school because she socialized with friends—school was one of the few places where all the girls could see one another. But, she admitted, there were grudges and there was prejudice among Arabs and non-Arabs. Layla distinguished her "American friends" from her Yemeni friends by levels of connection and comfort: ["My friends] are all Yemeni because that's who I like. You know, I like to hang around with my, the people that I really connect with" (Interview, 2/11/98).

In addition to family concerns about school and its potential negative social influences, the hijabat also lived under the constant watch of Yemeni boys. Much like Foucault's (1977) famous panopticon,[13] the girls' behavior was often altered by the gaze of these boys, especially in the hallways, in the cafeteria, and during after-school activities. For example, Layla had been involved in a few extracurricular activities before going to Yemen, but nothing that took place after school. She found that life could be

frustrating at school when the girls participated in extra-curricular activities. One of Layla's friends, a Yemeni American girl who did not wear the hijab, wanted to run track. When the boys found out that she wanted to join the track team, they began to spread rumors about her. "They don't want us to do anything!" Layla exclaimed. The boys at Cobb had a subtle but potent surveillance role—they were the ones who reported girls as having bad reputations to parents and the community. Bad reputations were constituted of certain behaviors, such as being too loud, talking with boys, and participating in after-school activities. Most of the girls at school, as in Foucault's description of prison inmates, internalized the threat they perceived from the boys' gazes and changed their behavior accordingly. The hijabat were quiet and kept their distance as much as possible. The married girls especially feared the false rumors that reached their husbands.

The wave of religious conservatism experienced by the Southend in the 1980s and 1990's paralleled that of North Yemen and the Middle East. Layla observed that the boys in the neighborhood and parents had grown very strict, always watching the goings-on of the girls. "Nobody trusts anybody for some reason." It was her understanding that in Yemen, people behaved normally while in the US, everyone "got the wrong idea" and said "people are going to talk about you." At the mosque, during the Arabic school for girls only, Layla and the girls were told by the teachers to look down when they walked in the hallways of the Davis public schools, otherwise boys would look directly in their eyes and have evil thoughts. When Layla entered high school her life changed. "I came into

[13] According to Foucault, the panopticon, a building designed by sociologist Jeremy Benthanm, automatizes and disindividualizes power. For example, in the peripheric ring of the building, one is totally

high school and everybody told me you gotta do this, you gotta do this, you gotta do this and this in order to live a happy life in high school. And that was don't look at guys, don't talk to guys, don't laugh loud in the hallways, don't socialize a lot in the hallways. Just keep up the education" (Interview, 2/11/98). Layla did not associate with boys unless the talk was about homework. She knew a girl, for example, who ran away and married a Black boy from Detroit who was not a Muslim. Her parents had had a Yemeni boy from Yemen in mind for her. This incident frightened the whole community, which became suspicious of anything over which they did not have control. School yearbooks, for instance, became an issue of control among all of the Yemeni girls and their families following the incident of the run-away girl. It appeared that boys would cut out girls' photos and tell everyone that "so and so is my girlfriend." This caused parents to worry about their daughters' reputations, so many girls were prevented from having their photos taken for the yearbook. This incident was followed by the publication of a pamphlet, "Awareness." It was written by one of the high school boys and was passed around stating (in Layla's words) "that a girl holds the family's name. She reflects on her family and the parents have a hold on her. She can't be a "ho" [whore]; otherwise it reflects badly on the parents. Girls shouldn't listen to American music on the school buses, especially to songs that are sexually explicit" (Interview, 2/11/98). Layla keenly observed that when the girls were so controlled by others, they tried to break away and they chose the wrong way, such as talking and forming relationships with boys or disregarding their

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seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen" (p. 202).

Yemeni community, parents, and friends. As a result, parents married off their daughters early and to people from Yemen.

School was not the only place that was worrisome among the Yemeni families in the Southend. Any space outside the home was questionable, at least for the women. For Layla, life centered in the immediacy of her home. Her younger sister walked the few blocks to attend Arabic school with all the neighborhood girls and her mother usually stayed home. Only her brothers and her father left the vicinity of the house when they went to work. Layla volunteered at the community center, a few blocks from her home, and handed her earnings to her parents who maintained houses in the Southend and in Yemen. She was allowed to work at the community center because her friend and next-door neighbor, Aisha, did as well and her mother trusted this particular friend and her family. "She [Aisha] has a clean rep. She [Layla's mother] thinks she's a very good girl. My mom has a lot of trust in me because of the friends I have" (Interview, 2/11/98). In other words, Layla's activities were limited to those of the "good" girls in the neighborhood. This satisfied her parents' safety concerns and ensured that everyone knew she was behaving properly.

In effect, Layla and her mother's social lives revolved around their nearby relatives and neighbors, whom they visited often. Layla usually went out shopping or to a neighbor's house with Aisha and Aisha's married sister. The girls were not allowed to go to movies, and most of them had never been inside of a movie theater. Layla hoped to go to the movies with Aisha, but because Aisha's parents did not allow their daughter to go, Layla's parents also decided not to let Layla go. Movie theaters posed a threat: "the room

is dark and people do bad things in there, like making out," Layla explained. If Layla did go, she would have to go with someone of whom her parents approved. For example, Layla was allowed to see Titanic because Sabrina and Mariam, the two older "good" girls in charge of the tutors at the community center, went. "I'd be allowed to go because Mariam, she lives right next to me, too, and my parents, they're like, she's a really good role model. You know, because she's in college, you know, she drives a car and she has a job." In other words, as this description of Layla's travel through different physical spaces illustrates, Mariam's proximity to Layla's family and her good reputation (as the one of the few Yemeni girls in college) played an important role in the parents' decision to allow Layla to participate in an activity away from the home. The same held true for all the girls. They tended to be involved as a group when they participated in activities outside the home so that there was no question of inappropriate behavior or issues of safety. Importantly, the group comprised of girls whose reputations were above reproach and whose families had high status (religious and economic) positions in the community.

As with all the girls, Layla had many chores to do at home. Learning how to do to housework and how to cook at an early age served two functions. First, most Yemeni families in the Southend had at least four children, sometimes seven to twelve children, and the older girls were needed to help around the house. Second, because the girls were usually married at an early age, between twelve and fifteen, they were expected to know how to care for their own homes in the future. Layla, for example, cleaned as soon as she arrived home from school and after she worked at the community center. During the

weekends, she learned how to cook with her mother and all the cousins were invited for a family dinner. Layla was preparing herself for her own home and marriage. As one of the other hijabat, Amani, said, "I have more home responsibilities now. I have to do more cooking. My mom expects me to know how to do things for the future. Ladies come over and look me over, look my cooking over. It's a lot of pressure" (Interview, 10/23/98). Like Layla, Amani was expected to perform well in the kitchen and at home, for it was likely that she would be married to one of the visiting ladies' relations. As Layla grew older, her mother spent more time with her teaching her how to cook Yemeni dishes. "She's accepting me more as a lady, more grown up. She's respecting my privacy for one thing," Layla said about her mother (Interview, 10/14/98, p. 5). Layla felt that she was more of a woman than a girl and that her mother's treatment of her had changed accordingly. She included Layla in decision making, asked her for advice or information, and took her along when shopping or visiting friends. Her brothers stopped wrestling with her as they used to do. Now, the siblings had serious conversations. As was noted above with Amani, Layla was preparing for duties in her own home. Yet, while she understood the changes that were occurring, she did not accept them willingly. Her mother often compared her to other girls who cleaned the whole house and who could cook a whole dinner, while she had yet to make an entire meal. Layla was methodical while her mother could do several things at the same time. "I'm like children of America," she would say, alluding to the fact that her American self was rebelling against what she perceived as Yemeni responsibilities. Her mother often grew impatient if she perceived her daughter to be avoiding housework or homework.

It is clear that the Yemeni girls from the Southend shouldered much responsibility at a young age. They had to excel in all domains of their lives: school, at home, and housekeeping in preparation for marriage. These responsibilities took their toll, making school a burden for some rather than a means for social and intellectual development and mobility. When Layla reached her junior year of high school, she decided to take school more seriously because she was worried about her future and what she would be able to accomplish. She focused more on her studies and less on her friends, and she noticed that her teachers were also focusing more on preparing students for college. Doing well in school increased the likelihood that she would be able to attend college. In many ways, Layla had to prove to her parents that she could improve her grades from those of the previous year, from a 3.0 to better. Her grades would be her ticket to college, otherwise there would not be much hope of her going. Layla observed that many of the Arab girls gave up in high school—"they wasted four years of their lives when they said that they were going to be married." She claimed that the Arab girls got lazy in school, knowing that they could not go to college, "so what's the point of trying?" She wanted to prove to her friends that they could go by going herself. She paid attention to her teachers, who had told her that she was a good student, an overachiever. Layla liked to hear this praise because she struggled with her home responsibilities.

At times, Layla was confused and unhappy with her situation at home. She preferred to be at school. One cause of her unhappiness was her father's use of qat, a legal narcotic in Yemen, but an illegal one in the US. Like many men and women in Yemen, Layla's father invited his male friends to his house where they sat in a room

whose perimeter was covered by mattresses. There, they discussed political issues, smoked a tobacco pipe, and chewed qat. Qat, or *Catha Edulis*, is a shrub grown in Yemen, the leaves of which when chewed (within twenty-four hours of its cutting), produce a mild euphoria. In Yemen as in the Southend, qat is an important social acitivity—qat parties are arenas for announcing news and reinforcing social status (Stevenson and Baker 1991, p. 46). In fact, qat and coffee make up ten percent of all cultivated land in Yemen. Religious authorities sanction qat but the Yemeni government is opposed to it because it is considered to be a health hazard, a drain on household budgets, and an obstacle to economic development, since qat parties may start at one in the afternoon and continue into the evening (Varisco 1986). Nevertheless, the Yemeni government does profit considerably from the production and marketing of qat. In the case of Layla's family, qat was a large expense—one *rubta* or bundle for a day of chew cost between fifteen and twenty dollars—and made life harder for them. With all the expenses in Yemen and home expenses in the Southend, including qat, life was not "what it used to be." Layla preferred going to school where she could be with friends who understood her problems and with whom she could talk. "They make me feel like really happy. I have friends that have to deal with the same issue. . . they deal with the same things" (Interview, 2/11/98).

Home life was complicated even further by what Layla perceived to be a gender bias in the Yemeni community. Her mother wanted her to go to college, but her father pushed marriage. Layla was often angry with the fact that girls in Yemen were taken out of school during their elementary years. "They're not given the freedom of choosing

education." She argued that if she was not going to have a choice about going to college, she might as well stop school now. She maintained that parents felt differently about education with regard to boys and girls. "A guy is supposed to have an education because he's the only thing that can hold a family together; he'd feel low if he depended on his wife for money" (Interview, 2/11/98). Sometimes, Layla thought this is the way things were. "Like, if you're lucky to graduate [from high school], you know, good for you, but you still gotta go home to the kitchen." At least, that is what her aunt always told her. The girls did not go to college, although Miriam and Sabrina were exceptions among the Yemeni in the Southend. The boys went unless they had families to support, although, for the boys, college as more of an option when it provided the better paying job. If Layla had been able to do anything she wanted in the world she would have gotten "rid of the boys at school because they stress[ed] the girls out so much." She stated plainly that she wanted to be rid of all the selfish and foolish guys that made girls uncomfortable. "You know, it's like you can never trust a person. You never know what they'll do to you" (Interview, 2/11/98). She thought that the boys had been given too much freedom, more so than the girls because the attitude was that boys could take care of themselves. The girl is thought to be more vulnerable and that was why she was covered up, especially if she was attractive. Layla saw herself going to college, becoming a nurse, a teacher, or doing pharmacy or politics, but she did not think she could do politics because "being an Arabic girl," she could not go into something that is "supposedly a man's job." As it turned out, the hijabat in the study and most of the Yemeni American girls with whom I spoke in the high school and at parties hoped to become nurses and

teachers, vocations which they thought would go hand-in-hand with motherhood and their future home lives.

Perhaps the most troubling issue for Layla and other Yemeni girls was the question of the return to Yemen. Layla's mother wanted to go back to Yemen and stay. She was happy in the US at first, but no longer. Yemen had changed for the better and her parents wanted to return. Layla emphasized her parents' sojourn mentality: "They come here, looking for work, and as soon as they're retired, they just go back because they see nothing else for them here. What else, they're just gonna live in poverty over here. So they just go back to their own homeland and they'll be like respected so much and they'll receive a check for $1000, like every month. So, they'll be living like the middle class here in Yemen" (Interview, 2/11/98). Several of the Southend families wanted to return to Yemen where their retirement pensions would place them solidly in the middle and upper-middle class and where they would enjoy a higher social status. Most of the girls did not want to leave the US. At school they saw that the "boaters" (a pejorative term used at Cobb to denote new immigrants and others who do not conform to particular social norms, such as wearing the right shoes) were boys who, like her father, came to the US, because there was nothing for them in Yemen. According to Layla, these boys come from the villages, the lower classes, and were uneducated. When they came to the US, they could not believe all the girls and women they saw so openly and did not relate well to this change. Layla was afraid of becoming part of that village life in Yemen. She liked traveling to and being in Yemen with her parents as member of the upper classes, "who are more sophisticated and have interesting conversations." She enjoyed

the high status of being and American Yemeni in Yemen. However, she did not want to be married to a village man (although she was) who did not have that status. Once in a while, when Layla purposefully forgot that she was legally married, she fantasized about having a boyfriend. When she saw people walking hand in hand in the school hallways or at the mall, she could not wait to be married to the man she would chose so that she could hold his hand. Instead, Layla was expected to go with her family to Yemen after she graduated from high school. Her father wanted to retire there because their house was built. She was afraid of making this journey and being unable to return to the US and go to college. All the same, she wanted to travel to Yemen just to obtain a divorce through the shari'a. She did not want marriage unless "[she] fell in love with a millionaire or something." For Layla the journey to Yemen was one fraught with anxiety, for she had no control over events in which she played a central, albeit, silent role.

The return to Yemen was in fact marked by the imposition of cultural norms that grew steadily more frequent as the Yemeni girls matured. Layla's father for instance, had a strong influence on her behavior and dress. He told her when she entered the third grade that she had to wear the hijab because other girls did. He wanted her to wear an *abaya* (an ankle-length dress worn over one's clothes) but Layla insisted on wearing loose jeans and large, long-sleeved shirts. Sometimes, she wore a long skirt, but upon her family's return from Yemen during the tenth grade, her father identified her with the women from Yemen, suggesting that Layla had finally learned who she really was: "And then he'll tell me. . . 'now that you went to Yemen, you see how we are, why don't you just wear like a, you know, an abaya?'" Layla explained that one of the girls at school, Saba, always

wore abayas to school and that her father was used to seeing women wearing those and covering their faces and hair in the house. During her stay in Yemen, Layla wondered why she had to wear the hijab in the house when men were not present. Her mother never dressed that way in the early 1970's when she lived in Aden shortly after British colonialism ended. Layla thought she related better to her mother's "society," the city life as opposed to her father's "village life." "I really, I relate to my mother and I really don't accept my father's kind of living" (Interview, 2/11/98). She said that her father did not know that there was a difference between there and here. "He still doesn't accept it." Yet, Layla had to contend with the cultural norms of her imagined and very real homeland, and as she grew older those become more explicit and less flexible.

Layla was not alone in experiencing inconsistencies between her American and Yemeni lives. All of the girls struggled with these issues every day as did some of the boys. Layla's brother, for instance, married his first cousin in Yemen. According to Layla, they were not close cousins, which indicated that in the Yemeni patrilineal society, marrying someone from the mother's side meant that blood ties were not as strong. "In our tradition, you're more closer to your dad's side than you are to your mother's side" (Interview, 2/11/98). This was an interesting point. The idea that a mother's line is not as strong as that of a father's was disturbing to the girls, especially when they learned in biology class that this was, in fact, wrong. Countless times during my fieldwork, the hijabat would ask if marrying a cousin was healthy. Layla worried incessantly about being married to her first cousin on the father's side, the "closer side." The girls were confused by what they learned about genetics at school and what they knew of their own

cultural traditions. Aisha, for instance, revealed that her own parents were first cousins and that one of her siblings died at a young age from some type of physical handicap. Yet, in the end, the girls tended to accept their parents' decisions about marriage, no matter how ill-informed they were.

Layla had very clear ideas about what it meant to be both Yemeni and American. To her, Yemeni meant wanting to get married; American meant wanting to go to college. She made the point that she was Muslim, too, but to her that was a matter of faith and not culture. She read the Koran every night and her parents were very proud of her for getting through the whole text and all of the prayers. "I want to be able to do what my parents want because I want to please my parents, you know. But at the same time, you know, I can't cuz it's not something that's in my heart" (Interview, 10/14/98). She did not think she could balance a marriage and pregnancy with college. In her culture, having children was central in perpetuating the image of a good woman, and pregnancy could not be avoided. Knowing this, Layla was under much pressure to earn good grades at the end of her junior year. If there was a possibility of her attending college, it was by showing that she was a good student in high school. "That's kind of why I'm trying to do as good as I can cuz I know years are going, flying by" (Interview, 10/14/98). Her brothers were not supportive of her efforts; they thought she should stay at home and cook and they told her that their mother needed help in the house. They forbade to go to college. For Layla, being a girl at home was not easy. College represented far more than an education for her and many of the girls who wanted such an opportunity. College meant solidifying

their American space in the US and liberating themselves from certain constraints that no longer made sense either in Yemen or in the Southend.

Conclusion

The Yemeni girls in the Southend were proud of their Yemeni culture, religion, and traditions, yet they also belonged to the larger American society, whose ethos challenged those of this Arab Muslim community. In public school, especially, Yemeni Americans faced a different model for success in life than the one they knew in their primary culture of home. Historically, American education has tended toward a republican ideal, one which emerged from Western Europe. For example, the classic republican model includes: the separation of church and state; the importance of the individual; the central role of rational and political factors rather than cultural and sociogeographic factors in the construction of citizenship; and, the unifying function assigned to state institutions, and particularly to the school in building the reproduction of these (Van Zantan 1997, p. 352). As illustrated by Layla's case and excerpts from the other Yemeni girls' lives, an inevitable clash occurs at the intersection of American republican values and the sociocultural practices of the Southend. In the Southend, the Yemen community lived by the following: an emphasis on ritual and religious practice; the prominence of the family; the focal role of cultural and sociogeopolitical factors in the construction of ethnic identity; kinship relations through the father's line or "village" in constructing the reproduction of these characteristics. The hijabat, who, on the one hand, attempted to be individuals in their own right, and on the other hand, complied to their community's

expectations, experienced an intellectual, if not emotional, divide as they traveled in and out of their homes in the Southend.

Furthermore, the girls maintained dual identities, which bifurcated according to the gendered and cultural spaces they inhabited. This was especially evident in the school setting and caused Cobb's teachers and administrators great concern. In several ways, the public high school compromised to accommodate the Yemeni students, often setting aside "mainstream" American values in order to make school life more adaptable to this new immigrant population (see chapter four for a more detailed analysis). In so doing, previously separate cultural and religious spaces mingled and became less distinct for the Yemeni students and for the girls, especially. Although this mingling of spaces made school more social and liberating for the girls, it posed a danger to their clearly demarcated home and community spaces. At this juncture, they were forced to imagine Yemen and what it entailed for their lives in the Southend.

It can be argued that Layla and her friends were powerless, at least much more so than most typical high school students, but this would be a rather simplistic observation because, after all, these students were successful at maintaining cultural norms both at home and at school. As Gibson (1997) recently observed, minority populations do well in school when they are strongly supported by their families. This was definitely the case among the Yemeni in the Southend of Davis. The girls were surrounded by family who were protective and supportive of them. It may turn out that this strong support and family identification will be the mechanism by which the girls will achieve their goals, if not immediately upon graduating from high school, then perhaps a few years later, once

they have married and had a child or two, and depending on their spouses' dispositions toward education. One of the girls' fathers, for example, negotiated for his daughter, as part of the marriage agreement in Yemen, that her husband would allow her to continue her education should she want to do so. At least for this first generation of Americans, the sojourner identification was strong and relevant. Home constituted of relationships among people both in the Southend and in Yemen. For girls such as Layla, Yemen was ever present in their lives even when they had never traveled there. Unlike their parents and the newly arrived Yemeni boys from Yemen, the hijabat were not so much sojourners as navigators at home in neither the US or Yemen, and found a "home" in managing their liminal space. As settlers who not only dreamed of returning home but who actually made the sojourn home, the Yemeni families of the Southend gave credence to the idea that the physical and the imagined space are at times one and the same.

TWO

Classroom as Oasis: The Spaces that Count

The lives of the Yemeni American girls in this study were clearly demarcated by physical boundaries which impacted their social and academic lives. In the previous chapter, the notion of sojourner illustrated the complex spatial relationships which permeated the girls' quotidian lives. The physics of space reflected an adherence to cultural and social norms that were alien to the domain of American high school life. Yet, at Cobb High School, the complexity exhibited by the interaction of Yemeni immigrants, Yemeni Americans, and non-Arab Americans only reiterated the importance of understanding that space is differentiated by language, dress, ethnicity, gender, and social class. In this chapter, classroom life, the interaction among students within the classroom, in the school hallways, and in the cafeteria are closely examined by: 1) explaining how "oasis" can be a helpful analytical tool for describing the physical and social relationships observed, and 2) using Goffman's (1959) definitions of interaction and performance to describe the students' school world. As Jackson (1968/1990) observed in his study of classrooms, "*Behind the ordinary lies the extraordinary*" (p. xix). In other words, the study of classroom life uncovers much and as will be shown in the figures below, the classroom, for girls such as Layla, was really an oasis.

Webster's New World Dictionary defines oasis as "any place or thing offering welcome relief as from difficulty or dullness." Unlike the hallways or cafeteria at Cobb, the classroom offered the Yemeni American students, both boys and girls, a sanctuary

from social and cultural norms, a place unlike any other space. Within the school setting and foremost among the girls' dispositions towards school and social life, was their worry of perception, how they were perceived by others. Research on adolescence and especially on girls (see Brown and Gilligan 1992; Finders 1997; Thorne 1997) suggests that this is typical of adolescent development more generally. Teenagers' preoccupation with how their peers view them is indeed a characteristic of youth culture and as popular media would indicate, an all-consuming one. However, in the case of girls such as Layla or her good friend Aisha, the self-other anxiety was directed toward specific people, i.e., Yemeni boys as the primary constant and Yemeni girls as a secondary but important indicator of acceptance or rejection. The classroom provided an alternative way of being, or what Greene (1997) calls an "alternative reality," for the hijabat because it was considered a private space and was not made part of the public practice of gossip which pervaded the halls and cafeteria. In fact, unlike Finder's study on thirteen-year-olds, in which she found that the classroom as safe haven is a myth and therefore unsafe, I found the classroom to be the only space within Cobb where boys and girls interacted socially as they would in any public school. In other words what constitutes "unsafe" or "uncomfortable" in one setting, as in Finder's study, may be liberating in the Yemeni American context.

One way to think about the classroom setting is to organize the events which take place there and those which take place in the halls or cafeteria within Goffman's (1959) framework of interaction versus performance. According to Goffman, interaction is defined as the "reciprocal influence of individuals upon one another's actions when in one

another's immediate presence" (p. 15). Performance, is defined as "all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants." The performance is pre-established; it is a routine of sorts from which social relationships arise. For example, in one classroom in which I observed Yemeni boys and girls conversing easily with one another in both English and Arabic, one of the boys, when I inquired about their lack of conversation in the cafeteria, informed me that if someone (of Arab/Yemeni background) were to come in and see the students sitting as a group and him talking to Saba, he would be questioned about his actions. Saba agreed but added that she, as a girl, would suffer the consequences and not he. He continued to say that the lunchroom really showed the way things were [whereas the classroom is the anomaly]—the boys "hang out with the clan and that this is nature and natural" (Fieldnotes, 3/24/98). This example shows that neither the boys nor the girls were concerned about anyone seeing them chat along with other classmates during class. It was unlikely that a parent, community member, or other Yemeni students would enter the class and observe the interaction among the students. The classroom was a safe zone, an oasis—it was not easily entered or exited. Furthermore and according to Goffman's thinking, whereas the lunchroom and cafeteria gave rise to the "enactment of rights and duties attached to a given status," (p. 16) which the performer routinely reenacts for the same audience, the classroom invited varieties of face-to-face interaction, especially among girls. In the classroom, as many of the teachers pointed out, the girls were at their

best academically and often much more social than in any of the other school settings.[14] Hallways and the cafeteria were places where behavior was sanctioned by cultural and religious practices and where power, as was explained in chapter one, was exerted to a full extent by the male gaze in much the same way that it was in the streets of the Southend or in a village in Yemen.

The Cafeteria

The hijabat placed a high value on school life, high enough to perform according to their community's norms both socially and academically. Continuing their high school education meant being fully conscious of themselves as Yemenis in the cafeteria and hallways. Therefore, the girls and boys did not sit near each other and do not talk to or look at one another. This reflected cultural norms both in the Southend and in Yemen, where men and women usually dined in separate rooms in restaurants. The hijabat at Cobb sat at tables that were in a small cluster in the middle of the cafeteria. This cluster was buffered by tables at which non-Arab boys and/or girls, or Arabs (Palestinians, Iraqis, or Lebanese) sat. The Yemeni American boys sat far away on one side of the room in a row of tables, while the newly arrived Yemeni boys (surreptitiously called "boaters"), who made up the majority of the bilingual program, sat on the adjacent side of the room. Figure 2 illustrates a typical lunch hour in the cafeteria.

[14] By classroom, I do not include in that physical education classes or music classes. These are exceptions and do not necessarily count as oases. More will be said in chapter four.

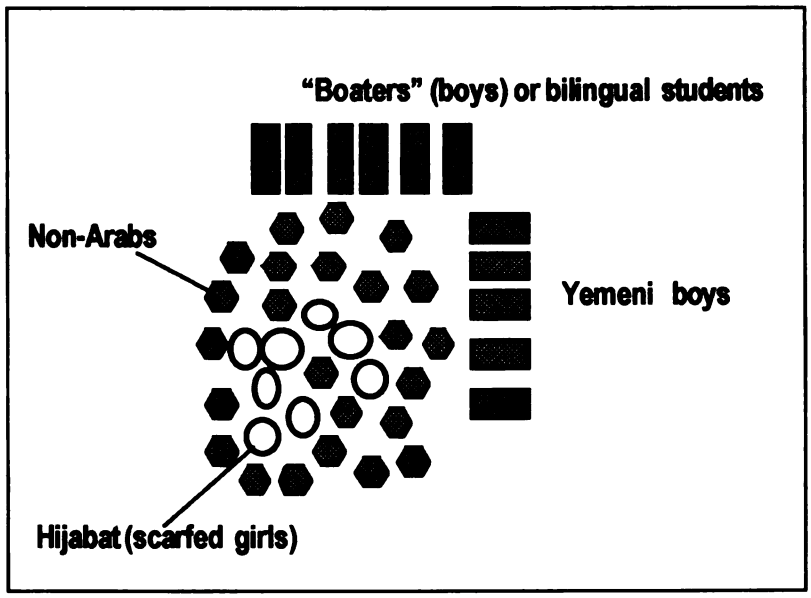

Figure 2: Cafeteria

The Yemeni boys who were part of the bilingual program were especially watchful of the hijabat, and both boys and girls took notice when the two sexes drew near each other.[15] The girls kept their eyes away from the sides of the room, while the boys stayed away from the cluster. Only brothers or close cousins conversed with the girls, and sometimes, husbands talked to their wives but this usually did not occur within the cafeteria but in the halls.

[15] Sometimes the Yemeni boys reacted negatively towards girls or women they did not know. I encountered this distrust during my second year of shadowing Aisha. Aisha approached me furtively on the day I was to shadow her and said, "I have to tell you something. There's this guy. He's my cousin. He saw me talking to you at lunch yesterday and he asked me why you were talking to me. He went to my house after school yesterday and told my mother that I should not talk to you, or my reputation will be ruined. So, can you please not shadow me today?" Of course, I agreed, but I reminded her that I had her mother's consent to shadow her. She said, "I know. He's been saying things to me since last year. But now, he went to my mother. I'm really sorry. I'm so embarrassed. No one knows about this. None of my friends. You won't tell anyone? I reassure her that I will not, but I ask if I may still sit at her table during lunch since other girls in the study will be there. She responds, "That's just it. He isn't in that lunch period, but yesterday he was. But you can eat with us. You know Layla and those guys." Aisha seemed frightened during the entire conversation. She fears her cousin, who is younger than she is. I'm not sure what to make of this. I'm awed by the power her tenth grade cousin exerts over her (Fieldnotes, 1/21/99).

The girls explained their behavior in the cafeteria in one of two ways: shame or fear. Saba, who was more religiously-minded than the other girls and who could quote the *Qur'an* at length, asserted that "shame and not fear [was] what the girls feel around boys" (Fieldnotes, 3/24/98). In the *Qur'an*, she argued among her friends, it was stated that girls should be modest and must act so in public places, such as the cafeteria. Consequently, most of the girls not only shied away from the Yemeni boys during lunch but also all other males, including the teachers. It was rare to see one of the hijabat waving to a male teacher or principal or even saying hello as other non-Arab girls did. In addition, the hijabat rarely sat with students unlike themselves. For example, an aerial view of the cafeteria would show white or black scarfed heads in small circles, all leaning towards the center of the table, much like closed flower blooms. When a non-scarfed girl sat among the hijabat, it was immediately noticed and noticeable. Consequently, when a girl who once wore the hijab and then decided not to wear it, she was cast out of the hijabat group and was usually no longer welcome by most of the girls. This occurred to Hannah, a Moroccan girl who had worn the scarf for two months at her friends' urging, but found it alien to her, especially since she had never worn one in Morocco. Hannah complained that the Yemeni girls no longer talked to her and thought her shameless. She made friends elsewhere, among the non-scarfed Lebanese and non-Arab girls.

Shame was a powerful incentive for proper behavior or performance in the cafeteria because it was grounded in Yemeni culture and religion. In public places, unlike the classroom, all the hijabat were modest in their mannerisms, movement, and speech. They kept to themselves within a specific area of the cafeteria. The only exception to

this performance occurred when there were fights between Arabs and non-Arabs. For example, when a non-Arab boy threw food at one of the hijabat, the Yemeni boys hurried to protect the hijabat by fighting with the non-Arab boys. Exhibiting shame or modesty, then, was a public performance, one which was demanded by Yemeni culture (and expected by the boys) and enacted by the girls. But, why and how was this behavior sustained over time? What mechanism reinforced the cultural enactment of shame when the hijabat were also part of American social norms in the cafeteria?

While shame was a publicly enacted performance to be seen again and again in the cafeteria and other public places, fear of being found without "shame" prompted the girls' public performances. The hijabat often acted out of fear. Amani, one of the hijabat with aspirations to become a nurse pointed out, "They'll (guys) just talk about you. They'll like ruin your rep. Like for us, the most, like, well, not the most important thing but we have to like, you know, watch our reputations really, really careful" (Interview, 2/10/98). Fear of gossip prompted the hijabat to perform according to what was expected of them. In fact, they were quite supportive of one another in that endeavor, both in the hallways and in the cafeteria. Even when one of the hijabat was quite alone in the hallway or the cafeteria, she was very conservative in her behavior. Goffman (1959) has remarked that "when a performer guides his private activity in accordance with incorporated moral standards, he may associate these standards with a reference group of some kind, thus creating a non-present audience for his activity" (81). The hijabat automatically assumed a different role when they were in the cafeteria and did so as a group which differed significantly from a "clique." Again, Goffman is useful here because he links performance

to the notion of team. In the case of the hijabat, they were first and foremost members of a team through their dress and importantly, their scarves. In addition, a teammate "is someone whose dramaturgical co-operation one is dependent upon in fostering a given definition of the situation . . . . Similarly, a girl at a party who is flagrantly accessible may be shunned by the other girls who are present, but in certain matters she is part of their team and cannot fail to threaten the definition they are collectively maintaining that girls are difficult sexual prizes" (Goffman, p. 83). In effect, the hijabat's fear of gossip was rooted in how they were perceived as sexual entities. They all denied that possibility. During lunch they ate with one another and never faced outward, only inward within their cluster of tables. They collectively formed a private sphere which was difficult to enter or exit without the hijab.

The Hallways

The hallways of Cobb High School posed a challenge for the Hijabat. Hallways, by definition, are places of movement, both fast and slow. And, not all hallways are the same. For instance, hallways can become congested as was often the case in B Hall or, as the Hijabat will often say, the "Boater Hall." This hall was usually congested by the recent Yemeni arrivals simply because all of their social studies classrooms were located in this hall. The hijabat were especially careful in this hall, where they usually lowered their eyes, walked quickly but not too fast, avoided body contact, and kept quiet. Just as in the cafeteria, the girls feared the new arrivals much more than the American-born boys of Yemeni descent. The so-called "boaters" were the ones who reported back to families

in the Southend. For example, the following observations illustrate the very real perceived threat the hijabat feel on a daily basis:

> After lunch, Saba and I walk down the hallway. She tells me about "this guy, Jeff."
>
> "He saw me and said, 'Saba, you look nice today.' He tried to put his arm around my shoulders, but I moved away and he said that my shoulders got wider. I just stepped away before he touched me. But, then, there was this boater and he looked at me when this happened. But I don't think he knows who I am. I won't wear this outfit (purple abaya and scarf) for two months" (Fieldnotes, 1/20/99).
>
> Several days later, Saba sees the same Yemeni boy again in the gym class in which she is one of the student leaders. She tells me that the "boater" who saw her almost hugged by another boy is in the class and he looked at her. Now, he knows who she is. I ask her whether it's the new Yemeni boys or all of the Yemeni boys who threaten the girls with "telling." She says that it's the "boaters" usually. "They feel it's their duty. The ones who are born here, a few do, but most don't" (Fieldnotes, 1/26/99)

As a Muslim girl, Saba could not be seen interacting at any level with a non-Muslim boy by a Yemeni Muslim boy. The fact that the "boater" gave her a "look" meant to Saba that he noticed the interaction and blamed her for Jeff's behavior even though she was the recipient and not the instigator of Jeff's compliment. She moved away because she could not be touched by a man who is not her father, brother, uncle, or very close cousin. Yet, although Saba behaved appropriately, the Yemeni boy witnessed the scene and was likely to remember her and find out her name later if he noticed her again. In the meantime, Saba, who did not want to be noticed, decided not to wear the same abaya and scarf for a long time. She did not want to provoke this Yemeni boy to speak against her to her family. Secretly, Saba told me that she was pleased by Jeff's compliment but had

the presence of mind to perform according to cultural norms, yet her fear was very real and escalated when she found out that the "boater" was in her gym class.

Although the hijabat were watchful in the hallways, they were less likely to maintain the cluster group from the cafeteria all the time. In the hallways, some of the girls walked and talked with their non-Arab friends and other hijabat; they tended to be louder and to joke more. They had a favorite bathroom in A Hall, in which they stopped to fix their scarves, gossip, and snack. This bathroom was generally full of cigarette smoke, although the girls swore that they never smoked since it is forbidden in the *Qur'an*. This was puzzling because it was never clear who was smoking in there. In general, then, hallway life was less constrained than that of the cafeteria, but from this emerged a different type of watchfulness—the girls watched one another more, in much the same way that Goffman describes the promiscuous girl at a party being watched by other girls in case she goes too far and hurts the team. Nadya, who was a ninth grader during my first year of fieldwork, was especially watchful of other girls' behavior in the halls. New to Cobb, Nadya worried about being proper in the hallways and cafeteria, even though she was quite boisterous in class.

> We leave English. In the hallway, we see a scarfed Arab girl giving an exuberant hug to a girl with long blond hair who is not Arab. Both girls laugh hard and loudly. Nadya comments, "Some of the Arab girls in this school, I don't like. They're all messed up. They do stuff with boys, bad stuff, like talk to them, go out with them" (Fieldnotes, 2/10/98).

Nadya's comment was telling. Being loud and laughter were associated with overt behavior which then indexed inappropriate behavior with boys. Nadya did not know either of the girls she observed, yet the exuberance they exhibited indicated to her that the

Arab girl was "all messed up" and that she probably "does stuff with boys." The implications Nadya drew from her observations seem unreasonable, yet they reflected the teachings of the Arabic School she attended and perhaps her own family's admonitions about overt behavior. She was also struggling to fit into her new school and to understand the cultural limitations, both American and Yemeni, which she faced in different contexts. The example below illustrates that although the hallways may have been less constraining because movement was categorically manifested, there was still a certain degree of watchfulness among the girls which reminded Nadya that an adequate performance regardless of audience was still important.

> As we walk, we see a girl who covers her face, except for the eyes. She notices that Nadya's scarf isn't covering her completely and that some skin just below the neck is showing. She exclaims rather loudly, "Haram!," and points an index finger at the spot of skin that's showing. Nadya hurries to cover herself, before anyone sees. I notice that Nadya seems rather anxious that her scarf wasn't just right. She tugs at it surreptitiously throughout the day" (Fieldnotes, 2/10/98).

The loud exclamation in Arabic for "forbidden" by the girl who noticed the spot of skin would normally have beem thought of as too loud, but in this instance, because it called attention to the personal appearance of a fellow hijabat, the loudness was not even noticed. Nadya was grateful that she could repair the damage before anyone else noticed the uncovered spot and hurt her reputation. The hallways of Cobb, like all hallways in various high schools, were lively and loud. The students were usually rushing to get to their next class on time and paid little attention to the people in whom they bumped or to the laughter they heard. Among the Hijabat, however, hallway life was different. Although they did meet friends at their lockers and walked together to class, they

maintained a distance from the goings-on of their non-scarfed peers. They did not take part of the same play and their performance was meant to be witnessed by an audience which was likely to approve of them as modest and good girls. This alone made the hallway an important social context for the girls. In the section below, I discuss how the classroom itself was perhaps the most liberating of all social and academic environments in the high school.

Classroom as Oasis

The classroom, regardless of subject matter, is the only space within the high school in which Yemeni boys and girls talked to one another. Teachers observed that the girls were quieter than the boys and sat apart from them, but there was much more interaction among them than in any other space. The hijabat were more likely to speak freely to the American-born Yemenis but would ignore the boys who are part of the bilingual program.[16] The hijabat also interacted more with the non-Arabs in the class. The teachers sometimes enforced mixed seating (and more will be said about this in chapter four), which decreased the level of talk and interaction in class, but when this is not the case, interaction among the students followed two distinctive phases, each of which is made up of two possible scenarios.

[16] The students in the bilingual program, for the most part, attended ESL classes in the various subjects taught by bilingual teachers (Arabic and English). Once the students were assessed to have the required English skills, they were allowed to attend mainstream classes. Some of the Yemeni boys, however, came to the US very well educated in mathematics and were able to become part of the mainstream math classes with relative ease. Others were allowed into the art classes since art is an elective.

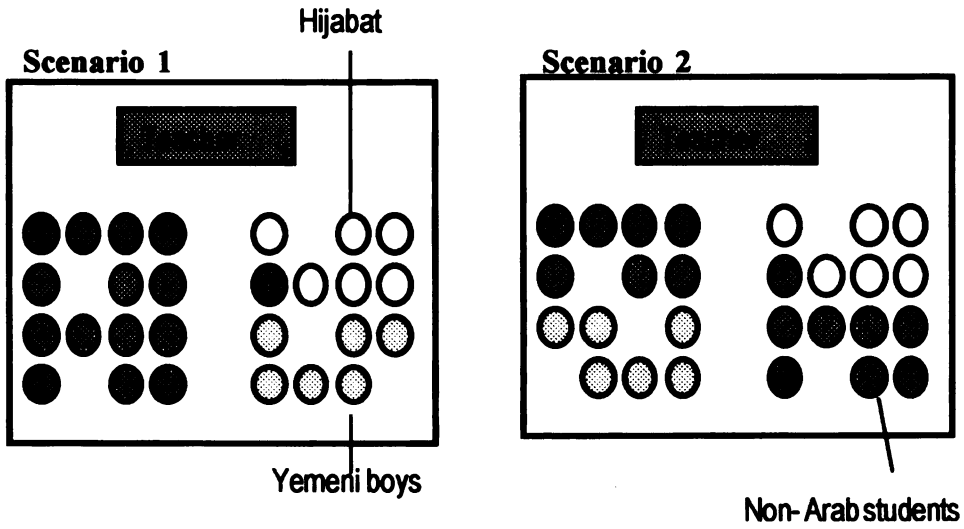

Figure 3: Classroom Phase 1

Figure 3 shows that the students arranged themselves in one of two ways when they first arrived to class. Scenario 1 was the more likely scenario, where both the hijabat and the Yemeni American boys sat on one side of the room and the non-Arabs sat on the other. Scenario 2 is the case in which the hijabat sat on one side of the room and the Yemeni boys sat on the other, while the non-Arab students sat on both sides. In both scenarios the hijabat and the Yemeni America boys sat as two distinct groups, without mixing with one another or the non-Arab students. The non-Arab students were either organized by gender or were mixed, but they all talked to one another. While these spatial arrangements may seem to extend, at first glance, cafeteria cultural norms into the classroom, that was not so. Once the teacher took attendance and the lesson began, whether it was a lecture, film, individual seat work, or group work, the students moved in astonishing ways which would be impossible outside the room. Moving was voluntary among students and usually occurred once the teacher assigned a task. For example,

Figure 4 below shows phase 2, an interactive setting where gender, ethnicity, language (Arabic and English) mixed together in what most teachers and students would recognize as a typical American classroom full of adolescents.

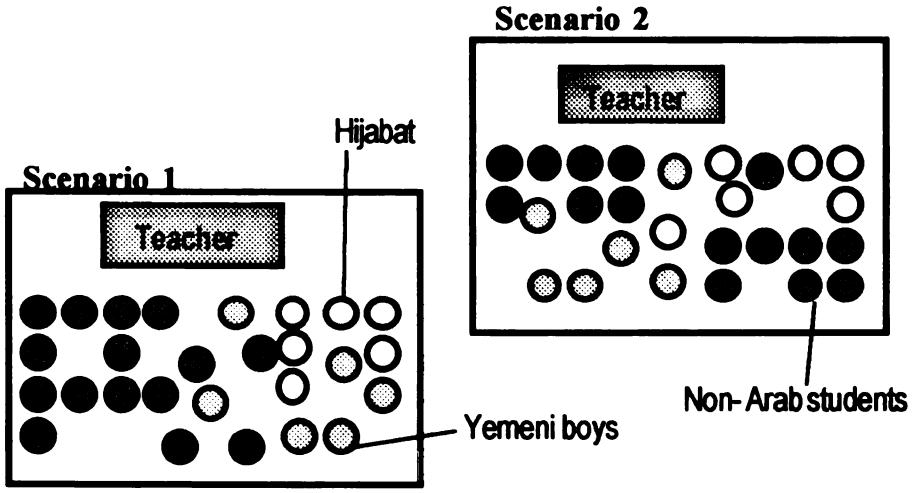

Figure 4: Classroom Phase 2

In general, the hijabat were more comfortable in the classroom than elsewhere in the school. Unlike Finder's (1997) study, in which she found that only girls who have popular power feel most comfortable in class, that was not the case among the hijabat. These girls, who normally kept to themselves in all public places, were unusually interactive in the classroom. The boys were also more open with the hijabat and the non-Arab students. The excerpt below from fieldnotes is an example the social interaction that usually occurred in the classroom.

> On one side of the room sit all the Arab girls. Layla was moved by the teacher across the room because she talked too much to Sumayya. Once Mr. Fallstein begins his lecture, she moves back next to Sumayya and Aisha. One of the hijabat sits by herself in the corner. There are 8 girls with scarves. 2 Arab boys are absent because they're at the mosque. One Arab boy sits by himself in a corner. Sumayya tells me that she doubts that these two are really at the mosque praying. She then talks to a non-

> Arab boy next to her about homework. He wants to borrow her homework.
>
> In the meantime, Mr. Fallstein covers senators and representatives' qualifications for the job on the board. He has his back to the class and talks over the conversations in the room.
>
> Layla gets teased by a boy who is across the room from her and talks to another non-Arab boy and non-Arab girl near her. The boy across the room asks if he can sit next to her.
>
> The non-Arab boy comes to sit by Layla and says hi to me. He teases her and Sumayyah by asking them out to a rave and on dates. They giggle and tease back, saying that they'll meet him on Friday night at the party. They're both embarrassed that I'm listening. Layla and Sumayya tell me in the hall later that they're just friends with him and they always talk to these boys in class (Fieldnotes, 5/15/98).

The question one must ask, then, is why was the classroom such a unique space for the Yemeni American students? How did they reconcile two such distinct ways of being within the school building walls?

One salient way to distinguish the classroom from other high school spaces is to understand that the classroom did not require a performance, the enactment of codified roles either by the hijabat or their male counterparts. Their identities became those of students rather than someone else. In the classroom, interaction among the students was often spontaneous; thus, gender relations tended to be of a lesser import during subject-matter activities. Furthermore, there was an adult, the teacher, such as Mr. Fallstein, who sanctioned acceptable and unacceptable behavior, and the students did not necessarily have to be responsible for themselves when they had a teacher who set classroom policy for interactive engagement. (Also and in general, the teachers at Cobb lectured or used recitation strategies or what Cazden (1988) calls three-part sequence questions which include teacher initiation, student response, and teacher evaluation. Asking students a

question and then responding by saying "right" or "wrong" was most common. There was very little sustained discussion in the classrooms I observed and once the teachers assigned a task, students did individual seat-work. This type of academic interaction actually fostered more social discourse in the classroom.) In other words, real world cultural norms were suspended in the classroom for the Yemeni American students, and other types of norms took over, ones that were common to most high school classrooms. Yet, how did the hijabat and Yemeni American boys make sense of their own discourse in and out of the classroom? It would seem that inner conflict over proper behavior and the maintenance of "good girl" status would ensue. However, this was not the case.

"In class it's different. We talk to each other," Aisha said (Fieldnotes, 5/15/98). As Aisha's comment suggests, the classroom as different and there were three common arguments the hijabat gave for their contrary behavior in the classroom versus that of the hallways and the cafeteria. First, there was the "we know each other; it's like talking to a brother or cousin" argument. The girls pointed out that they had known the boys with whom they spoke in the classroom since they were small children in the neighborhood, and therefore, these boys seemed much like family. Second, there was the "it's safe—no one talks" argument. The hijabat thought of the classroom as a haven from prying eyes and gossip. And, interestingly enough, the goings-on of the classroom, even those that included teasing among boys and girls as in the example above, remained in the room. One teacher noted that when she had just girls in her class, they sometimes removed their scarves to be more comfortable, something that would never occur anywhere else outside their homes unless they were among women at a party or wedding. Third, there was the

"we're just talking about school stuff and there's nothing wrong with that" argument given by the hijabat. This argument as often used by the girls when they explained themselves to a person of authority, such as a teacher or family member.

All three arguments above helped the hijabat negotiate two different worlds and to make an oasis of the classroom. By temporarily giving the boys in the classroom the status of family member, they bridged the gap between home and school to make life at school more "normal" and home life less threatening. The fact that the girls felt safe from gossip encouraged them to engage more openly both in academic talk, that is, talk around school work, and social talk, talk about social events and relationships. Their openness, however, was predicated by the reciprocity of the Yemeni boys in the class. Their comfort level decreased as the number of "boaters" increased. They were much more comfortable with Yemeni American boys than with the newly-arrived immigrants. In fact, when the girls found themselves in a classroom with mostly "boaters," they were less likely to move around the room and to chat with friends, but they were still more interactive than in the halls or the cafeteria. For their part, and with few exceptions, the recent immigrant boys kept to themselves. [17] Although the hijabat were always wary of the boys' watchful gaze, for the most part, the classroom still offered a safe zone, an oasis.

[17] I should note, too, that I often observed that when one of the hijabat finds herself alone in a classroom, she is likely to drop the class and find one in which she is certain there will be other scarfed girls. This occurred among a few of the older girls, who found themselves alone in the more advanced math, economics, or science classes. These girls are generally good students, whose friends sometimes drop out of school or don't see the point of taking the "hard" classes when they know that they will not continue their education after high school.

It is important to consider why the boys might have felt freer to speak to the girls in the classroom. They, too, gave similar arguments as those of the girls. The classroom was less constraining and the presence of the teacher, a third party, as was commonly said by both boys and girls, "keeps the devil away." Additionally, some of the Yemeni American and recent immigrant boys were engaged or married.[18] Therefore, talking to the girls was not a sin because they said they could control themselves, i.e., their lust, in their married status. For instance, one eighteen-year-old Yemeni American boy who had two children and was married at fifteen to a girl from Yemen, said, "If I didn't get married, I'd be lost. Marriage controls hormones. That's what my father says. Life is different here. We have a house and my mother helps with the children" (Fieldnotes, 5/11/98). A friend of his who was sitting next to me and Nouria, the girl I was shadowing that day, added, "I'm going to Yemen this summer and marry a girl there. It's too hard to get married in the US. If I didn't marry, I'd be lost and start drinking, smoking. Marriage fixes everything" (Fieldnotes, 5/11/98). At least for some boys, another argument to be made for the more open classroom interaction was that they were already married and therefore the talk was innocent. For the hijabat, the classroom was a space that counted tremendously in their daily lives. It was the only space in which the girls openly interacted with people unlike themselves, as in Mr. Fallstein's classroom. To an observer the classroom became an extraordinary setting, one which defied the performative norms that defined all other

[18] I was not able to get an accurate number of students who were married or engaged, since both categories are ambiguous unless there are children and because most Yemeni students did not want to divulge such information. Layla, for example did not wear a wedding ring at school. However, the school

spaces in the high school. The classroom could be characterized as a space of mutual social engagement and interaction which was spontaneous, whereas the cafeteria and halls called for a performance for a very strict and threatening audience, whether real or imagined. It was no wonder that the hijabat looked forward to school with both anticipation and trepidation. The girls often felt that home life in general, and especially during summer vacations, was boring for them because social and spatial relationships were limited to family and close family friends within the Southend, whereas school offered more, and the classroom offered even more in relative safety.

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administration, teachers, and the hijabat, did tell me that while there was a small married male minority, it is unusual for boys to be married while in high school, whereas the opposite is true for the girls.

THREE

"In-betweeness": Religion and Conflicting Visions of Literacy

Saba and I went shopping at the mall. She wanted to buy gifts for her friends and family for the El Eid holiday. I parked the car in the lot in front of JC Penney and moved to open my door. Saba raised her hand without saying anything and I stopped moving. She closed her eyes and her mouth began to move silently. I surreptitiously glanced at my watch and saw that it was nearly noon. Saba was doing her noon prayer right in the front passenger seat, while I sat there not knowing what to do. I caught a few sounds, but her lips moved silently for ten minutes. When she finished, Saba praised God aloud, took off her seatbelt and unlocked the door (Fieldnotes, 1/15/99).

In this chapter, I examine the multiple uses of religious text at school, home, and in the community. Specifically, I focus on how the Yemeni American high school girls employ religious and Arabic texts as a means for negotiating two worlds, home and school. These texts can be characterized as "in-between" texts, or forms of discourse which are manifested in different contexts and which bridge, subvert, and recreate Yemeni and American social and cultural norms. By discourse, I mean more than talk, or speech acts. Gee's (1989) sociolinguistic analysis differentiates discourse (stretches of language) from "Discourses": "ways of being in the world; they are forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes" (p. 7). Gee asserts further that a Discourse is an "identity kit" which a person takes on as a role and which is immediately recognizable to others. In the tradition of Goffman (1959), Gee suggests that Discourse is really a presentation of the self, both past and present. In a very real sense, then, Gee's definition of Discourse

describes culture. According to Geertz (1973), culture "denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about attitudes toward life" (p. 89). Hence, culture is both a temporal and local phenomenon. It is certainly not static because the enactment of Discourse or culture as performance is localized continuously over time and is therefore dynamic. The locus of such a performance can be an individual or group of individuals, who, as stated in the previous chapter, assume culturally-laden roles which require certain texts, behaviors, mannerisms, etc. The example of Saba (a twelfth-grader), whose experience I chose as a symbolic entrée into this chapter, illustrates that she, as a devout Muslim, is following the strictures governing the five pillars of Islam—one of which is prayer five times daily—closely.[19] At the same time, her oral text is mediated by the space she occupies and creates something which is representative of both her surroundings and her culture. Saba's discourse can be described as "in-between" and her performance is symbolic of adaptation to her immediate context. The cultural pattern is explicit yet somewhat changed to account for differences, both in identity and in space.

The localization of Saba's prayer was unexpected, at least to me, as we sat in the mall parking lot, yet her actions symbolized an identification with something other than the tangible objects in the immediate space of the car. Under normal circumstances, Saba would have found a quiet area at home or at the mosque, washed her hands and feet, laid

[19] The five pillars of Islam include salah (daily prayers), saum (fasting), hadj (pilgrimage to Mecca), khums (the one-fifth tax on savings), and zakah (the alms-tax).

out a small rug, and knelt facing east on her knees to do her prayer. Instead, she improvised as best she could and made use of the car, which was facing east toward Mecca, and prayed silently in Arabic. This improvisation, a performance, identified Saba solidly with a people and a religion. Her actions, which were both textual and spiritual, transcended her immediate space and occupied an "in-between" space which was neither Yemeni nor American but was, instead, a hybrid, an alternative possibility carved out of a particular time (afternoon) and place (the car outside the mall). Bhabha (1994), who has written extensively on culture in the post-colonial era and about the boundary spaces which minority populations occupy, characterizes this "in-betweeness" as the *locality* of culture. He notes that

> this *locality* is more *around* temporality than *about* historicity: a form of living that is more complex than 'community'; more symbolic than 'society'; more connotative than 'country'; less patriotic than *patrie;* more rhetorical than the reason of State; more mythological than ideology; less homogeneous than hegemony; less centered than the citizen; more hybrid in the articulation of cultural differences and identifications than can be represented in any hierarchical or binary structuring of social antagonism (140).

In other words, "in-betweeness" or the *locality* of culture signifies the immediate adaptation of one's performance or identity to one's textual, social, cultural, and physical surroundings. Saba, much like the girl who exclaimed "Haram!" at Nadya's show of skin in the previous chapter, engaged in ritualistic performances which were influenced by the immediate conditions of the interaction. In effect, the result was neither conventionally Yemeni/Muslim nor was it commonly American but somewhere in between. In this chapter, then, I examine the discourse and textual practices of the Yemeni girls in and out

of school by considering more closely both their use of language in the cultural and religious locus and their use of texts (reading, writing, and oracy). In so far as literacy is concerned, and as the title of the chapter implies, visions of literacy do conflict with one another because the girls occupied the "in-between" spaces of two cultures and this necessitates negotiation, which, in turn, influences ritual performance. Scribner's (1984) definition of literacy into three metaphors—literacy as adaptation, literacy as power, and literacy as a state of grace—is à propos in the case of the Yemeni American girls. I will use these metaphors as I describe the girls' use of text in several places and how "in-betweeness" was manifested at school, weddings and parties, Arabic school, and *Muhathara* or lecture.

Hidden Texts in School

Scribner notes that the "the single most compelling fact about literacy is that it is a social achievement" and importantly, that "literacy is the outcome of cultural transmission" (p. 7). Among the Yemeni students in the Southend, being literate meant being able to call upon multiple literacies in order to perform appropriately in the contexts they inhabited. School, for example, may have created an imbalance in the lives of Yemeni American students by challenging their cultural traditions and by challenging their primary (or home) Discourses (Gee 1989). Whereas the Muslim Yemeni family promotes loyalty based on kinship ties, American schools tend to privilege individual opportunity over collective responsibility. American schooling teaches youngsters to value personal response, individual reasoning, and the expression of a highly personal

voice (Graff 1995; Portes and Rumbaut 1996). An example of this is found in the 1995 Michigan English and Language Arts Framework standards in which students are strongly encouraged to form an individual voice such that they can question texts and form arguments about them, thus often disregarding their own beliefs or values about the content and ways to talk or write about it. Home or family culture is necessarily divorced from the students' learning at school in order for knowledge to be disseminated most efficiently. This type of critical reading of texts, when it does take place and which Gee calls 'a liberating metaknowledge or literacy' and which carries an *ideological message* (italics found in Gee, p. 16) may run counter to Yemeni Muslims' views about the sanctity of religious text, i.e., the *Qur'an*, in relation to their quotidian Discourses both at home and at school.[20] Knowing how to read at school is different from knowing how to read at home, where the *Qur'an* is the primary source of reading. Reading the *Qur'an* and being able to recite it endows a person with both knowledge and holiness, or, in Scribner's words, "a state of grace." In fact, in the *Qur'an* itself, there is a passage which states, "This is a perfect book. There is no doubt in it," which makes it impossible for students to be critical of the word of God. Both Yemeni boys and girls at Cobb told me that all I needed to do was to read the *Qur'an* in order to know what success is. In other words and according to them, the text of the *Qur'an* contains all, and if one reads it, that person assumes that same knowledge.

[20] It is important to note that Anyon (1981) argues that the critical analysis of texts in the classroom is rare and is influenced by social class practices. Her researach shows that knowledge is often fragmented and isolated from meaning.

The literacy practices which I am about to describe and with which the hijabat engaged were clearly influenced by their religion. Street (1995) defines literacy practices as "behaviour and the social and cultural conceptualizations that give meaning to the uses of reading and/or writing" (p. 2). They incorporate literacy events, which refer to how a piece of writing is integral to a reader or writer's interaction or interpretation of it (Heath 1982). Street's definition of "literacy practices" is part of a larger framework stemming from various disciplines called "New Literacy Studies." According to Gee (1999),

> The New Literacy Studies approach literacy as part and parcel of, and inextricable from, specific social, cultural, institutional, and political practices. Thus literacy, is, in a sense, "multiple": literacy becomes different "literacies," as reading and writing are differently and distinctively shaped and transformed inside different sociocultural practices. Additionally, these socioculturally always have inherent and value-laden, but often different, implications about what count as "acceptable" identities, actions, and ways of knowing. They are, in this sense, deeply "political" (p. 356).

In other words, as Barton and Hamilton (1998) have pointed out, literacy is integral to its context. At school, where the intersection of multiple cultures and literacies was most evident, Yemeni American girls learned to adapt various texts to different situations. The most direct way that they did this was by organizing some behaviors and speech events into three categories which stem from the *Qur'an* and religious teachings. The three categories were: /haram/, meaning forbidden; /halal/ meaning lawful; and, /mahkru/, meaning not written as forbidden in the *Qur'an* but condemned by the Prophet Muhammad. All things haram are written in the *Qur'an*. Drinking alcohol, for example, is haram. Things halal are good deeds, which include learning and being learned. Things mahkru include wearing make-up before marriage or listening to music. The mahkru

category is controversial and is therefore the marked category. Many of the hijabat wore nail polish or eye liner even though the Prophet forbade it. However, because nothing is written in the *Qur'an* about such things, Islamic scholars and ordinary Muslims debate these issues constantly.

At school, the hijabat used "haram" and "halal" liberally, especially when one's modesty was in question. The students argued about what was haram when something was called into question, and advice was often sought from people such as Saba who was respected for her knowledge of the *Qur'an* and the Hadith.[21] The category halal also governs food consumption. For example, Mariam did not eat meat prepared at restaurants or school if it had not been prepared according to Islamic custom (the blood must drain from the animal and a prayer is said over it). Her parents, however, ate meat in restaurants. Mariam explained, "It is mahkru to eat this meat but because there is a verse which can be interpreted as letting Muslims eat meat that hasn't been prayed over. It's a controversial issue and people can do as they like" (Fieldnotes, 2/5/98). Girls who were pious or wanted to appear pious did not do or say anything that was likely to be considered mahkru. In fact, except for some girls who studied and read the *Qur'an*, the category mahkru was not known or well-understood by most girls and boys. For the hijabat, most of life fell under haram or halal, and when scripture did not provide an answer, there was always the Yemeni "folk Islam," occult beliefs (and/or magic) which

[21] Hadith, or "Traditions," are the recorded words, actions, and sanctions of the Prophet Muhammad. Unlike the *Qur'an* or the Hadith Qudsi (Divine Hadith), the Hadith are the Prophet Muhammad's own words which help explain and clarify the *Qur'an* and to give practical application (1991a; 1991b).

helped explain and remedy problems. More will be said about "folk Islam" in chapter five.

Arranging school life into religiously motivated textual categories gave the hijabat the opportunity to maintain Yemeni social status and norms within the confines of school. Yet, school also gave the girls the chance to stretch home and community imposed limits. For example, unlike most teenagers, the hijabat were often not allowed to listen to American Rock or Pop music (in the mahkru category), and they were also not allowed to read teen magazines, or anything that might be sexually explicit or imply sexuality. At school, however, whereas the hijabat and some of the boys might not have been familiar with movies which teachers discussed in class, there was still a significant amount of underground reading which took place during lunch, the most social event of the day. I observed that the active engagement with text which took place outside the classroom was not usually present in relation to subject matter within the classroom. In fact, as I show in chapter four, the hijabat would sometimes refuse to participate in watching films or discuss texts if the content was "risky," meaning that it crossed a certain religious or cultural boundary. This lack of engagement in the classroom usually occurred if and when the presence of "boaters" was strong and the hijabat had to maitain a proper social peformance while the teacher tried to engage the class in the text. Socially, as I describe in chapter two, the classroom was still an oasis for the hijabat, but different rules applied under specific conditions, and therefore, their experiences in class were not uniform. The merging of identity and literacy was quite complex and multifaceted in all of thecontexts the hijabat inhated. In their cafeteria cluster of tables, which was buffered

from the Yemeni American boys and "boaters" and by the non-Arab students, the girls brought forth their contraband: teen magazines, yearbook pictures which could only be seen by them, and fable-like poems and stories (such as chain-letters) about girls who misbehaved. They gossiped around these texts, sharing personal information about their marriages, their families, the men they would like to marry, and their friends. During one such instance, both Aisha and Layla, two eleventh graders, suggested that I read *Princess* by Jean Sasson. This was a popular biography about the tragedies experienced by a Saudi Arabian princess who manages to escape her family and country to tell her story. Both Layla and Aisha identified strongly with the woman in the story and talked about her at length. This was not a book they openly discussed or read at home because, as Saba noted, "It makes Islam and Muslims look bad" (Fieldnotes, 11/20/98). All of the hijabat in this study reiterated that there is a difference between religion and culture. They argued that Princess Sultana's story by Sasson is a story about culture and not about religion: "there's only one true Islam and that's in the *Qur'an*, and not in that book," Saba said firmly (Fieldnotes, 11/20/98).

The distinction made by the girls between religion and culture is an important one. It means that to them that while their religion and their Holy Book cannot be questioned, their culture and cultural acts can. For instance, when the hijabat were upset or angry with family decisions dealing with education or marriage, they were very careful to blame it on Yemeni culture and not on Islam. According to them, religious texts sanction meaning, but people were likely to misinterpret words and actions found in the *Qur'an*, and therefore, the girls limited their public discourse and interaction with others in order

to protect themselves. It is easy to see, then, the significance of the relatively safe classroom or the isolated cluster of hijabat within a crowded cafeteria. Those places offered a haven for sharing secret texts, texts which were American and which represented American values. Sometimes, however, these texts reinforced Yemeni cultural values. Here is an example about dating taken from fieldnotes:

> I sit with Amani and the other girls during lunch. A poem is passed around the table about a girl who goes out with a boy even though her parents don't allow her to date and expect her to be at a school dance that night. The boy has been drinking heavily and crashes into another car. At the hospital, as the girl lays dying, she asks the nurse to tell her parents that she's sorry. The nurse doesn't say anything as the girl dies. It turns out that the car that the girl and her boyfriend had crashed into had been occupied by her parents, who were both killed instantly. All the girls around the table react to this poem with loud exclamations of "haram!" To them, hurting their parents through their actions is forbidden. They admire the girl for taking a risk, but they all agree that it's better not to take such a risk and that "religion knows what's right." The poem is folded and put away and is shared again later in the classroom with other girls (Fieldnotes, 9/17/98).

The example of the poem about dating illustrates the significance of private spaces (a small cluster of girls in a large cafeteria) within the school, and it reinforces the teachings of the *Qur'an*. It also recreates, bridges, and subverts different cultural norms and is therefore a good example of "in-betweeness." Private spaces were places and times during which the hijabat could voice their concerns, reify their beliefs, and sometimes put their doubts to rest. Public spaces (the cafeteria in general or the hallways), however, were indexed only by the culturally laden roles and by religious texts spoken in Arabic or in the

English translation, which was not typical of every day American English speech.[22] In other words, throughout the day, the girls' talk was peppered with Arabic and English excerpts of the *Qur'an*, and the use of "haram" and "halal" was rampant. At the same time, the hijabat found moments during the school day to address topics and issues which were never discussed at home or in their community. The combination of religious textual reference and the clandestine quality of the hijabat's use of non-religious texts was unique at Cobb. In fact, during an interfaith roundtable (Diversity Day) organized by the high school administration to improve relations among Arab and non-Arab students, when the students were invited to depict pictorially who they are, without exception, every Muslim student (eighteen out of forty-three students) drew a crescent and a star, symbols of Islam. None of the non-Arab students drew a religious symbol (Fieldnotes, 5/7/98).

Even though the hijabat claimed that their culture is independent of their religion, the evidence suggests that the two were intertwined in very elaborate ways. If culture can be defined as performance according to both Goffman and Gee, then so can religion, which is a very specific set of symbolic actions. Geertz (1973), who has written about religion as a cultural system, defines it in the following fashion:

> *(1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic* (italics found in original, p. 90).

[22] For example, some girls not only memorized the *Qur' an* in Arabic, but they could also recite parts in English. The English version is a sophisticated spoken register which is an almost literal translation of the Arabic version.

The hijabat were not only visibly symbolic of their religion because of their dress, they also embodied their religion with their actions and speech. For example, to Saba, religion was her life, and she talked the talk of militant Muslims: "Islam has permanent solutions to primary problems. And Islam is set to where if anything is forbidden, it blocks all avenues leading to the forbidden thing" (Interview, 2/3/98). Saba, like all the hijabat, strived for a state of grace in her daily life especially as she struggled to persuade her family to allow her to marry a young Black man who had converted to Islam. She retreated into the text of the *Qur'an* not only for spiritual reasons but also as a means of protection and power against her family's racial prejudice. By embodying the work of the *Qur'an*, she did not think that her family could hurt her. The text sanctioned her relationship to the young man even if her culture and family would not. Reading the *Qur'an*, as Saba did each day or as Layla did with her father each night, led to three results: being more knowledgeable about the contents of the *Qur'an* and therefore more respected by one's family and community, reaching a state of grace by virtue of the fact that the reading it endows a spirituality or holiness, and empowering one's self against culturally biased acts. In fact, parents took pride in the fact that their sons and daughters, but especially their daughters, read the *Qur'an* and prayed. At a school/parent meeting about school violence, one father praised his son's success (a high GPA) in school but chose to describe his daughter's success at being prayerful, "She prays more than I do" (Fieldnotes 3/24/98). In other words, although most of the Yemeni families desired both their male and female children to know the *Qur'an* and to pray, these characteristics were especially valued in girls because they reflected on the family's honor. It was the girls'

responsibility to maintain religious values, thus reinforcing a gendered notion of religion. The girls knew this and were genuinely involved in their religious practice, but they were also cognizant of the power one assumed with the thorough knowledge of the *Qur'an*. As Saba explained, "Usually, the time I really concentrate on reading the *Qur'an* is when I have a problem because that purifies my heart and just makes me feel so much better. It's, it's unbelievable the way it touches my heart" (Interview, 2/3/98). At home, Saba constantly quoted from the *Qur'an* in order to persuade her family, for example, to let her marry the person she chose.

If reading the *Qur'an* incited a state of spiritual grace and power, reading other texts allowed the hijabat to adapt and become part of American social and cultural life. This was most easily done at Cobb, where the interaction among public and private spaces allowed the girls to maintain cultural and religious norms and to indulge in the same texts, both oral and written, that other students did.

Music: The Text of Parties

As a contrast to school life and reading the *Qur'an*, it is important to consider other social settings within which the hijabat enacted cultural and/or religious performance through texts. Parties, which often took place within the Southend were segregated according to gender, and the most controversial text was the music to which the girls listened or danced. Parties were often organized around birthdays and weddings. The girls printed out invitations (written in Arabic and English) which were passed out at school. For weddings, everyone in the Yemeni community was invited. These were important

occasions and the entire Yemeni community knew about them. For a party, such as the sweet sixteen party Nouria (a tenth grader) had at her house, the hijabat generally arrived wearing the hijab and the abaya or very loose pants and large shirts. In the Southend, since most homes had basements which included complete kitchens, the girls gathered in the basements while the older women chatted upstairs in the living room. The basement room was usually arranged so that the guests sat along the perimeter of the room. This allowed a vast space in the middle to remain unoccupied until the dancing began. The girls and young women (some of whom are married and had young children with them) sat around the perimeter, and as each guest arrived, she would walk along the perimeter and shake every guest's hand and say hello in Arabic. Guests who were friends or kin kissed each other three times on one cheek. Arab music was played and as in Nouria's party, the girls danced with Nouria's mother's encouragement. The dancer tied a long scarf or belt around her hips and moved to the music, with most of the movement centered around the hip area, as in a belly-dance.

Even though parties took place in the privacy of Yemeni homes and were segregated by gender, they did in fact manifest "in-betweeness" in concrete ways, through clothing, talk, and music. For instance, most of the hijabat at Nouria's party removed their scarves and abayas, revealing the American clothing—jeans and shirts—which were quite tight underneath. Their hair, although long, was done in the latest fashion: straight or up with wisps of hair around the face. The women began to ask Nouria and her sisters for American music and a friend brought a compact disc player with American dance mixes. The girls danced but were shy around me, a stranger in their midst. Some of the young

married women did not remove their scarves and talked instead about the lyrics in the songs, describing them as "haram" because of the sexual messages in them. Most of the high school girls could not listen to this music at home and dared not tell their parents that Nouria allowed it at her party. Other girls openly opposed the music and remained covered. Saba, who wore very tight outfits at parties and who was proud of her figure, had turned away from "regular" music." Her explanation below reflects and represents other girls' perceptions, misgivings, and doubts about both American and Arab music.

> I used to listen to regular music such as, you know, FM98 and tapes and stuff. But I stopped and now I listen to only Islamic music. And Islamic music is only, is only the drum but nowadays there's so many groups of talented Muslim, like rappers, singers, that the music is so beautiful that you can really dance to it (Interview, 2/3/98).

Saba explained further that there are American or Western musicians and singers who make music to which she can listen because it is based on Islamic teachings. She gave singer Cat Stevens as an example and shared an article about him in which he explains the reasons for his conversion (Stevens, n.d.).

> So like, cause from before, the music wasn't, I mean, you could only listen to it, you couldn't really dance it. But now they became more talented. Like there's this one guy, his name was, his name is, one guy that you're probably familiar with. Cat Stevens, a British rock star. Well, now he converted to Islam and he makes his own. His name now is Yusuf Islam and he is so talented. Like his music is so nice. He has these songs for little kids and they only do with the drum but you won't think it's the drum. You'll think it's other music, too. But it's the way he uses other drums, different types of drums and they make different kinds of sounds and he makes sounds with his vocal chords so it makes it look like real nice (Interview, 2/3/98).

In effect, Saba listened to a hybrid type of music, music which is composed of Islamic teachings and Western rock. Again, "in-betweeness" characterized the music and musical

texts to which the hijabat listened, danced, and sang. Saba pointed out that she listened to Islamic music because it connected both American and Yemeni cultural and religious spaces.

> *It's Islamic music but it's American.* Some is [from the Middle East], like the ones I found, like the one's that's Arabic but there is... usually the ones I buy, the American music is about the people that converted. These three rappers, Joshua, Jesse, and ___ converted. And they're real talented rappers They're called Sons of the Crescent. And they have like really good rap and like dealing with Islam and to better yourself in the future and better yourself in this world. It's really like, it's mainly rap that doesn't concern all the negative... you know, these, about women or this and this and that. Things that shouldn't be said (Interview, 2/3/98).

Saba and most of the other hijabat did not listen to other types of American music because of the possible negative consequences on their reputations.

> Because I, sometimes you can say probably like if there's, from the olden days, it's a nice, decent song. Innocent, it deals about like love, it's nice, it's beautiful. Because nowadays, I find that music nowadays is very distracting in a way where they have like things that, I don't know. I'm a very modest person and I don't like to hear like I wanta, you know, this and this and that. Because I don't, I don't think that's modesty and I just, I prefer to listen to something I can benefit from. And I prefer to listen to something that won't be held against me in a way like... you know, cause you control what you hear, you control what you see, you control what you say. So if I can control to hear something good than negative, then why not. The main music nowadays is not innocence, not decent. I mean, they're just...(Interview, 2/3/98).

Music among the hijabat served one main purpose: it helped connect American and Yemeni life more concretely and it did so through religious texts or musical instruments such as the drums.[23] The hijabat listened to other music but not openly. They did at

[23] Islamic music is characterized by the beat of drums. The drums, unlike other musical instruments, do not provide harmony or melody and, therefore as it is implied by devout Muslims, drums do not suggest corporeal movement.

Nouria's sweet sixteen party, although some of the young women did not participate in the sing-along or dancing.

Most of the hijabat talked and gossiped at parties. The talk centered around pregnancy and life in Yemen, and the girls were very open about their attitudes toward their homeland. For example, one of the girls who worked as a receptionist at a doctor's office told the story of a woman who found out that she was pregnant but did not want to tell her husband. All the guests exclaimed, "Haram!" The girl said that the next time she saw the husband, she congratulated him on the new baby. All the girls nodded their approval at this and the conversation shifted to Yemen. In other words, it was sinful for the woman to keep her pregnancy a secret and the receptionist thought only to act according to the teachings of her religion by informing the husband.

The talk about Yemen centered around how backwards their villages are. All of the young women at Nouria's party went back almost yearly and some went back to get married. The girls talked about how restaurants were segregated by gender and about how women in the street were always covered. Nouria shared a story in which she and her uncle had entered a restaurant and she was told to eat by herself in the women's room while her uncle ate with the men. She did this for ten minutes and could no longer "stand it," so she went back to her uncle and sat by him. They were told to leave the restaurant within five minutes of her rebellious action. All the girls and women laughed at this story. One woman who attended the nearby community college stated that that people in the Southend are three hundred years ahead of those in Yemen" (Fieldnotes, 2/7/98).

Parties were important events in the Southend because they allowed young women to socialize safely. Birthdays were always celebrated. Women found these opportunities to gather in the safety of their homes for a conversation with neighbors and family a highlight of their daily lives. Among the high school hijabat, these gatherings offered the opportunity to partake in American cultural norms, such as listening to music and dancing. Because parents did not usually approve of American music (and the Imam, the religious leader at the mosque, was against it), the hijabat compromised by listening to "in-between" music. This type of music often included Arabic and English lyrics and sometimes French ones. The music had a fast beat, but it contained musical influences from the Middle East or North Africa which were immediately recognizable as "Arab" and were therefore deemed appropriate by the girls, even if their parents disagreed. Within the basement spaces at parties, the girls enjoyed this music without worrying about being either too American or not American enough.

Weddings were another type of special occasion during which the hijabat indulged in unrestricted behavior and listened to different types of music and "in-between" lyrics. At school, the girls talked of nothing else but the upcoming wedding, whether the bride and groom (who are already married) are cousins, whether the marriage will be consummated during the night of the party. This talk was preceded by the bride handing out invitations to all of the Yemeni girls at school. The girls then took these invitations home and showed them to their mothers, most of whom could not read in Arabic or English. In this fashion, the news of a wedding spread quickly and efficiently. A wedding was a community affair in the Southend and generally everyone was invited. Since many

families were related and/or had village affiliations in Yemen, it was taken for granted that everyone would send someone from the family to the wedding. The invitations were quite elaborate and included English and Arabic script. The example in Figure 5 begins with a short prayer in Arabic praising God and is followed by the announcement of marriage and its locations in both Arabic and English.[24] The celebration is to take place in two different places, one for men and the other for women. At the bottom of the invitation, the families requested in Arabic that small children be left at home. The wedding invitation is an example of an in-between text in both language and form. The wedding celebration was a significant event because it announced that the bride and groom could live together and consummate their marriage. For the hijabat, the celebration gave them the opportunity to dress up in their finery and enjoy an evening out in safety. A Yemeni wedding in the Southend generally began at six in the evening on either Saturday or Sunday. The women were driven to one location by the men, and the men drove to their own celebration site. If a hall was rented, the men loitered outside the hall to ensure that all was well, while the women and children found places to sit at the tables.

At one of the weddings to which I was invited (see Figure 5) and which I describe here, at least 200 women attended (Fieldnotes, 11/1/98). All of them were covered upon entering the hall and many of the hijabat from Cobb High attended to celebrate their friend's marriage. Nouria arrived with two non-Arab girls who were the only women with long dresses held up by spaghetti straps. Nouria's friends felt uncomfortable with their

[24] The invitation was scanned from the original. Names of people and places have been blacked out to preserve anonymity.

Figure 5: Wedding Invitation

exposed shoulders, but no one commented on their dress. The women settled in their seats and waited for the bride to walk in, which she did with her husband. He wore a white tuxedo with red bow tie, and she wore a Western-style, white wedding gown with a full skirt. The fathers of both groom and bride were dressed in traditional Yemeni dress—red jackets with white shirts underneath, pants which were loose to the knee and then tightened from knee to ankle, and long swords at their sides. The mothers were not part of the march into the hall, but other male relatives accompanied the bride and groom along with six covered (with hijab and abayas) bridesmaids and a few small children. The groom and bride danced their first dance to Arabic music and were photographed, then all of the men left the hall and the women removed the hijab. The older women wore beautiful, intricate jewelry made of gold. Some wore huge belts made out of gold around their hips and waists. They also wore colorful traditional dresses and everyone wore make-up, even the unmarried girls. The bridesmaids all wore burgundy dresses.

The high school girls wore outfits ranging from conservative (with short or long sleeves) prom-like dresses to traditional Yemeni dresses. They also had gold jewelry. Layla, one of the girls in the study, showed me her shorter hair, which she had been hiding from her mother for a long time (her mother could not attend the wedding). Most of the women had very long hair that reached to the waist. The unveiling caused a stir among the women, for some had not seen each other without the hijab in a long time and comments were made about appearances. Non-Arab guests, such as teachers or students from Cobb exclaimed that they now knew what their students and friends "looked like." They danced the debka (a line dance) and couples belly-danced. Each girl danced with the

bride—hand and hip movements to the beat of the music. One of the girls commented that dancing to flute music is "haram" because it makes people do things, yet the women and girls danced to many kinds of music throughout the evening. Every time the (male) manager of the hall walked in to check that all was well, the women would hurry to cover their heads, sometimes with the table linens if the hijab was not immediately available. When the groom came back at 8:30pm to cut the cake, all the women covered for the duration. There was no advance warning, so there was a flurry of activity in getting heads covered. Chicken, rice, salad, humus, bread and wedding cake were served. I sat at a table with the high school hijabat, who discussed Yemen and traveling there. They advised that women should always cover when visiting, and they explained that the city of Aden is much more"technological" than Sa'na. They told me never to go to Yemen alone and to always be with a man, otherwise I would get pinched, harassed, and mistreated. They said, "You can go to the beach if you swim in pants and t-shirt." The bride's friends also discussed her wedding night quite openly. For instance, Nouria divulged that the bride was too frightened to consummate the marriage that night and would rather wait until the next day. Throughout this conversation, it was evident that a conflict over music had ensued near the audio tape player, and the hijabat soon left the table to take part in the argument. The older women wanted traditional Yemeni music so that that they could line-dance, and the younger women wanted fast Arabic music and Raï music.[25] For

[25] Raï music is a "mixture of Western instruments, local Algerian popular longs and rhythms, American disco, songs of Julio Iglesias, Egyptian instrumental interludes, and Moroccan wedding tunes. . . .The lyrics [as Marc Schade-Poulsen argues] reflect the contradiction between the desire of young men to establish love relationships with women and the fact that this implies a questioning authority of their

instance, one of the songs to which the girls wanted to listen, "Aïcha" by Khaled, has a combination of French and Arabic lyrics. The older women refused to dance to it and the younger women refused to dance to traditional Yemeni songs. In the end, a variety of songs were played and each group of women danced to different appropriate songs.

It is clear that weddings and parties offered special social opportunities to the hijabat. In these situations, the girls' performance were private ones, where dancing and a variety of talk about school, Yemen, the bride's wedding night experience with her husband, and listening to music could take place without serious infringement upon their public reputations. The Discourse (after Gee) surrounding the various texts—music, print, or talk—can be characterized as "in-between" or a hybrid of two cultures and languages. Furthermore, the locality of this performance was expressed through states of dress. The hijabat were always wearing both Yemeni/Muslim and American clothing. The appearance of one or the other was dependent on the context, both temporal and situational, of the performative event. Conflicting ways of being were resolved by the adoption of certain texts to the exclusion of others or a blending of texts. This facilitated life at home and school.

Muhathara

So far in this chapter, I have examined textual practices at school and at one important social event, parties and weddings. Within those categories, I have touched

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mothers" (Wulff 1995). The girls were not aware this music is called " Raï" music or that it originates in Algeria or among Algerians living in France.

upon literacy practices within the home, such as reading the *Qur'an* or knowing it well enough to argue one's case during conflict (such as marriage). One of the most salient literacy practices within the home also included the reading and paying of bills. Every single girl in this study had the responsibility of informing her parents of incoming information in English and in Arabic. One of the hijabat, Aisha, for example, kept records and did the accounting for the rental properties her father managed in the neighborhood. The hijabat were all aware of their parents' financial status because the parents were not literate and relied on their children to read and write for them. In addition, the girls also followed the academic progress of their siblings and were responsible for ensuring their success in school by helping them with homework. Therefore, in order for these Yemeni families to survive in the United States, their daughters' (sons usually work outside the home) knowledge of English and Arabic was crucial. These literacy tasks, characterized by Scribner as adaptation, enabled the Yemeni families to fulfill mundane tasks, such as signing papers sent home from school or paying the electricity bills. Yemeni parents, however, also encouraged their daughters to be just as versatile in Arabic as they were in English. Consequently, the hijabat also attended Arabic school till the seventh grade, and they did this on Saturdays and Sundays. Some of the girls also attended lectures (*Muhathara*) and discussions organized by women in the community. Arabic school and Muhathara emphasized knowledge of the Arabic language and religious education and morals. In both of these settings, reading, writing, and recitation of text from memory were key practices, and because parents were fearful that their daughters would become American, they insisted on such instruction for as long as possible before marriage.

Muhathara (lecture) was a unique space for the hijabat. It was a time and place for learning and socializing within the context of reading. The lectures, which a few groups of girls attended, took place either at the mosque or in a private home. The ones at the mosque functioned much more like a traditional lecture, where a woman speaker addressed women's issues in front of an audience and the audience participated in a discussion at the end. The Muhathara held in someone's home, however, was quite different. In the Southend, I was introduced by Saba to Mrs. Bouzain, a woman who led Saba's lecture group. Once a week on Mondays, five to eight high school hijabat and young women from the community gathered in Mrs. Bouzain's basement from five till seven in the evening. The girls arrived and removed their shoes, and because it was time for evening prayer, they found a quiet corner and prayed before the lecture/discussion began. After the early evening prayers, the lecture began. Each of the girls brought something specific to read from the *Qur'an* or from a book on Muslim religious conduct. This group functioned much like a book club, but reading or reciting text aloud was emphasized and was followed by a lecture on morality. During one meeting, Saba began the lecture by reading a prayer from the *Qur'an*. Mrs. Bouzain mouthed the prayer silently with her eyes closed as Saba read. Then, Saba recited the hadith in Arabic and its translation in English. This particular hadith dealt with being thankful. Mrs. Bouzain proceeded to explain the hadith, its meaning, and why expressing thanks was important. She continued by admonishing the girls in English and Arabic, "You should not be as you are in school. You should take Islam seriously and you should not laugh while studying Islam. You should bring your hearts to Allah. You're teenagers and you love life, but you

have to be serious. In the Arab community, you have to be like a queen. When you walk, people will watch you walk and talk about you" (Fieldnotes, 11/2/98). Mrs. Bouzain reiterated the girls' biggest fear: being watched. Because she had daughters at Cobb, Mrs. Bouzain understood that the girls were much more open and perhaps less vigilant about their reputations while at school. Therefore, she used Saba's reading from the *Qur'an* as a segue into a lecture on modesty and good behavior. She reminded the girls that the most important prayer of the day is the one at 5:30 in the morning because "[they're] waking up especially for God," and they should remember that upon their death, the first question they'll have to answer is the one about prayer. The girls listened raptly and inquired about husbands who do not pray. Mrs. Bouzain replied that if the husband does not pray, the wife has the right to ask for a divorce from the Sheik, a local judge of Shari'a law. "A good husband fears Allah and he shows it through prayer. If the husband beats the wife or does not provide for her, the Sheik will say to the women to be patient." Mrs. Bouzain explained that she divorced her first husband, the one her family chose for her, after sixteen years of marriage and nine children, because he was not a good man. She noted, "The devil makes us do bad things," and she warned the girls that looking at boys in the eye more than once is a problem in the United States because "boys at school are not husband material." Upon hearing this, one of the hijabat laughed and said, "I can't help taking a second look at school because some of the guys are very good looking." Mrs. Bouzain exclaimed that she should not look, "A girl is like glass. If you break it, you can't put it back." Mrs. Bouzain was persuasive because the laughing girl became somber immediately and especially after she was reminded of her duty to her parents.

Mrs. Bouzain urged the girls to be good to their parents because "death can come at any time." Once Mrs. Bouzain finished her lecture, one of the hijabat read aloud in English about wickedness. Then, it was time to stop for dinner. Mrs. Bouzain made Lebanese chicken sandwiches for everyone. After dinner everyone left to go home (Fieldnotes 11/2/99).

Muhathara gave some of the the hijabat yet another opportunity to socialize but within a strictly textual and religious context. There was no room in this setting for outsiders who did not want to learn the *Qur'an*.[26] The Muhathara was also a haven for the girls because they trusted Mrs. Bouzain to keep secret their confidences. Although there was an explicit emphasis on recitation and the *Qur'an*, much more took place implicitly during these meetings.

Muhathara provided an occasion for textual inquiry and response. The hijabat felt they could talk to Mrs. Bouzain because she had daughters their age in their school and, importantly, because she *was* learned. She could read and write in Arabic and recite the entire *Qur'an*. She had achieved the state of grace into which the girls wanted to enter. She was a teacher to them and a friend who did not betray them to their parents. For instance, the girl who admitted to looking at boys would never have said such a thing to her own mother, but in Mrs. Bouzain's basement and in the context of reading from the *Qur'an*, one could openly discuss the "in-betweeness" the girls experience in and out of school. Although the girls did not disagree with the text of the *Qur'an*, they sought to

understand it in the context of their daily lives. So, they were not afraid to disagree with Mrs. Bouzain and her opinions or interpretation of the text, and this fostered more discussion, which sometimes soothed the girls.

Muhathara was important for another reason. In a world of fast-paced multi-media , the sanctity of the *Qur'an* was preserved both emotionally and intellectually, as well as physically. For example, a girl who was menstruating could not touch the Holy Book and therefore could not read from it. She had to distance herself from it until she was "clean" again. Below, I have included an excerpt from fieldnotes of another meeting at Mrs. Bouzain's house. It illustrates the powerful connection the hijabat made between purity of mind and body. Reading was delimited in unusual ways which suggest a clear link between the purity of the Book and those who read it. This excerpt also shows the intertextual nature of reading, religious talk, and gossip within the group.

> At Mrs. Bouzain's the girls recite *surat* (verses from the *Qur'an*) one after the other in round-robin fashion and refer to the text only when they forget the words. The *Qur'an* is passed around but Saba doesn't touch it. I volunteer to read and the girls inquire if I can touch it. I realize, then, what they mean. I read the text in Arabic, while Saba recites next from memory.
>
> Purity and "touching" is the next topic of conversation. We talk about why the girls don't shake the principal's hand. Mrs. Bouzain says that when she didn't work and stayed at home, she felt beautiful, but when she started to work around men in her restaurant, she grew ugly. Touching, Saba says, is disrespectful and she shouldn't have to lose respect for herself by shaking a man's hand just because he's Dr. Principal.
>
> One of the girls reads from the morality book It's a section on gossip. Gossip is haram, they say. The girls have a heated discussion about this, especially when I say that we gossip every time I have lunch

[26] Although I had inquired about these meetings, I was not invited to attend till I had lived in the community for more than a year. When it was established that I wanted to learn more about Islam, I was welcomed into the group.

with them. I'm told that there's a sura in the *Qur'an* that says that hell is full of gossiping women. Also, on judgment day you'll have to eat the person you've gossiped about and this is a horrible punishment. This becomes a joke later when we eat dinner and the girls gossip about a boy at school.

We also talk about *zunna*. It takes five steps to commit this ultimate sin of having an affair. All the girls chime in, "It takes a look, then a smile, then flirtation, then talking, and finally, the warmth of bed." All the girls laugh at this and jokingly say that they've smiled and looked and flirted. They argue about this. Some don't know what zunna is and really want to know. Mrs. Bouzain explains that the word in Arabic means adultery.

Mrs. Bouzain also says that watching a show like Bay Watch can lead to zunna. Saba interjects that since girls aren't allowed to see each other from waist down, it's wrong to see the women on Bay Watch in their swimsuits. The other girls say that they're going swimming through Arabic school and would wearing swimsuits be a problem? Saba responds, "Not if you're covered to your knees."

We talk about the scarf. Mrs. Bouzain says, "When a woman covers herself, she respects herself. She feels better about herself, more secure. When she's covered, she's pure."

After the Muhathra, we eat dinner, chicken, rice, and fruit. The girls gossip about some of the boys at school and about who's been traveling in Yemen. I'm invited to come back and I give all the girls a ride home (Fieldnotes 11/16/98).

Within the repeated Monday event of Muhathara, the hijabat constructed a routine: late afternoon prayer, recitation of text, lecture from Mrs. Bouzain, gossip and discussion, and conversation with gossip during dinner. The pattern did not change and became more significant as the hijabat continued to meet. In effect, Muhathara became a system of communicative forms, or genres. In describing genre as dynamic, fragile, provisional, and plastic, Freedman and Medway (1994) point to the social interplay between text and context. Clearly, prior knowledge, such as knowing the *Qur'an*, served to shape the genres of Muhathara. Interestingly enough, genres have boundaries or limits which make them recognizable, e.g., a business letter, or one of the surat in the *Qur'an*,

but these boundaries are permeable, allowing for individual or group appropriation within specified contexts. According to this view of genre, the composition of texts, oral or otherwise, becomes a social process, whereby knowledge is created and recreated. In the case of the hijabat, they learned something new every Monday night by attending Muhathara, but the system by which they communicated remained consistent as did their intention. Bazerman (1994), in his analysis of US patents, has thoughtfully described this form of enactment of genre as

> The intention, the recognition of the intention, the achievement of the intention with the coparticipation of others, and the further actions of others respecting that achievement (that is treating the realized intention as real and consequential) all exist in the realm of social fact constructed by the maintenance of the patent system and the communicative forms (genres) by which it is enacted (p. 82).

By replacing "patent system" with "Muhathara," Bazerman's observation would accurately describe the intentioned realization of the interactions set in motion every Monday night by the hijabat and Mrs. Bouzain.

It is clear from the example of one of the Muhathara meetings at Mrs. Bouzain's house that the hijabat's culture and religion had a tremendous impact on their school lives. Many teachers simply did not understand the cultural and social limits within which these Muslim girls negotiated their American and Yemeni selves. It is fair to say that that community/family values (both implicit and explicit ones) sometimes differed significantly from those at school. Reading during Muhathara become meaningful because it endowed a state of spiritual grace upon the girls and also allowed them to talk openly about their religious or cultural concerns. This was very different from conversation at

lunch time around magazines or other "contraband." The conversations at Muhathara were characterized by the girls as more intellectual and religious. They saw the reading of the *Qur'an* and the conversation which ensued around the readings as knowledge to be learned rather than just talk among friends or "stuff you learn at school." These groups of girls grappled with disturbing religious and moral issues for a purpose: to stay true and pure to Islam and to show their community that they were good Muslim girls. This type of gathering differed from the safe conversations among peers which took place in the classroom or in the cafeteria because the intent was the study of religion. Although not all the hijabat participated in Muhathara, for those that did, it offered them a venue both social and intellectual activity. Other hijabat attended Arabic school, which was not as informal as Muhathara. In fact, Muhathara is akin to classroom life in Arabic school, where language and religious instruction are co-taught.

Arabic School

Arabic or Islamic schools have a long history. The golden age of Islam (AD 750-1150) was marked by the establishment and maintenance of a large network of educational institutions, including Islamic schools (Shamsavary, Saqeb, and Halstead 1993). Classical Islamic education was organized into six types of schools, all of which were primarily religious and most of which taught boys. Remnants of these schools are still visible, both in the Middle East and North Africa, and in the United States. For example, The ***maktab*** or ***kuttab*** (writing school) focused on reading and writing. The instructor would teach children literacy skills. As the number of these schools grew, they became instrumental in

spreading literacy among Muslims both in the East and West. Eventually, the maktab curriculum also included literature, grammar, proper etiquette and manners, calligraphy, swimming, and horsemanship. The *halgha* (circle school) focused on a particular teacher's teachings. The teacher usually sat on a cushion against a wall while students sat around him in a semi-circle. The closer the student sat to the teacher, the higher the student's status in learning. Notebooks were usually checked by the teacher and discussions were characterized by controversial issues and passionate arguments and debate. The palace school, a school for royalty, had a similar curriculum to the *maktab*. However, in addition to a standard curriculum, the palace school focused on preparing its students for higher education, upper-class society, and employment in government and administration. Students were trained in the social sciences and taught how to be effective orators. The *masjid* (mosque school) was the most common and long-lasting form of elementary education in Muslim societies. These schools were most effective in combining worship with learning. During the early period of Islam, there were 3,000 mosque schools in Baghdad, and 1,200 in Alexandria. These schools played a significant role in transmitting knowledge and learning to Muslims. They continue to do so today. The *madrasah* (university of public instruction) provided a more sophisticated curriculum and education than any of the other five types of school. These schools were often dedicated to the promotion of religious and political education, along with general education and specialized training. They attracted the best professors and included vast libraries. Unlike the other schools, the madrasah was supported by generous state funding. Finally, the last type of Islamic school was the bookshop, which was essentially

a literary salon. These institutions were exclusive to the highly educated classes. With the expansion of bookshops across the Islamic world, book-dealers and copyists were fundamental in making books available to the general public, students, and centers of learning. From the bookshops, there evolved libraries, which students were free to use.[27]

In the Southend, Arabic school was a blend of the maktab school, which focuses on reading, writing, and manners, and the masjid school, which combines learning with religious education. Arabic school was also organized according to gender and ethnicity and was located in the mosque. There were several Arabic schools in the Arab community of Detroit, but in the Southend, because of the predominance of Yemenis in the community, almost all of the students were Yemeni, while the Lebanese and Iraqis attended other schools. The boys entered from one side of the mosque and the girls from the other. The girls were always covered from head to toe in an abaya or very loose long shirts and pants and the hijab, while the boys generally wore Western clothing but never shorts. Arabic school included grades K-7 and met on the weekends from 8:30am till noon for instruction, after which lectures were scheduled. Each grade was organized by literacy level in Arabic rather than by age, so some of the hijabat such as Nouria were in the fourth grade. Each grade level had one room, and the small rooms were quite overcrowded. The desks stood against one another, making it almost impossible to stand. Although each grade was generally organized according to pupil age in much the same way public school is, anyone from the Yemeni community could register for Arabic school,

[27] For more detail about these schools, please see (Shamsavary, Saqeb, and Halstead 1993). I have also provided this description of the Islamic schools in an encyclopedia chapter on American Arabs and

and therefore, there ere often students of various ages at each grade level, and if the girls failed a grade, they repeated it until they passed. Each morning before classes began, the teachers, who were Yemeni, Egyptian, and Iraqi, met in the teachers' room. They sat on chairs arranged along the perimeter of the room, facing the principal's desk. When the bell rang the teachers went to their respective classes. After mid-morning recess, the teachers changed rooms as they switched from teaching Arabic to religion or vice-versa. The students remained in the same rooms. This organization was modeled upon schools in the Middle East and in Europe. The teachers moved from class to class, while the students remain in the same room.

All of the instruction revolved around reading, writing, and the *Qur'an*. In effect, the students were taught to read and write in Arabic so that they could read the *Qur'an*, and in the upper grades, the *Qur'an* was used as the main textbook. In the lower grades, the teachers helped the students with memorizing various surat from the *Qur'an*. Oral production, recitation, and listening were emphasized in all grades. Importantly, because Arabic vocabulary is based upon a three-letter root system to which affixes are attached, much time was spent learning different roots in the younger grades. For example, in the second grade, the teacher passed a worksheet on which was listed sets of three letter sounds out of order, and the students were to recognize the letters and the words they made. So, for the sounds /th/, /h/, and /b/, make the word *thahaba* , to go (Fieldnotes, 10/24/98). The children learned that any word with these three sounds in that order will

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education. See Sarroub 1999.

have one basic meaning, "going." Other exercises include syntactic sequencing and conjugation of verbs. The upper grades focused more on grammar, such as learning the parts of speech by rhyme, and spent most of their time reading the *Qur'an* and memorizing it.

Instruction at Arabic school differed from that at Cobb in that it was all teacher-centered. The students did not address their teachers by name but as "Teacher" or "*Moualima*." Because the classrooms were so overcrowded and it was so easy for the girls to talk to one another, the teachers usually yelled at the top of their voices during the lessons. In fact the hijabat were much louder and laughed more in Arabic school than they did at their high school. The teachers were often aghast at their behavior and became harsher, calling the girls donkeys or camels in front of the whole class. Literacy instruction took the form of the teacher telling the girls what to do and how to do it with little opportunity for discussion or questions. For assessment, the teachers gave the girls homework such as grammar exercises and the *surat* (verses from the *Qur'an*) to memorize for the next class. Each month, the upper grades took an oral exam, which consisted of reciting from memory different parts of the *Qur'an*. The hijabat often grew impatient with this type of instruction and constantly criticized the teachers for their lack of innovation. But there was little they could do during literacy instruction. However, during religious instruction, they tended to ask many questions about the text and demand an explanation from their teachers. This was distinctly different from classroom instruction at Cobb, where questioning the text and the author was taken for granted because the teachers usually asked questions. In the context of the *Qur'an*, the hijabat

were willing to accept it as the word of God, yet they wondered at the reasons behind their religious practices. For instance, a seventh grader in her late teens asked the teacher why she could not wear a ring on her index finger. The teacher explained that wearing a ring on that finger is *mahkru* because that finger is used during prayer and signified one God. Therefore, it was better if it is not adorned (Fieldnotes 10/24/98).

Religious instruction in Arabic school was characterized by a more open, but teacher-centered environment and by the chanting of various sections of the *Qur'an*. This was especially so at the upper grades, where some of the hijabat were young mothers. There was more discussion which was generally led by the questions the students asked. The teacher reminded the hijabat in Arabic and broken English to wear their scarves wherever they went and to pray five times so as to be good role models to the younger girls. During one class a young woman asked if a bride should pray on her wedding day. The teacher replied, "Yes, and on her wedding night, too, before her husband even kisses her. He should, too. Everything should be baraka [good] and not haram on the wedding day" (Fieldnotes 10/24/98). The teacher said that in the old country many new brides died on their wedding nights because they were so afraid of what was about to happen, so it was better to pray beforehand. Almost in an afterthought, the teacher commented that this is why grooms are allowed to marry relatives of the bride. Discussions such as this one usually took place at the beginning of class, and the teachers allowed the hijabat to explain their concerns. Then, the teachers moved on to the planned lessons. On one occasion, the students chanted in unison a section of the *Qur'an* about charity. The teacher explained, "This is about taxation and what happens when Muslims conquer or

invade without war. Money gets disbursed among the poor, the leaders, and the members of the government." Below are excerpts taken from fieldnotes of a fourth grade classroom during which one teacher lectured and led a discussion on the hijab and another teacher led a discussion on cleanliness. In both cases, the instruction led to confusion and disbelief among the hijabat.

> The teacher hands tests back; she has to quiet down the class several times. She does this by counting to three very loudly in Arabic.
>
> The class chants a prayer. Some of the girls follow along in their books, while others chant from memory. The teacher chants from memory as she counts the money from candy sales.
>
> After the chant, the teacher asks the class in Arabic and English, "If someone asks you why you wear a scarf and why you're covered, what do you say? You may say it's because of my religion."
>
> The teacher then makes an interesting analogy. She says that "expensive chocolate is covered—in olden times good, expensive chocolate was covered. Allah created feelings in a man. Even if a woman is completely covered, a man can smell her perfume and his feelings will cause him to harm her. We have to cover ourselves. We have to protect ourselves like candy to keep the flies away. In the old days, in the US, there was less rape because women wore long dresses and skirts and this kept men from raping women. Little House in the Prairie, Dr. Quinn are examples of women who cover themselves and avoid harm. Girls today should cover for the same reason."
>
> The teacher says that among women, "Women have to cover themselves from waist to knee, or in some cases, from chest to knee. In front of men everything must be covered, like expensive chocolate."
>
> The girls listen to what the teachers says with avid interest. Nouria does not look convinced. One girl asks the teacher whether watching TV is haram. The teacher says, "No, it's not harm, but women on TV and in magazines are asking for rape and make life unsafe for women."
>
> Next, we chant more ayas from the *Qur'an*. The girls repeat after the teacher who doesn't look at the book at all (Fieldnotes, 11/1/98).

The teacher in the excerpt above was obviously interested in the girls' safety and by using examples from American media and Muslim teachings, she interacted with the girls with a

mixture of "in-between" texts. Her words carried a greater import in the context of religious instruction, and her use of popular media to persuade the girls of her viewpoint helped her identify with their daily lives. In the excerpt below, the teacher prepared a reading comprehension lesson which focused on cleanliness. This teacher had trouble managing the class and the girls took advantage of the situation by talking over her. This was a sharp contrast to their behavior at Cobb High.

> At 9am, another teacher comes in. She literally yells most of the time while she conducts class. She writes sentences on the board and tells the students to write them in their notebooks. She moves one of the girls to sit up front, and this girl complains aloud and in English that she hates to sit up front because this teacher always smells.
>
> This teacher speaks in Arabic the entire time. She lectures on cleanliness. She tells the girls when they should shower, after menstruation, after having a baby, etc. She tells them how to wipe their feet should they step on cat or dog feces. There are ways to wipe off feet on water, grass, rock, and snow.
>
> Several times, the teacher interrupts herself and really screams at one of the girls. She turns to Nouria and asks her what she's doing in class. Nouria says that she's been in the 4th grade all this time, but the teacher never noticed her until today. It is so crowded in this tiny room with nearly forty girls that the teacher could easily miss someone's presence.
>
> After the lecture, the girls ask the teacher questions in Arabic. The teacher puts questions on the board with answers and the girls are told to copy them.
>
> At one point, the teacher thinks one of the girls is passing a note, but the note is really the copied questions on the board which is passed to a girl who can't see the board. The girl protests but the teacher rips the paper up without looking at it.
>
> Unlike public school, the girls in this class are very loud and much more active (Fieldnotes 11/1/98).

In Arabic school, the hijabat learned and improved their Arabic, but they also heard and learned lessons which were not easily reconciled with those they learned at Cobb or through American media. Like the Muhathara, Arabic school in the Southend

utilized the context of reading to instill fear and mistrust. This had grave consequences. When the girls were told to think of themselves as wrapped chocolate or as fragile glass, the implication was that they did not have power and therefore they could be hurt. It is no wonder that they were so frightened of marriage or of talking openly in the school cafeteria. Arabic school did offer them the opportunity to discuss many important issues relating to their religion, and they did so boisterously and with a certain level of irreverence for their teachers (which did not characterize their relationships with Mrs. Bouzain during Muhathara), but they also received mixed messages about their status as women, their education, and their futures as workers in the world or the home. Arabic school was an "in-between" place where the girls interacted intellectually although passively with their teachers. The discourse of Arabic school, much like that of Muhathara, was a threatening one, for it positioned the hijabat as victims of society, and in some ways, it hindered the negotiation process of living in two worlds. Public school, on the other hand, offered a mixture of possible discourses and certain freedom to choose among them to reach both academic and social success, from classroom content to cafeteria conversations around secret poems. It is no wonder that the hijabat preferred that space to Arabic school, even though they all agreed that knowing Arabic was important to them and to their families.

Conclusion

The hijabat dealt with conflicting visions of literacy on a daily basis. However, they adapted to their situation by adopting an "in-between" text. This allowed them to

perform successfully or enact cultural norms which were acceptable and valid in the given context. At the same time, however, striving to be both American and Yemeni, boy or girl, could be a struggle. The Discourses that accompanied these identities are complex and complicated, affording the hijabat little power but endowing them with grace within public spaces. Knowing the *Qur'an* and being modest bestowed grace upon the individual. Within the private spaces, whether at school or elsewhere, grace often fell by the wayside as the hijabat attempted to connect their Yemeni to their American selves. This could be as easy as shedding a layer of clothing at a party or as difficult as reading a book or poem clandestinely. In either case, the girls were told at muhathara and Arabic school that these actions were wrong and perhaps sinful. Yet, the hijabat continued on, finding more and more "in-betweeness" situations within which to live.

It is clear that the hijabat negotiated their home and school lives in unique ways. They adapted to a given situation by creating or adopting "in-between" texts which helped them bridge two cultures. As in the example of Saba and her prayer in the car, "in-betweeness" helps satisfy the demands which the girls face as they attempted to succeed at being good Muslims, good daughters and wives, and good students. In the next chapter, I examine more closely how Cobb High School and its teachers accommodated their Arab population, which comprised 40% of the student population. "In-between" texts become all the more salient as teachers and school administrators struggled to maintain a sound learning environment for all students.

FOUR

The Tensions Teachers Face: How Cobb Accommodates a Yemeni Muslim Community

The growing population of Yemeni students at Cobb has led teachers and administrators to consider carefully the dilemmas of cultural pluralism within their school. In particular, it has led them to struggle with the issue of accommodation to the cultural traditions of Muslim students more generally and Yemeni Muslim students in particular. Both at organizational and personal levels, high school and district personnel have inevitably met certain challenges which called for conciliatory measures to ensure a sound learning environment for all students. With a growing population (40% at the time this study) of Muslims, the majority of whom were Arab "newcomers" of Yemeni descent who had little long term presence in the surrounding neighborhood, Cobb High found itself, from 1997-1999, in the middle of cultural and religious strife between the Arab and non-Arab communities. This conflict was occasioned by (or at least encapsulated in) two incidents, one having to do with a district-wide memorandum from the superintendent to principals over a Muslim holiday in April 1997, and the other with a cafeteria food fight on December 2, 1997. Although these incidents escalated tensions among various groups within the school and in the community, teachers at Cobb had begun the process of unpacking and addressing the tensions among their staff and students long before, in the late 1980's and early 1990's, when the number of Yemeni students soared dramatically, from a miniscule percentage to almost 30%, following the war in Lebanon, Yemen's political turmoil, and the Gulf War. The incidents of 1997 served to accelerate the course

of accommodation already in place in interesting ways. In this chapter, I examine the ways in which teachers and administrators dealt with the cultural, religious, ethnic, and gender tensions which arose as their minority population slowly increased. The chapter is based on an analysis of field observations specifically around accommodative measures, interviews conducted with 22 "mainstream" and bilingual program teachers, school counselors, and social workers, as well a wide array of documents, ranging from district-wide memos, to daily school bulletins, school memos, and local newspaper articles. The chapter is divided into two parts, the first of which deals directly with the mandates and policies of the school and district with regard to their Arab population. The second part of the chapter presents the teachers' perceptions of the accommodations they made and the impact of the accommodations on students.

Formal Accommodation in Historical Context

In 1992, Cobb High School formed the Committee on Cultural Understanding in order to explore students' perceptions of peer relationships. The committee included the principal and several teachers. Their goal, as stated in a report from an external task force, which was invited to help begin the process of cultural understanding, was to ensure that "students [would] demonstrate an understanding and acceptance of all cultures".[28] The report states that after consultation with the Southend's community center, a multiple-choice and true-false "Multi-cultural Survey" was administered to the Class of 1995, all

[28] Cobb High School [pseud.]. 1992. Multicultural report, in Mr. Laramy's [pseud.] files.

ninth graders, to test their cognitive knowledge of mainstream American, Middle Eastern, Asian, and Hispanic cultures. The following are sample questions from the Multi-Cultural Survey:

1. An Arab is . . . .
   A)anyone from the Middle East
   B)a believer in Islam
   C)a native speaker and writer of Arabic
   D)all of the above

2. What is an "Hispanic"?
   A)a person who speaks Spanish
   B)an American whose native language is Spanish
   C)a person from a Spanish-speaking country
   D)none of the above

4. Lebanon is about the size of which U. S. state?
   A)Texas
   B)North Carolina
   C)Connecticut
   D)California

8. How many countries have Spanish as their official language?
   A)10
   B)20
   C)30
   D) none of the above

26. A kimono is . . . .
   A)a garment
   B)a temple
   C)a city
   D)a fruit grown in Asia

36. America is an older nation than China. (T/F)

39. Arabic nations are basically communist nations. (T/F)

46. Generally, compared to Middle Eastern families, US families have fewer children. (T/F)

The survey was given to 197 students. The mean score (from a possible of 60) was 28.3 and the range was 8-52. Based on this data the task force observed that although the survey did not deal with student dispositions, students were uncomfortable with the test procedure. The task force recommended "more interactive student, parent, and community involvement in planning would facilitate strategies that are more student-oriented and owned rather than teacher directed." The task force also noted that Cobb should consult other schools and districts who had "undergone adaptation" to cultural diversity and that teachers should participate in staff development sessions on cultural diversity and the function of the bilingual program. Finally, they recommended that the district support Cobb 's efforts through policy and funding. In addition to the survey, during the winter of 1993, focus group interviews were held with randomly selected Arab American and non-Arab students regarding their perceptions of their inter-ethnic relationships at school.[29] Based on the combined results of the survey and these interviews, Cobb began to implement formal and informal curricular strategies to better accommodate the Muslim students and to forge links between the school and the Muslim community, especially the parents.

The process of accommodation has been by no means an easy one. As in British schools whose largest minority consists of Muslim students, Cobb initiated a series of reforms, broadly construed as informal and formal curricula (Haw and Hanifa 1998). The formal curriculum included: resource material about Muslims, the bilingual program,

[29] Cobb High School [pseud.]. 1993. A discussion with Cobb students regarding their perceptions of inter-ethnic relationships in the school, in Mr. Laramy's [pseud.] files.

Friday afternoon leave for religious instruction, consultation and sensitivity to religion, adaptation of the physical education curriculum, and sensitivity to swimming arrangements. The informal measures included dietary accommodation, the establishment of a diversity club, the use of dual language signs within the school, and recognition for Muslim holidays. To facilitate home and school connections, a community/school liaison was hired in the fall of 1998, and regular consultation with the mosque and community center was implemented. Unlike Britain, which is not as aggressively secular as is the United States with its public schools, prayer facilities and the appointment of Muslim staff were not included in Cobb's curricular changes.

Although the process of adaptation to the Yemeni population began when the Yemenis from the Southend began to be bussed approximately 6.5 miles to the high school in the late 1980's and early 1990's, the development of more thoughtful accommodation strategies took a serious turn in the fall of 1997, as a result of confusion and misinformation over religious observance. On April 14, 1997, the superintendent of the Davis school district sent to all the principals and assistant principals a memorandum in which he stated that Muslim families should be encouraged to delay their holiday celebrations:[30]

> This Thursday, April 17, is an Islamic holyday/holiday commemorating the event when God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son as a test of Abraham's faith.
>
> While our school district is committed to respecting the religious observances of its children and their families, there is a major consequence if student attendance is abnormally low this Thursday.

[30] Cobb High School [pseud.]. April 14, 1997. A Muslim holiday memo to principals and assistant principals from the superintendent of the Davis School District [pseud.].

In Michigan law, if a school district's total attendance falls below 75% on any one day, the district forfeits state aid for that day (snow days, or "acts of nature," so to speak, aren't counted, up to a certain point). One day's state aid for us in [Davis] is about $340,000. We could avoid this loss by scheduling an extra day of school at the end of the year, but that would obviously require the consent of our employee groups.

Without being insensitive to the importance of this religious holiday, if there is a way for you to encourage your Muslim families to delay the holiday celebration till the weekend it would be beneficial to our district.

P.S. Please remember that in order for a religious holiday absence not to count against a student's attendance record, a written parent excuse is necessary, verifying that the absence is for this purpose.

This memorandum prompted a backlash from the Arab community in Davis. In response to the protest, two days later, the superintendent sent the principals another memorandum, apologizing for appearing insensitive:

I have received much criticism today for my previous memo regarding the Muslim holiday, student attendance, and state aid. Some of this criticism has hit you directly as the "messenger" of my message.

Many of our Muslim staff and parents feel I have been insensitive in suggesting that their holy day can be moved around and postponed till Saturday. It was suggested that, if December 25 fell on Thursday, this would be like asking students to delay celebrating Christmas until Saturday.

I admit that I was acting somewhat out of ignorance. I had been told that the upcoming Muslim feast was four days in length and thought that the celebration for students could be delayed till the third day, Saturday. I was not aware that the *first* day was the most important and consisted of religious ceremonies in the mosque.

I am sorry if I created a problem for you by asking you to relay my earlier message to students and their families, and I apologize to our Muslim staff and parents if I appeared to be insensitive to the nature and importance of this religious holiday. [31]

[31] Cobb High School [pseud.]. April 116, 1997. A Muslim holiday memo to principals and assistant principals from the superintendent of the Davis School District [pseud].

These memoranda fueled the mounting tensions between the school and its Arab population just as Cobb was grappling with issues of integration among Arab and non-Arab students within the building and in the community.

On December 2, 1997, some eight months after the holiday fiasco, a fight broke out between an Arab American boy and a non-Arab American boy in the cafeteria. In a letter to the mother of the Arab American boy, one of the assistant principals stated that her boy would be suspended for ten days because he had initiated the fight in the hallway by saying to the other boy, "What all you white honkies doing?" to which the other boy took offense and called him an "Arab."[32] This exchange resulted in a fist fight between the two students. The principal stated that "this happened after a major warning had been given all students here at Cobb about ethnic slurs or intimidations." The Arab American boy also threatened to "blow up the school" as he was dragged away from the fight.

The "cafeteria incident," as it was subsequently called in all school correspondence and media reports, marked a turning point in Cobb's short history with its Yemeni population. Much to the surprise of the school and community, at a Board of Education meeting on December 8, 1997, one of the Yemeni American hijabat declared that she had been "knocked down, kicked and hit with racial/ethnic slurs" during the fight.[33] These accusations had not been made on the day of the fight, and as one of the assistant

[32] Cobb High School [pseud.]. December 1997. Letter to parent from an assistant principal at Cobb [pseud.].
[33] Cobb High School [pseud.]. December 8, 1997. Memo to Superintendent from an assistant principal at Cobb [pseud.].

principals pointed out in his memorandum, "...Several students and staff were astonished at her statements to the Board of Education. Many thought this was less than honest and it has left a bad feeling among staff and students." Cobb was contacted on December 23, 1997, by the Director of Education and Outreach for the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee in Washington, D.C. The superintendent responded to the Washington group with the following explanation:

> I have met several times with a group of 18 district staff, including 8 from [Cobb], to discuss what needs to take place at Cobb (...and elsewhere in our school district) to increase the understanding and respect students and adults have for each other. The Cobb members of this group, working independently, have come up with a plan for their school, which plan received the approval and support of the whole faculty at a meeting on January 12, 1998. I am also discussing with our Social Studies department the development of some special teaching units
>
> . . .I cannot end this letter without asking you to believe me that the information you received about the Cobb cafeteria event is not entirely accurate and that you received some extremely exaggerated reports. I am not proud of what happened there but the vicious scene of mob rule and outright physical aggression against innocent Arab female bystanders is not accurate. Teachers and other cafeteria supervisors who were present at the scene were absolutely dumbfounded to read the allegations contained in your letter.[34]

While the Davis School District tried to deal with multiple allegations of wrong-doing from internal and external sources, Detroit area newspapers portrayals included descriptions such as, "strife," "ethnic turmoil," "conflict," "understanding is needed," "ethnic fighting," "cultural clash," and "unrest," just to name several of the more prominent themes. Within the walls of Cobb High School, teachers and students were struggling in their own negotiations for improvement of relations among the students and faculty which mirrored media descriptions. On December 12, 1997, a small group of

Arab American students, all of whom were of Yemeni descent and most of whom were hijabat, met with teachers and principals to discuss their concerns. Their list of grievances below dealt specifically with the principals, the secretaries, and the teachers:[35]

Administration:

-Administration say Arabic students are a pain in the neck
-Using words like "you guys" when dealing with situations
-Telling Arabic students to "not push their luck" when asking about their holidays off
-Arabic students get harder discipline than Non-Arabic students
-Administrators lie to Arabic students
-Annual Arab/non-Arab fight expected - administrators do not take any actions to avoid it -student's know it's coming

Secretaries:

-Secretaries give Arabic students dirty looks when they come into the office
-Secretaries ignore Arabic students when they come into the office

Teachers:

-No teaching of Arabic culture/no mention of Islamic holiday.
-Staff makes little effort to force mixing of students - particularly in lab or group
-Arabic students go to teachers to complain and nothing happens - teachers do not listen to Arabic students but will listen to non-Arabic students
-Some teachers allow students to say ARAB and other offensive words without punishment

General Concerns:

-The handling of the cafeteria fight was not done fairly
-Yearbook not representing the Arabic population - yearbook photos getting lost or misplaced.
-There is a lack of understanding of the Arabic culture by students and staff
-Arabic students don't feel welcome in after school clubs
-When asked the question, named some good teachers who they said treated them with respect, dignity, and appeared to treat ALL students equally

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[34] Cobb High School [pseud.]. January 23, 1998. Letter to Director of Education and Outreach, American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, Washington, D.C. from superintendent of Davis School District [pseud.].

[35] Cobb High School [pseud.]. December 12, 1997. Small group of Arabic student concerns expressed at 12-13-97 meeting, in Mrs. Barnabey's [pseud.] files.

Many items on this list perplexed administrators and teachers alike, whose experiences with the Yemeni and Yemeni American students had made it clear that the students, and the girls in particular, could not and would not engage in many academic and social activities at school and/or in class. What was more interesting to teachers and administrators alike was that the hijabat were the students who were the most vocal about making changes in the school to accommodate the Arab students. Students such as Saba attended meetings and demanded reform. Unfotunately, in the case of Saba, she allienated several teachers when she called them racist and the principal had to bar her from attending certain meetings. Based on the meeting regarding the list of grievances and the previous incidents, Cobb created a plan of action for intervention at three levels: a parent intervention, a student intervention, and a staff intervention (see Appendix B).[36] The parent intervention emphasized hiring a community liaison who would meet regularly with community group; converting English documents into Arabic; providing shuttle services from the Southend to the school during Open House and Parent/Teacher Conferences; and translating the Curriculum Guide, Student Code of Conduct, and other important documents from English to Arabic and other languages if necessary. The student intervention focused on blending students early on from the two middle schools who feed into Cobb so that the predominantly Arab American population at one middle school and the predominantly non-Arab students would have an opportunity to adjust to one another earlier; creating an Ambassadors Group for the orientation of new students in

[36] Cobb High School [pseud.]. January 20, 1998. Plan of Action (in response to student and parent concerns regarding Cobb High School [pseud.].

the school; organizing meetings for teachers, administrators, and students around school concerns; increasing involvement in the Student Leadership area; making curricular objectives changes at the middle school level with re-enforcement activities at Cobb; exploring diversity through writing assignments in ninth and tenth grade English/Humanities courses; forming a "Diversity Club;" and working alongside community centers to educate new immigrant students in some of the more general aspects of American schools. Staff intervention included in-service or school improvement days on diversity education; the practice of heterogeneous grouping and seating charts; and an intervention to improve inappropriate language related to diversity. Following the dispersion of the action plan to community members and school faculty, the principal wrote a memorandum to the faculty in which he, once more, emphasized the management of students in classrooms:[37]

> At the last Faculty Meeting I spent some time discussing the Action Plan a committee of staff members developed in response to community concerns. At the close of the meeting, consensus was given to implement any and/or all points listed. We have started the implementation of some items (i.e. increasing student leadership, investigating the formation of a diversity club, routine meetings with students, planning for a new freshmen orientation program). One item that I wanted to emphasize from the action plan is the forced mixing of students whenever classroom activities are occurring. I would like all staff members to take professional responsibility to culturally mix students whenever classroom activities are occurring. The optimum plan would include culturally mixing students in seating charts as well. Your cooperation in this effort will be appreciated.

[37] Cobb High School [pseud.]. February 4, 1998. Cultural diversity action plan memorandum to all Cobb High School [pseud.] faculty from Principal.

This memorandum caused much consternation among the teachers who had Yemeni hijabat and Yemeni boys in their classrooms. As I suggested in chapter two, segregated seating was important to the hijabat and from that stand point, they then could decide how easily and safely they could partake of the normative classroom practices. Although the students had called for more integration measures within the school, teachers recognized that the reality of classroom life and Yemeni cultural norms would not allow them to freely mix the boys and girls as the principal suggested. Regardless of the institutional efforts made by the school and district, teachers would be caught in the middle, as enforcers of unenforceable measures and as inadvertent agents of American culture.

Teachers and Administrators' Perceptions of the Accommodation Process

Bargaining for grades: Why it's not like haggling for beans

> It's hot. Your mother has sent you to the Souk (market) to buy some beans for tonight's dinner. She tells you not to spend more than what's right. You walk around the stalls and hardly pay attention to the men yelling out their wares and prices. You do notice, though, that the prices seem different from yesterday when you were here to buy potatoes. Finally, you get to the bean stand and you ask the merchant how much for a kilo. He gives you a number and you shake your head. Then, the haggling begins. You say, "C'mon! That's too much. I didn't even pay that much last week. You can do better. You know me. I come here every week." And so, it goes for twenty minutes, back and forth, back and forth. It's a game and you try to outsmart the crafty merchant until you come to an agreement and you get your kilo of beans. At the end you may still have some money left over from what your mother gave you, but not really enough to impress anyone with your bargaining skills.
>
> Ali sits in the back row of the classroom and he's surrounded by six other Yemeni boys. This is math and Mrs. Jenson is handing out the graded

tests. She's on the other side of the room where all the scarfed girls, five in all, sit together and apart from the other students. All that can be seen of one girl are her eyes. The girls talk quietly in their softly accented Davis Arabic English to one another while Mrs. Jackson walks around the room handing out tests and reacting to the smiles and groans with a stoic expression. The boys talk in Arabic teasing each other about being smart and dumb.

Ali gets a C on his test and groans aloud. He follows Mrs. Jackson around the room and says, "Mrs. J, why d'I get a C?

"You didn't study hard enough."

"C'mon, you know me. I study. Change it."

"No, you'll just have to do better next time. It's not the end of the world."

"C'mon, Mrs. J! What'll it take? Give me a B-. I deserve a B-. You know me.

"I told you, Ali, that's your grade.

C'mon, a C+. You can do that. A C isn't right.

"Ali, go sit down. I told you before that I don't change grades. You and your friends never learn. Just study more."

Ali goes to his seat, his posture stiff and angry. He turns to me and says, "Look, wouldn't you give me at least a B?

"I'm not your teacher, Ali. I'm just shadowing today."

Ali turns to his friends and speaks to them in Arabic, commenting that Mrs. Jackson is a bitch. They all laugh.

It's clear that although Mrs. Jackson doesn't understand what they say, she senses their resentment towards her. She remembers her first experience at the beginning of the year when she acquiesced and changed Sharif's grade. It never stopped. She'd give him two extra points and he's beg for three more and so it would go on. She'd almost torn her hair out. No respect, that's what this is. She knows that some other teachers feel the same way. Well, she'd have another story for them today at lunch. As she looks around the room, she thinks to herself, "At least the Arab girls

are conscientious. They study hard and always behave." She begins the new lesson on the board.

In the meantime, Asya stares disappointingly at her grade. Another B. It's going to ruin her GPA if she keeps taking this math class. She whispers to her closest friend and cousin, Amina, who got a C, and they both agree that if it's too late to drop they'll switch to a different teacher next semester. Asya says that she'll have to miss two weeks this semester when she has her baby so it's really better to drop if she can so that her GPA doesn't get worse. Amina agrees and says that she'll have to tell her parents that math doesn't really matter when you want to be a nurse.

In the meantime, Ali makes plans for a ride with Sharif after school. Both boys work from 3:30p to midnight at a restaurant in Greek Town. Their grades matter but only to the degree to which it may affect getting their diplomas and graduating on time. Working is what matters.

The bell rings and the students file out of the room noisily. The hijabat keep to themselves and the boys push and shove. The non-Arab students do the same, although they don't all file out in boy/girl groups.

The teacher breathes a sigh of relief even as she wonders at the Arab words left hanging in the air as the door shuts (Fieldnotes, 11/16/98).

The vignette is an example of the day-to-day negotiations teachers engage in with their Yemeni and Yemeni American students. From haggling over grades to having married and pregnant hijabat in class to implementing a seating arrangement which will accommodate both school mandates and cultural norms—these are just some of the tensions teachers face each day. In part two of this chapter, I explore the kinds of accommodations teachers, administrators, and counseling staff make on an individual and personal basis in their dealings with non-Arab and Arab Americans in their school. They made these accommodations to ensure that all their students had the opportunity to succeed in school. As will be illustrated, there was a range of expectations for conformity from and dispositions toward their students among the teachers and staff. I begin with an

analysis of the roles the teachers have vis à vis their students. Then, I examine specific types of accommodation, ones made on the basis of gender, physical space, language, religion, and culture.

Teachers at Cobb High School viewed their roles in one of two ways with regard to their relationships with the Yemeni populations. These roles are intimately connected to the teachers' own ethnicity and ties to their own communities. The majority of teachers, all of those who were ethnically non-Arab, described themselves as teachers who have the same expectations of all their students, regardless of ethnicity, and whose main objective is to teach their subjects. This is the classic liberal view of equity—treat all students the same—that characterized American racial dispositions in the 1960s. It is in stark contrast with either multiculturalism or cultural particularism, the more current views of diversity. Overall, these teachers did not see themselves as invested in their students' personal lives and made clear demarcations between school and community and home life. The hijabat felt this separation and told me that they sometimes "really talked" to or confided in five non-Arab teachers in the whole building. The Arab American teachers, most of whom taught in the bilingual program and had very little interaction with the Yemeni American hijabat, included the metaphor of being a parent to their students and of feeling a sense of obligation and responsibility toward their Arab and Arab American students. It should be noted here that not all Arab American teachers welcomed this added responsibility, but they understood that in many ways, they were indeed surrogate parents and agents of American and Arab cultures to the newcomers, especially since many of their students were illiterate in Arabic and had never been to

school before. As Mrs. Ishmael, one of the bilingual program teachers said, "You know, sometimes I feel I'm part of the family. I mean like a family member. And, usually, these kids, they look at you like, like a father or a mother or a sister, whatever" (Interview, 9/15/98). Another teacher, Mrs. Ali, also reinforced the parent family and parent metaphor:

> I think they [Arab community] expect us to teach them the language, the content, manners, because back home, [the] teacher was like a second mom or dad for those students. I think their expectation is the same thing. We send them to you, you are in charge. And I've had, I've had parents where they tell me, listen, if he doesn't listen to you, spank him. Hit him. Like a parent. So, and we do act like parents sometimes, when we sit down and teach them morals and respect and values and you cannot talk like that, it's wrong. You have to go to school. You know, like, like that because we know they're not getting that at home (Interview, 9/15/98).

Mrs. Ali, as an Arab American teacher, accepted the responsibility of being a "parent" to her students in the bilingual program, but she was also troubled by her students' lack of adaptation to American norms. In fact, she was often embarrassed by them. Her statement below illustrates the difficulty she experienced in her role as parent and as agent of American cultural norms:

> See, now, if I talk to the father, I will say maybe he doesn't understand because he's not good, he's not here so he doesn't see how Americans are and how... so he doesn't know, maybe understand. But these kids *are* here. They see Americans, how they are. They are with the Americans. They see how clean they are. How they smell, how they, you know, everything. You know, it's like they are the same thing as their parents. And I have students we have two years, three years, you would expect they would learn something from the way they are here. No. What's here stays the way it is, that's it. I'm gonna dress that way. This is the way I'm gonna smell. This is the way I'm gonna look. No change. This is something I, you know, I was shocked. I mean, I am shocked about. Because when we came here, it was different. We didn't shower every day

> back home. These things were not available for us. But when you took gym, it was mandatory, everybody has to shower. Everybody has to do that. I don't know. And we tell them, you know, you guys gotta be in the mainstream, you know, we don't look bad. We are all, you know, they're gonna think all Arabs are like that. Why you say that, why you do that. You have to change. I mean, you come and, this is, now we are in heaven. In the winter time, it's freezing outside and can't open the windows. We have 35 students smelling like that, you know how bad it is? You know how embarrassing it is to us when the principal comes into our classroom? Or a teacher comes in the classroom? It's embarrassing. We don't know what to do. And if I open the window, we are freezing. They don't have decent sweaters to wear. And there, some of them come in with the same clothes 3, 4 days a week. The same clothes they're going to work with, same clothes they sleep with, probably the same clothes they're coming to school with. This is a big, and teachers, they raise this problem, during faculty meeting about the hardship (Interview, 9/15/98).

Mrs. Ali expected her students, the majority of whom were boys, to adapt to American cultural norms from their interaction with their American peers and thus accepted her role as "parent" to help the students become more American. In addition, as an Arab American, she was concerned about her students' images as Arabs among her colleagues and her principal. The embarrassment she felt along with the need to be a surrogate parent were inner conflicts she experienced as a teacher in the bilingual program on a daily basis.

Mr. Yasser, also a teacher in the bilingual program, resented being put in the position of parent or role model. ". . . They [Arab community and parents] believe that I should be the role model, the perfect person. Okay? I don't think that's true. . . . I'm too Americanized for them" (Interview 9/15/98). As an American teacher of Lebanese descent, Mr. Yasser found little in common with his students. Like most teachers at Cobb, teaching this new population meant learning the mores of another culture and adapting his teaching to fit with his students' expectations. Below, he explains an incident

which changed how he would normally conduct informal classroom discussions with the Yemeni boys.

> You know, a lot of the kids, when they first came here, I had the worst time in the world. It was such a bad teaching experience because I had never taught Yemenis before. And I had to find out a lot about their culture. Prime example is that I always felt that, okay, the last ten minutes of class we'll speak English. And so like how are you today, you know, everybody one day was like how are you. You know, next day, what did you do last night? Finally, I said well, how's your mom. And how's your mother, the whole class went silent. The kid got very embarrassed and verbally abusive. Why are you asking about my mother? Who are you? And I didn't realize that you don't ask about their mothers. It's like, right. I mean, any, Lebanese culture, Syrian culture, you know, you see somebody and you're friends with them, well, how's your mom and dad doing? You know, no qualms about anything. But in this one particular culture, you know, it's different. Even the Iraqis, I can ask the Iraqis, well, how's your mom doing, you know. You meet some of these parents and they're like wonderful. Oh, she's doing good, you know (Interview, 9/15/98).

The bilingual teachers' experiences with the new immigrant population in their school were challenging, as illustrated above by Mr.Yasser's comments. An Arab American himself, Mr. Yesser did not readily identify culturally with his students, whose culture and ways of interacting differed substantively from his previous experiences with other Arab populations from the Middle East. He and other teachers in the bilingual program had to maintain a precarious balance as professionals and as representatives of the Arab American community. In many ways, the teachers and their students were isolated from others in the building because the bilingual program and classes were situated in one part of the building, away from the "mainstream" and their Yemeni American peers. Since the newcomers worked long hours for the remittances they would send home and for money to support themselves, they did not participate in after school activities; thus

they really have no opportunity to interact with the other students. All the teachers at Cobb were aware and understood that the Yemeni boys attended school only for the diploma and worked around the clock to support themselves and their families, yet tensions were not eased, as Mrs. Ali pointed out. Her roles as caretaker and teacher sometimes collided because she could not engage her students in high school social and academic life. For example, another Arab American teacher, Mrs. Fahzel, who taught mainly boys in the bilingual program, remarked, "Mainly, the student population that I have here, for the most part does not come specifically to learn. First of all their main purpose in coming, their main goal is to work and, and by the way, or on the wayside, along the way, they earn a degree which is also prestigious for them to take home" (Interview, 9/15/1998). As I stated in chapter one, the newcomers were sojourners, gaining access to a high school diploma in order to have a better life in Yemen.

The tensions teachers experienced at Cobb as the number of students of Yemeni descent increased is multifaceted. Although this study did not concern itself with the Yemeni newcomers but with Yemeni Americans, the newcomers were an important aspect part of school life, as noted above and in the previous chapters. Furthermore, the segregation of the bilingual program in a section of the high school building helps to explain the spatial and language divide among the Arab American and non-Arab American teachers. These two groups of teachers did not eat lunch together or intermingle at staff meetings. They self-segregated and this was due, in part, to the fact that the bilingual program was located in one section of the building, away from other subject matter classrooms. The second reason for this self-segregation is that the Arab American teachers

were mostly of Lebanese descent and enjoyed eating together, sharing homemade food, and speaking a mixture of Arabic and English. Finally, these teachers were simply not comfortable with the other teachers. Mr. Ackerman, a non-Arab teacher, commented that although he ate lunch with his colleagues "upstairs, some of them will say they don't want to come down here because they feel they're not welcome" (Interview, 10/15/98). Some Arab American teachers contended that teachers at Cobb were prejudiced and "could do a better job of acknowledging Islam" (Interview with Mr. Jaber, 9/15/98). Although there existed an obvious and explicit social divide among the Arab and non-Arab teachers, which included the way in which Arab American teachers related to their students, it was also true that all teachers were concerned with improving academic and social achievement for their students.

Faculty Accommodations

Accommodation at Cobb involved the logistical and culturo-religious. Perhaps one of the most startling examples of both is the degree to which administrators respected the hijabat's corporeal space. For example, at the Underclass Honors Assembly, during which 197 students received awards, 54 were Arab, and among those, 41 were Yemeni American; 15 Yemeni American girls received an award for having high grade point averages (Fieldnotes, 10/20/98). The hijabat sat in a cluster at the front of the cafeteria during the ceremony, while the Arab boys sat together in the back, and everyone else, including parents, sat in mixed gender groups throughout the cafeteria. It became immediately noticeable that as the first of the hijabat walked forward to the principals,

she began to extend her hand and then noticed that the principals put their hands over their hearts and made a slight bow before giving her the award pin. As the rest of the hijabat followed suit, they all understood that they were not expected to shake their principals' hands. It turned out that a few of the hijabat, Saba, among them, had complained in the past that having to shake a man's hand, even if he is the principal, did not show respect towards them as pious Muslims. As a result, on all public occasions, including the graduation ceremony, the principals would send a letter to the hijabat's homes warning that they would be extending their hands at the event, and that if the girls did not want to make contact, they would have to wear gloves. On this particular occasion, the principals had not sent notification early enough to the girls, so they accommodated the situation by a hand to the heart and a bow.[38] This example shows the extent to which the school will accommodate its students, even when administrators forget to send letters home. However, teachers still grappled with gender bifurcation in their classrooms and religious and cultural accommodation.

The two most significant tensions teachers faced at Cobb were the self-segregation of the hijabat and the Friday afternoon leave for prayer. Teachers reacted to the hijabat in different ways. During the two years of fieldwork, every single teacher with whom I spoke remarked on the hijabat's good study habits. According to the teachers, the hijabat were far more diligent about their school work than any of the other students in the

[38] I would argue that this is not a genuine accommodation. It is more an accommodation to the school's inefficiency (not sending home the letters in time) than to the cultural norms of the Yemenis. It was often awkward for the hijabat to know exactly what to do for ceremonies when they had not been alerted ahead of

school. While the teachers' admired the girls for their hard work, they were frustrated and confused over what they perceived to be family versus cultural issues. One English teacher, Mr. Sajek, commented that "a lot of teachers at Cobb are trying to get a feel for what's cultural and what's coming from the family" (Interview, 2/24/98). This had a direct impact on his teaching. "In other words, when we do art, we might have Michelangelo's David. It's a nude. And I've had three Arabic girls sitting next to each other and one will say I'm not allowed to look at this. And all three of them are Yemenis and will ask, you know, can I leave the room or put my head down and the others will look. You know, is that cultural or is that family? (Interview, 2/24/98). It is this teacher's perception that "Arabic boys blend into the classroom" but the hijabat are "faced with living in two worlds." Another teacher, Mr. Laramy, who also teaches English shared Mr. Sajek's assessment. Mr. Laramy's classroom was an oasis for the hijabat. Cultural and religious norms were often suspended, but those norms also depended on content context, which made the suspension of norms more complex and nuanced. This complexity made classroom life less uniform for both teachers and students throughout the year. In the example below, Mr. Laramy comments enthusiastically about the hijabat's lively engagement with content.

> ...The most ironic thing, I think, that I've done in the last year was last year when I was teaching *The Crucible* and I had all these Arabic girls in class. . .they watched it here and they loved it and we read it, but I thought to myself, what must be going through their heads as they look at these girls, who because of their religion and culture were so, you know, penned up and unable to express themselves. And then here they are, in exactly

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time about how they would be received by the principapals. In chapter three, I discuss why hijabat such as Saba would rather not be touched by men, regardless of context, even at school award ceremony.

> the same situation, which is why sometimes when we, at least the last couple years, when we had problems in the school of any kind, they tended to be prolonged by the Arabic girls. They're the ones that wouldn't let it die and I thought to myself, maybe it's because for once they can kinda step forward and they're getting some attention and stuff (Interview 10/22/98).

In making connections between the hijabat's lives at school and the literature they were reading in his class, Mr. Laramy was able to make some sense of his observations and the girls' demands for religious and cultural accommodation in the school. He was surprised at how vocal the girls could be with regard to change in the school and admitted that school was probably the only place where they could openly voice their concerns because the stakes were so high for them. In order to stay in school and maintain good grades, there had to be some religious and cultural accommodation. Going on a field trip, for example, could be problematic because the girls refused to be seen sitting in a car with their teacher and/or boys on the way to a museum. Or, as in the case of Mr. Sajek, who knew that his students could not get the help they needed at home for their homework, he was frustrated by the fact that the hijabat asked for help but were not allowed in his room alone after school. What was most frustrating for the teachers is that the hijabat were good students, if not exemplary students, yet they could not participate in school activities or even in some discussions on literature and other content matter, thus making classroom life complicated for their teachers. Below, Mr. Sajek describes this situation as he attempted to think about what being a student entailed:

> Your heart goes out in a way to the female students because I have heard conversations and I've had conversations in the classroom where it's been indicated we wish, we wish we could do some of these things. You know, attend after school activities. And I don't mean dances, but, you know,

> take part in more activities at school. I've had girls in my classroom who have broken down and cried because, you know, dealing with literature you deal with the concept of love, falling in love on your own. Whereas you know, and I've had students say, you know, I don't want someone to pick the person that I'm going to marry but I have to. . . .your heart goes out and you see the pain of your students. It's not all of them, some are very happy (Interview with Mr. Sajek, 2/24/98).

Teachers were troubled by the fact that their Arab population did not participate in after school activities. Because of its size, with over 1400 students, Edward Find was expected to compete in Division I Class A school for sports and other extra-curricular activities, but this was almost impossible when more than 30% of the school population did not participate. Teachers attempted to engage their students in school activities, in getting the necessary help after school, and in working in mixed ethnic and gender groups, but the result was usually failure because the students refused to participate. Teachers then just let their students work in a manner which was most comfortable to them, regardless of school mandates because they could not control the likely consequences of those mandates. For example, Mr. Sajek explained, "I have a female student who, the most recent one was a few weeks back where she's a great student but her uncle came from Yemen and when he heard that she was going to a school with boys, they're sending her back to Yemen. You know, and this teacher was broken hearted" (Interview2/24/98). Teachers never knew when they might lose a student because of Yemeni cultural norms, so they treaded lightly and learned as much as they could during interactions with their students, although the hijabat were not often forthcoming about cultural or religious issues.

As I stated earlier, teachers at Cobb reacted to their minority population in different ways. Most teachers were frustrated because accommodation entailed giving up their own cultural norms—changing the cafeteria food to include humus instead of pork or pepperoni or not posting any kinds of religious symbols or words during the traditional winter holidays. In fact, teachers also contended with moving the spring holiday (or Easter) to include El Eid during Ramadan, and this caused them to have a different holiday than their children, who attended other schools the Davis school district. Although the teachers grumbled about these accommodations, they did acknowledge that since they had to bus the Yemenis so far from home, that "it [was] only fair to recognize them and their cultural and religious practices." However, there were teachers who were angry and expressed themselves openly in their anger. Many resented the Yemeni and Yemeni American boys. As the vignette at the beginning of this section showed, the boys were always trying to negotiate the system. Mr. Seely, a math teacher, noted, "I get some Arabic boys that always want to negotiate their grade. That's what they're interested in. And I tell them this is not a negotiation process. This is what you earned" (Interview, 10/20/98). Mr. Laramy, who admitted that he is sexist, said that he did not expect much from the boys, but

> we accommodate them grade wise. We have a number of Arabic students [boys] who pass who shouldn't. . . . We've lowered the bar educationally. . . . But you go down to the counseling office, the first two weeks after the semester starts, 90% of the students who were there were Arabic. Most of those students want to get changed out of a class because they didn't get the teacher they wanted, because they think it's gonna be too hard, or they want to be moved in with their friends who are in another class. And I would have to say most of these accommodations are made for them. And once the word gets out, oh, you can just go down and get out of this class

> and go over here where you're. . .then it becomes wholesale and it causes all kinds of problems early for the teachers particularly. The fact that an Arabic girl sometimes doesn't understand the assignment won't stop her from doing 30 pages on it. . . . The boys, on the other hand, don't, cheating is just second nature to them for the most part. It's a situation we have to deal with (Interview, 10/22/98).

The lines which formed outside of the counselors' offices at the beginning of each semester did include mostly Yemeni students, and more often than not, the hijabat did not want to be in classes by themselves, so they switched to be with others like them. Overall, the teachers respected their hijabat for their diligence and good grades. Concerning the Yemeni and Yemeni American boys, the teachers took a more critical and sometimes hostile view. Mr. Laramy exclaimed once that he "never felt so totally helpless in all [his] life" as when he found out that one of his best female students was going to drop out of school because of a bad grade, while the boys could continue school with really low grades. He understood that getting good grades allowed the hijabat to stay in school, but the fact of the matter remained that for him the accommodation process went too far if teachers had to give students good grades to keep them in school.

Other school personnel complained about the boys, especially in the cafeteria. One Lebanese American staff member, Mr. Yasseen remarked,

> To be blunt, they're not civilized here. At the other high school, they're third and fourth generation. Here they're fresh, new. If you tell them, ok, you're suspended for three days, they say, c'mon, give me one. If you tell them, here you have a C, they'll tell you, c'mon, give me an A. They have no respect for anything. They're always negotiating and not learning how things work (Fieldnotes, 10/27/98).

Some teachers, such as Mr. Dodge, who teaches science, was quite critical of the Yemeni students in the school and described them as "a fundamental, uneducated, ignorant group."

He said, "If you treat them like dogs, they're fine." In addition, the principal's policy of integration in the classroom is part of "a pretty world and we don't live in a pretty world." In describing the hijabat, Mr. Dodge noted that "their direction is simply breeding" and that "[they] have a difficult time at being successful because of their appearance." Finally, Mr. Dodge commented that "we get edgy with difference. It's like hanging out with retarded people. We don't want to be like them" (Fieldnotes, 2/11/98). These types of comments from a teacher elicited angry responses from students, who did complain to the administration about prejudiced teachers, and from Arab American teachers, one of whom stated, "Some teachers, they have to have more acceptance. And some, what you call, they call them white trash, they should be, they should be white, not trash" (Interview, 9/15/98).

While some teachers were openly prejudiced and hostile, others simply struggled to understand and to accommodate the situation. Gym class is a prime example. Cobb had made some formal curricular changes such that the hijabat could fulfill their physical education requirement without worrying about the presence of boys in the class. Unfortunately, when the changes were first instituted, a male teacher was inadvertently assigned to an all-female class, thus causing an uproar. Eventually, the school ensured that those classes would be taught by women instructors and that swimming would also be taught separately to boys and girls. Nonetheless, these teachers were extremely frustrated by their students' behavior, as Ms. Soretsky's comments suggest:

> I try to learn from them and I try to allow room for their differences. I let them wear whatever they want. So some are totally covered. But some boys walked by and they want to stop running. Well, my first instinct is

> no, you don't stop running. And I knew it was one of those where I might as well just adjust a little bit and two girls were very concerned about it. I let them pause and I said, ok, you owe me a minute. . . . I know that many of them have said we are not allowed to, to do anything physical in front of guys. I had to struggle a little bit. Do I push them, do I just let it go? And I'm not sure why the concern has heightened to the extent that it is but they were late for class several days in a row and I'm like, you guys, what are you doing? You can't be late. They said, well, there were guys in the hall. We didn't wanta walk across the hallway. You know, now we're getting to such extremes. I want to be considerate of the differences, I wanta be as helpful and, but I can't, I can't get to the point where kids can be tardy because they won't walk across the hallway when they're clothed any way they wanta be clothed" (Interview, 2/24/98).

Ms. Soretsky was at her wit's end in her attempts to implement her curriculum and to engage her students in class. She could not assign homework assignments to her students, such as running during the weekends, because the girls laughed and told her that they were not allowed to run. She wondered about their home life, "I think they're two different worlds and I would be curious how in tune to this the parents are. And how many internal struggle these girls have, particularly the girls, that there's no one there to help them with." Ms. Sortetsky also commented that she had heard "many teachers say I'm moving out of Davis because it's basically being overtaken with the Arab population. Growing up in Davis, especially Mayor H years and years ago, when I was a kid, it was so much Davis being the racist, all White community. No African Americans allowed. It's kind of funny how it's changed and stayed the same." This teacher questioned her own receptiveness toward the Yemenis in her classes. But, she also worried about the girls who failed the course again and again because they failed to dress appropriately (even when she allowed them to cover completely) and instead of taking three semesters

of gym, they enrolled in the course for four years, and then she had to give them a passing grade (another accommodation) so that they could graduate.

The most interesting yet subtle accommodation school counselors made was to encourage the hijabat to enroll in family life education courses, which include foods classes, parenting, career success, interior design, and sewing. As one of the life education teachers, Mrs. Barnabey, noted,

> Over the years, because the mere numbers of Arabic children in this school has grown, I have seen a larger number of Arabic students, both boys and girls. More girls than boys in my classes. I think. . . for two reasons. Number one, because the lower ability student, not only Arabic, but Arabic and non-Arabic children alike, are encouraged to take these classes where they might have success because it's more hands on. And secondly, I think that counselors encourage the Arabic girls to take it because many of them are going to be homemakers. And thirdly, I have a lot of repeats. I have a good relationship with them and they sign up again (Interview, 2/10/98).

At their discretion, counselors did make recommendations based on individual students' needs. One counselor commented that "the girls are basically the same as their mothers. They follow their mother's upbringing. And being home right after school, they're basically doing the same thing as the mother" (Interview with Mr. Abdullah, 9/15/98). This was not an accurate depiction of the hijabat; all of them, unlike their mothers, were literate in Arabic and English and far more educated. But, early marriages and pregnancies and pressure from parents to be competent as homemakers convinced teachers and counselors that the family education classes were a valuable asset for the girls. All of the hijabat in this study, for instance, took one or more of the family life education courses and two enrolled in sewing because their parents told them they would need those skills

in Yemen. Layla and Aisha, for instance, learned to sew just in case they moved back to Yemen and needed make clothes for themselves and their families. In effect, the high school supported the development of competencies the girls would need once they left high school.

The counselors had much more interaction with the Arab community than did the teachers. When problems arose, they were careful not to refer potentially serious cases to the health clinic in the Southend's community center because of the likelihood of breach of confidentiality within such a tightly knit community. Also, they knew that the students might be sent back to Yemen, so they protected them as much as possible unless there was no alternative. On the other hand, the counselors did utilize the community center as a resource, especially in the bilingual program, where the students participated in workshops on drugs (especially for those students who chewed Qat) and alcohol. Importantly, the counselors facilitated parent meetings with the school. For example, because many parents were poor and could not drive the distance to school or work at night, one of the counselors had an Open House in the elementary school located in the Southend. This provided a means for parents to communicate with school personnel.

Other than the gender bifurcation issues which had troubled and frustrated teachers, the most controversial issues revolved around the inclusion of more academic content on Arab cultures and Friday prayer.[39] As to the first issue, Cobb's Action Plan as described above called for an increased emphasis on Arab and Islamic cultures as part of

the curriculum. This confused teachers because the purpose of the increased emphasis was not clear to them. As one English teacher, Mr. Zanak, was quick to point out, none of the students was literate in his or her own culture, so an increased emphasis did not serve any purpose.

> You know, people talk about cultural literacy. That's one of our, that's one of the things you hear a lot about, especially when you've got a diverse culture or a diverse population like this and people say, well, you have to do, you know, teach more about the Arabic culture to the other kids and this is something we've heard before. And you know, one of the arguments against that is look, these kids aren't literate in their own culture. Arabic kids aren't literate in their own culture. White kids aren't literate in their own culture. It's, you know, it's a level of literacy across the board. And they don't know their history. They don't know where they came from. They don't know what was written by anybody in either culture. And yeah, that's one of our, you know, we have the humanities programs. I'm a big advocate of that because you know, we're, we're teaching art, music and literature rolled together. And at some point, I think you arrive at a level of cultural literacy there (Interview, 10/22/98).[40]

Another teacher insisted on focusing more on American culture because he thought an increased emphasis on Arab culture would not be as useful for the school's Yemeni population.

> I don't know if secluded is the right word, but they have asked us to instill or keep part of the Arab culture. And, in world history, that's very simple because we did that anyhow. But the one thing, this is purely opinion. This is opinion. I honestly think that many of the Yemeni, when they come here, they always seem to tell me that they're going back to Yemen

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[39] Some teachers also complained about hearing too much Arabic spoken in the hallways. With the exception of the students in the bilingual program, English was usually spoken in the classroom. Only in special circumstances, as noted in previous chapters, did the students speak in Arabic during class.

[40] Very few teachers identified students as White and Arabic in opposition to each other, as Mr. Zanak does here. The Yemenis are considered to be Caucasian although they did appropriate the opposition of White and Arabic and referred to themselves as Arab or Arabic. Mrs. Barnabey, noted a conversation she had with one of her students on this topic, "Sometimes, when they call themselves, they'll say, let's see, they call like the White students, and I say what color are you? Well, I don't know. I say, well, you are considered Caucasian, too. So, I don't know what you're talking about. Well, you know the American. I say really? What country were you born in? Well, America, but you know what I mean" (Interview, 2/10/98).

> and that's the reason for us, asking us to teach some of the Arab culture. And I suspect many of them will not be going back to Yemen. I suspect many of them might think they're going back but they really will stay here. And that' s one reason whey I also teach the American culture. Now, maybe that's prejudice on my part, thinking that American culture is a culture that's going to keep them here. . .(Interview with Mr. Fallstein, 9/21/98).

Both of these teachers' comments are interesting because the teachers seem to have missed the action plan's objective in suggesting a more distinct emphasis on Arab culture. Such an emphasis was not for the purpose of educating the Yemenis about their own cultural and historical background in World History, although this could be a by-product of the curriculum. The plan suggests a more deliberate approach to Arab culture and civilization in order to enlighten *all* students for the purpose of common understanding between Arabs and non-Arabs. This was one strategy among the many outlined in the action plan to bridge the cultural and religious gap among students and staff. Most teachers missed this point entirely in their responses to this particular accommodation as it was laid out in the plan because they understood the accommodation process to be one-sided, an accommodation for the Yemeni population in the school. They did not take the view that non-Arab students could benefit from changes in the social studies curriculum and that this might ease tensions among all students. In other words, if there was a deficit in knowledge, it existed among the Yemeni students rather than in non-Arab students. This view is narrow in scope because logistically not only does the curriculum reform fail to accommodate the growing immigrant population, it also fails to include the equally important non-immigrant population.

Accommodating Friday Prayer

One issue which drew much resentment from all teachers, Arab American and non-Arab alike, was the policy of student absence for religious reasons. On Fridays, during fifth and sixth hours, Muslim students were allowed to leave school to attend Friday prayer at the mosque. More than any other district-wide policy, this one has angered teachers and some community members. In the fall of 1996, the Davis School District made a decision regarding the release of students on Fridays for religious instruction. Many Muslim students, mostly boys, had requested release time for Friday, the Muslim holiday, each week. Following a consultation with the school attorney, the superintendent sent a memorandum stating that a parent's request to release a student for religious instruction for up to two hours per week must be accommodated. These absences would not be penalized.[41] Between the fall of 1996 and 1998, students took advantage of this privilege and as many as fifty boys would leave school on Fridays. Girls generally did not leave the grounds because they had no way of getting to the mosque, while the boys could share rides amongst themselves. In fact, the girls said that they could pray on their own or go to the mosque after school. Their religious identities were not dependent on the mosque as a physical space because women in the Southend often prayed at home while the men prayed at the mosque. In the fall of 1998, when Cobb hired a community and school liaison staff member, the Friday release policy changed. The liaison staff member held a meeting in the Southend for parents who

[41] Cobb High School [pseud.]. November 19, 1996. Friday Release for Muslim Students memorandum from superintendent to high school principals and assistants.

wanted their children to attend Friday mosque during the school day. Parents were invited to attend and sign their names, thus giving their permission for their children's release from school. The school received approximately twenty-four signatures, and from then on, these boys went to the mosque where attendance was taken by one of the more responsible boys under the liaison staff member's supervision. Although this school-related release improved under the leadership of the school/community liaison person, teachers were still irritated that the students could leave during the school day. It came to their attention that within the Muslim religion, it was not necessary for the boys to pray between noon and two-twenty in the afternoon, that they could just as easily pray after or before school on Fridays. Teachers characterized this accommodation as "bending over backwards." Some questioned the constitutionality of the release, but as long as religious practice did not take place on school grounds, the state of Michigan and the Board of Education of the Davis Public Schools allowed two hours of religious instruction a week (see Appendix C). The comment below from Mrs. Barnabey is representative of the teachers' reactions to the Friday religious release. She thought that the community and religious leaders should stress attendance in school rather than religious practice during school hours.

> See, well, I'm tolerant and I celebrate all religions, I truly do. But I think that we have gotten, well, let me back up. I have talked to some Muslim teachers at this school and they said nowhere in the Koran does it say that you have to stop on Friday, between noon and one to pray. That can be made up. This is relatively new. Again, I personally feel that it would be more beneficial because I feel a child's primary responsibility now is to get an education. That, but so when you miss fifth and sixth hours every single Friday, you are missing one fifth. To be honest, I do know that our school is particularly sensitive to the Arabic issue. And it seems that

> most of the things that are asked for are accommodated. The girls' gym class. The boys being off on Friday. Instead of saying, you know, we understand this and we appreciate this but the facts are that the Imam [Muslim religious leader] should have said education first. We pray to God later in the day. God would want you to be in school. To me, that would be, but again, you know, maybe the Imam is coming from his point of view, where he feels it is more important for them to be there. So they have to get a written permission and they do that. It's a bone of contention, I will tell you, as you can imagine (Interview, 2/10/98).

In her comments Mrs. Barnabey listed some of the ways in which the high school accommodated the "Arabic issue," and it is clear that to her, Friday leave was a step in the wrong direction. The Friday release for religious purposes continued to be a controversial issue, but under the supervision of the new school/community liaison staff member, it was no longer abused.[42] The school had also decided that if and when other students requested a leave for holidays or religious instruction, as one Jewish girl did, they would be excused without any penalty (Interview with Mrs. Jakowsky, 10/22/98). The district worried, however, that if too many students left on any one day, they could lose substantial state funding for that day.

Accommodating Dress

It is important to note that Cobb High School accommodated its Arab students in one other significant way, by letting them dress as they pleased. In a memorandum from

[42] The community/school liaison staff member also did lunchroom duty and kept a watchful eye on the both the Yemeni and non-Arab boys. He was also called upon to give advice regarding proper behavior and dress for certain occasions, such as when an car accident occurred and a Yemeni American boy was killed. He sent a memorandum to all the teachers advising them how they and their students should dress for the funeral at the mosque in the Southend.

the principal to the teachers in January 1997, the principal reinforced the school's openness to dress for religious reasons with some strict guidelines.[43]

> Just before the holiday recess, I was approached by a Muslim male student who asked if he could wear a "kuffia" which is a religious hat-like structure. I gave him permission, providing (as with our female students wearing scarves) he will never be seen not wearing his kuffia. My reason for this is that we do not allow students to wear hats in school and if a kuffia is being worn in a similar fashion as a hat, then it falls under this rule structure. I explained that should he be caught not wearing his kuffia, he would be disciplined for insubordination. He assured me that this would not happen since this was a religious decision he had made and would not be without his kuffia.
>
> This past week, I have noticed two or three other male students wearing kuffias. My intention is to treat them the same as the student mentioned above. However, I am not in a position to track these students throughout the day. Therefore, I am asking your assistance in my being consistent with this situation.
>
> If a male student is wearing a kuffia in your class, please do not ask him to take it off. Instead, ask to see him in private and show him this memo (or explain my position in private). Then keep a daily watch on this student to make sure he continues to wear it. If on any future day he does not wear his kuffia, please refer him to me directly (via referral) for insubordination. I will personally handle the situation.
>
> Your cooperation with the content of this memo will be greatly appreciated.
>
> Note: Some students wear the kuffia into and out of school in a similar fashion as a hat. This is not the same as wearing it throughout the school day and should be treated the same as any student wearing a hat in and out of school.

Unlike the hijabat, the boys rarely wore religious or cultural dress at school. They all wore Western dress, while the girls were rarely seen without their scarves. Many of the female teachers found this differentiation in dress exasperating and often commented that it was interesting that the boys outwardly seemed to embrace Western values by wearing

[43] Cobb High School [pseud.]. January 7, 1997. Muslim boys wearing religious "kuffia" memorandum to all Cobb High School [pseud.]faculty from Principal.

the latest fashions, while the girls had to maintain their reserved and conservative appearances. Mrs. Sorestky, one of the gym teachers, said that this was unfair and that religious dress contributed to the hijabat's separateness and lack of participation in various activities. Dress did indeed prohibit the hijabat from participating in most activities and reinforced their identities as "good" Muslim girls within the school. This was an image the hijabat wanted to sustain in order to navigate sucessfully among home and school worlds. By accommodating their dress and the hijab and by being sensitive to this issue, the school administration inadvertently also helped reinforce the hijabat's identities as religiously and culturally different and therefore separate from the rest of the student body.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the process through which the high school adapted to its growing minority population of Yemeni and Yemeni American students. By examining specific primary sources, it is clear that the process was complicated and complex and that both teachers and administrators faced challenging issues and charges from their communities and students. In the second part of the chapter, I focused on the teachers' perceptions of the accommodation process and on their understanding of the hijabat's identities within the school. There is a range of responses from teachers, from descriptions of heart-breaking experiences, to confusion, to open hostility when they think the administration has gone too far, to ignorance of cultural and ethnic differences. The teachers understood their students' precarious balance in "two worlds," but they

wanted some limits imposed. Most teachers were disturbed by the Yemeni students' imposed gender segregation and the self-segregation of the Yemeni community. As one teacher put it, "They just don't buy into being an American" (Interview with Mrs. Barnabey, 2/10/98). This was troublesome for teachers who made great efforts to be accommodating and to give their students opportunities to succeed academically, only to find their hopes (and those of their students) dashed to the ground. Yet, at the same time, as a school, Cobb made some strides in the last decade to diversify its approach toward its population of students of diverse background and to welcome and improve educational opportunities for all. I think teachers would do well to learn more about the Yemeni community and to find opportunities to have discussions with their students and parents about participation in school activities and the relationship between subject content and the students' culture. Also, it might benefit the high school to diversify its faculty by assigning its Arab American teachers "mainstream" classes rather than only classes in the bilingual program. More open and infomal conversations need to occur among faculty around accommodation issues examined in this chapter. Importantly, teachers need to be aware of the heavy responsibilities the hijabat bear as they negotiate their complicated domestic lives within their community and their social lives within the high school. The process of accommodation and understanding is by no means over, and questions linger among teachers about the secularity of the strategies used in the last several years. The school took a step in the right direction in hiring a community/school liaison staff member who would be able engage the school and community in productive conversation and action. As it turns out, there was a similar staff member position at Finkle High School,

the school with approximately 75% of its students who were of Lebanese descent, for years. Only by giving the accommodation process more time, by comparing itself to other schools and districts in similar situations, and by continuing to involve parents and the community in its reform for cultural understanding will Cobb High School be able to judge the fruition of its efforts.

FIVE

From Aspiration to Desperation: Living in Ambiguity

"I'm not going to be nothing when I grow up. I'm a yum-yums. I'm going to be a house wife" (Fieldnotes, 1998).

Like when I was young, a lot, I would like always, I always like would play with my cousins. I always would be a teacher. But as they years pass by, you know. I was thinking of the easy way out, if I could ever continue my education. You know, if were to be able to go to college, how long does it take to be a nurse and how long does it take to be a doctor? A teacher? I'm really concerned right now with my education. It's easier to be a teacher or nurse" (Interview with Aisha, 2/11/98).

During my two years of fieldwork in Davis, it became clear that as the hijabat grew older, they perceived their futures as increasingly bleak and uneventful no matter how successful they were academically or in maitaining their cultural and religious norms intact. All of the high school girls I shadowed—Nadya, Nouria, Saba, Amani, Aisha, and Layla—regarded their futures fearfully, not really knowing if they would be able to realize their dreams and goals. The hijabat intended to become nurses or teachers, occupations which met the expectations of the community and even their school. Yet for most of them, developing professional careers was not likely to occur, and therefore, they looked to graduation with trepidation. In this chapter, I argue that the intersection of public school and home expectations for success is a turbulent space for the hijabat. As they successfully negotiated the academic and social expectations at each grade level, they also had to attend to their community and parental expectations for success, and these sets of expectations did not complement one another. As a result, the girls' dispositions towards

school, their families, and themselves became more and more negative as they approached graduation. Their desperation was heightened by their realization that they had little say in the decisions made about their futures. They lived their last two years of high school in ambiguity, for they did not know whether they would be sent to Yemen to marry or finish high school and even be allowed to pursue careers. In this chapter, then, I examine the hijabat's changing dispositions toward their futures in conjunction with the teachers' perceptions of the girls' lives throughout high school. I will show that although the hijabat become quite desperate about their status as Yemeni women in their American world, they maintained their grade point averages in the hope of continuing their education after high school. Doing well in school, no matter what their futures had in store for them, allowed them to hope.

The All-important GPA

As ninth graders the hijabat had strong aspirations for their futures. They saw themselves graduating from high school and then attending college. By the time they reached the twelfth grade, however, they were desperate to stay in school and maintain a high GPA. They compared their lives to those back home, in Yemen. Layla, from the class of 2000, commented, "If you live in Yemen, you get married because there's nothing else to do. Here you can do things with your life" (Fieldnotes, 2/14/98). Knowing that obtaining an education might give them opportunities they would not have elsewhere, the hijabat worked very hard at school in order to be able to stay and perhaps continue their

education. Table 2 below shows the grade point averages over two years for the class of 2000 at Cobb High School.

	Female	Male	Arab Females	Non-Arab Females	Non-Arab Males	Arab Males
Fall 1997	2.713 N=145	2.301 N=196	2.694 N=30	2.718 N=115	2.357 N=129	2.195 N=67
Spring 1998	2.702 N=146	2.286 N=189	2.756 N=31	2.688 N=115	2.340 N=123	2.187 N=66
Spring 1999	2.855 N=130	2.495 N=155	2.957 N=26	2.829 N=104	2.537 N=107	2.401 N=48

Table 2: Class of 2000 mean GPA's (N = total number of students)

Table 2 shows that the mean grade points of all the high school girls were higher than those of the boys.[44] By the spring of 1999, the Arab girls' GPA's were higher than those of the non-Arab.[45] The class of 1999 had a similar distribution although the non-Arab girls were slightly ahead in the spring of 1999 with a mean grade point of 2.972, while the Arab girls had a mean grade point of 2.840. The classes of 2001, 1998, and 1997 also showed a distribution where the non-Arab girls were slightly ahead of the Arab girls. Overall, the boys' GPAs were lower than those of the girls and the Arab boys' GPAs were lower than those of the non-Arab boys.[46]

The Arab American girls' (most of whom were of Yemeni origin) relatively high GPA's are the result of several factors. As I mentioned in previous chapters, the fact that the hijabat did not work outside the home and did not participate in after-school activities and sports ensured that they had more than enough time to complete their school work.

[44] The mean grade points of the girls and boys are significantly different based on a z-test of 4.089 at α = 0.05

[45] Arab girls did not differ significantly from non-Arab girles in terms of GPA, $t = 0.77$, $p>0.05$.

Teachers often described the hijabat as diligent students who handed in work either on or ahead of time. Second, being a good female student in the Yemeni community was equated with being a "good girl", one who upholds the family honor. Third, doing well in school meant having a possible ticket to a career outside the home and community. Unlike the Yemeni boys, for whom high school meant getting a credential (diploma), getting by with a passing grade was not enough for the hijabat; they were not allowed to work outside the home and/or community after high school. But, having the opportunity for more education was still a viable option, especially if scholarships were available for college. For example, both Sabrina and Mariam were able to attend nearby universities because they were awarded scholarships. In Sabrina's case, her father negotiated, as part of the marriage agreement with her Yemeni husband, that she would be allowed to finish college. In Mariam's case, her older brother attended college and this enabled her to go. Both of these young women, unlike most of the hijabat, were able to continue their education because they had excellent grades while in high school and because in their case, the men in their families supported this decision.

Teachers at Cobb did notice the hijabat's preoccupation with grades. For example, Mr. Ackerman, one of the social studies teachers remarked that he did not understand their obsession with grades: "I don't see them going onto school once they leave here because my perception is that these Muslim girls don't go onto higher education. You

[46] The mean grade points of the Arab and non-Arab boys were not significantly different based on a z-test of 1.049 at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance.

rarely hear them speak about what they're going to do" (Interview, 10/15/98). Mr. Ackerman described one of the hijabat in his advanced placement history class:

> I know these girls are, they study very hard. I know that each of them is keeping track, every time I pass a paper back, they get a little grid out and they write everything down to keep track of where they are and if something comes back, and they get like a calculator out to try to figure. And, I've tried to say to them, you know, don't do that because they, I'm trying to get across to them that different grades mean different things in terms of like . . .cuz the multiple choice tests will be 1/3 of the grade, essays are 1/3, notebooks are 1/3 and they're just looking at oh, my gosh, I got a bad score here. I'm not doing well. And I say, you know, you can't do that. You've got to wait until the end of the marking period, look at it overall, and if a grade here seems low, you gotta remember that this is coming in later and that most likely will boost the grade because of what it's going to be, this type of thing. And I've had to do that several times to try to reassure them that they're, that they're doing better than what they think they are. I got this sense for this girl that there was, there was pressure from home to have a higher GPA I got that sense. Because she mentioned her dad a couple of times, you know (Interview, 10/15/98).

The hijabat experienced a lot of pressure (from themselves and their parents) regarding grades. Layla's mother, for instance, said that she pushed her daughter to get good grades, otherwise what was the point of letting her stay in school (Interview with Layla Mrs. Nasser, 9/15/98). She also thought that teachers were "too easy" on her daughter and should make her work harder. Nouria's mother was perplexed about her daughter's lower grades in comparison to those of her older daughters and told her to write as much as possible (Interview with Nouria's mother, 9/24/98). Mr. Ackerman was one of several teachers who observed that if they could not maintain a high grade point average, the girls were likely to drop the class. It is important to note, too, that while the hijabat's fathers made final decisions about marriage, mothers were also a strong influence with regard to school and grades. Layla's mother, for instance, wanted her daughter to attend college and

bemoaned her daughter's less than perfect GPA (Interview with Mrs. Nasser, 9/15/98). Aisha's mother, on the other hand, preferred to see her daughter married and out of school, so Aisha was under constant pressure from both parents and had to maintain her 4.0 average every semester—she put pressure on herself because if she faltered even slightly, she would have to drop out and get married. At one point she confided, "I'm like in a bad position because my father wants to marry me in like one year and forever. I'm gonna be a senior and they want to leave [to go back to Yemen]. And that just, I've been so depressed about that" (Interview, 2/11/98). Her school counselor, Mr. Vestsy, commented that he "push[ed] the girls' families to let their daughters take the PSAT by telling them that their kids could possibly go to college for free" (Fieldnotes, 10/19/98). He persuaded Aisha to let her family know that she could get a scholarship once he noticed how depressed she was about the possibility of not being able to finish school and not going to college. Aisha, like most of the hijabat, was willing to be a teacher or nurse because any other career path would take too long and would try the patience of her parents. However, the notion of attending college remained a question in her life.

The Power of the Curse

It is clear that the hijabat's success at school—having a high GPA and behaving according to Yemeni cultural and religious norms—was intimately connected with their status as "good daughters" at home and in their community. Being successful at school meant that the hijabat spent their time wisely by studying a home and being helpful with housekeeping, thus doing little else which would elicit questions from their families and

community. There were times, though, when the hijabat openly disagreed with their parents' decisions, and the consequences could be harsh. Other than being forced to marry, the hijabat feared the curses their families would throw at them. During my two years in Davis, it was apparent that curses was a taboo topic and that the curses rested on an underlying belief system that parallels that of Islam. One of the women who worked in the community, for example, told me that the Yemenis believe in good and evil spirits and that when one of the hijabat was sent to Yemen for misbehaving, she would come back a different person—with physical (and sometimes mental) symptoms of having been cursed. These curses, according to community members, would be said while the intended person ate something, which could be drugged to produce the desired effect, such as a rash or a stupor. For example, the high school hijabat often warned me not to drink tea served by the old women in the Southend or in Yemen.

In school, the belief in curses manifested itself in interesting ways. Saba, the girl who wanted to marry someone of her own choosing, spent a week at the hospital after an altercation with her mother in the Southend and her uncles in Yemen. Her family refused to acknowledge the man she had chosen. Upon her return to school, Saba stated that she feared her family's curses, which had sent her in a fit of depression in the first place (Fieldnotes, 1/14/99). Several of the hijabat in the community commented that the curses could affect their GPA's, so they had to be careful about everything, and make sure that the "boaters" never looked them in the eye.[47] Those hijabat who worried about curses or

[47] Talking about curses in the Southend was difficult. The hijabat did not discuss the topic openly with me unless they were under great pressure, as in Saba's case. These curses are part of what is commonly

evil spirits recited the Ayat El Qursi and the Surat El Baqara from the *Qur'an* each night in order to ward them off.

Negotiating home and school expectations within the Southend was no easy feat for the hijabat. Maintaining a good GPA, constantly performing within cultural and religious boundaries at school, cooking and cleaning and looking after siblings, managing the household finances, coping with husbands' housekeeping and personal demands (if married), pregnancy, avoiding marriage as long as possible, and being careful not to incite any curses—these practices defined the hijabat's lives while in high school. By doing all of these well, they had the chance to realize the futures they envisioned. However, as I stated above, getting to where they would like to go would not be easy, and sometimes, it was impossible.

Fatalistic and Depressed

The teachers at Cobb High School characterized the hijabat's dispositions from ninth to twelfth grade as steadily more "depressed," "low morale," and "fatalistic," while most of the Yemeni boys would "barely get by and get the diploma" and left school pleased at the prospect of working and in a few cases, go to college. The girls often expressed their frustration at not knowing what they would do after graduation as their families decided their futures and their teachers could only listen. The hijabat were never

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known in the Western world as "folk Islam," which denotes a belief system that includes spirits, such as witches, genies, etc., in addition to the use of the medicinal properties of certain herbs and plants. Unfortunately, I was not able to get any kind of response from the hijabat's parents regarding the curses.

really aware of how their teachers felt or reacted to what they said. Mr. Dodge, one of the science teachers, said,

> Girls' future, I see them the girls and what I've heard them speak of it, it's very fatalistic. Yemenis leave after school and go back home. To the fatalistic environment. This my fate. I will go home and I will make dinner. I will clean this. I will care, watch my brothers. You know, that's what they'll tell you, too. If you ask them" (Interview, 2/26/98).

According to Mr. Dodge, the hijabat's future outlook was not an optimistic one. One the school counselors, Mr. Abdullah, pointed out that the hijabat's grades might slip as their morale slips:

> Their grades are slipping, the morale slips, the enthusiasm slips. They know, even if they get a diploma, they're not going anywhere with that diploma because they're not going to college. They're gonna raise a family, a large family, and whatever the husband says goes. So, the majority of the time, even if they can get that diploma, there's no use for that diploma" (Interview, 9/15/98).

Another teacher, Mrs. Barnabey simply said, "The girls cannot dream" (Interview, 2/10/98). She reiterated that some do go on to more education, but for most, the future is a "bleak" one. One of the more poignant observations was made by one of the gym teachers, Mrs. Soretsky:

> I see dramatic change in the girls from ninth to twelfth grade. Not just the usual changes of the kids growing up. I see such a pattern of these girls getting very, a lot of them seem to get depressed their senior year. A lot of them get very withdrawn. I watch their personalities change dramatically and I always thought that it was due to the fact that they would be leaving school and many of them, their lives will drastically change if they're not going on to college. I had one student, before she graduated, she stood and she's talking to me and she said, you know, she said I look at all of these awards that are in the hallway, the athletic awards, she said, and I would have bee so good at basketball and I would have been so good at, I don't know what other sports she named. She said I wasn't allowed. And she said I will never, ever forgive my parents for that. And for her to be even

> open enough to say it cause many, they feel they're not honoring their parents and not being appropriate by voicing something like that. But it just broke my heart, just broke my heart (Interview, 2/24/1998).

Like the other teachers, Ms. Soretsky felt helpless as she listened to her Yemeni American female students. She pointed out that "there's a kind of push and pull to maintain [their] culture but yet fit in . . . There's two different worlds" (Interview 2/24/2000). The conflict the hijabat faced as they dared to speak out about their desperation was prohibiting. One of the Arab American teachers, Ms. Ishmael, suggested that the hijabat kept everything inside because they were afraid of the consequences of speaking out.

> . . . the conflict stays inside. It's not outspoken. She'll never answer her mom, you stay out of it, you keep out of it. No, there's no such thing. She'll cry and feel depressed inside without nobody knowing it. So everything's kept to themselves. It's not out. Because if she speaks out, that means you're not raised well. You are bad. You've become a bad person. You're not following your religion. You are dada, you know, and then you are not good for the community not good for the family and if people find out about you, they're gonna think you are bad. So, it's all hush, hush, hush (Interview, 9/15/98).

Ms. Ishmael, like Ms. Soretsky, understood the hijabat's reticence concerning their private struggles to deal with their futures. At the same time, teachers who would normally be encouraging their students to take all the necessary steps to attend college could not do so with the hijabat who were good students. This ran counter to the school and teachers' expectations about what should happen to their high achieving students. The teachers could only remain silent when the hijabat expressed the dissonance of home and school worlds.

Desperate and Living in Ambiguity

The six high school hijabat and their friends expressed their desperation about the future in different ways over the two years that I spent in the community. Nouria, from the class of 2000, wanted to divorce her husband. She said, "I hate my life. I want to get the hell out of this place" (Interview, 10/20/98). Amani, from the class of 1999 said that she wished that she could remove her scarf and wear short sleeves and become a nurse or teacher (Interview, 10/23/98). Aisha, a top student from the class of 2000, was finally happy to learn, during her eleventh-grade year, that she could finish high school, although her family arranged for her to marry and go to Yemen following her graduation (Interview, 10/26/98). Layla, also from the class of 2000, said that she worried about her grades which were average and did not know if she could go to college especially as she was trying to divorce her husband, who was also her first cousin (Fieldnotes, 1/28/99). Nadya, from the class of 2001, knew that she could go to college because her older sister was married and enrolled in college, but she did not know if she would be allowed to go because her grades were not as high as those of her sister (Interview, 10/23/98). Saba, from the class of 1999, talked about her unwillingness to go to Yemen and marry, "I believe that victory comes with those who are patient. If I, I let it get to me, it will eat me alive. I'm being patient in the sense where I'm not, you know, committing suicide" (Interview, 10/29/98).

In contrast to the hijabat's desperation about their futures, the two boys who allowed me to interview them expressed markedly different views about their futures. Fateh, from the class of 1999, said, "I can do anything I want now. I can do anything

(Interview 2/10/98). Malek, from the class of 2000, stated, "...all I want to do is finish high school and then don't worry what I do. Whatever I do, happens. I don't know. I'm not looking for the future yet. I'm just looking to get my education and do whatever feels right for me to do" (Interview, 11/10/98). These responses from the boys illustrate that they had a choice to pursue more than one option after they graduated, although both of them were expected to have good grades and to work after school. Yet, as their comments suggest, there is a lack of pessimism, depression, and fatalistic outlook, which characterize the girls' responses.

The ambiguity with which the hijabat faced their futures conflicts with their school's goal of producing educated citizens who will contribute to society. As Peshkin (1986), noted, "The artistic, literary, social, and religious riches of our society, are a product of minds able to operate under relatively open conditions" (p. 287). As long as the hijabat are constrained by the expectations of the Southend and Yemen, they are unlikely to benefit from or contribute to American society. Even as they express themselves in the "in-between" spaces of school and home discussed in chapter three, or even as they engage more freely in classroom life, as I noted in chapter two, the fact is that as members of the Yemeni community in the Southend, for most of the hijabat, their lives will be cognitively and socially limited by the spaces they occupy, mostly the home and immediate neighborhood, and the ever-present Yemeni village. As long as they continue to marry men from Yemen who have little or no education, they are likely to relive their parents' lives in the Southend. Of course, as one of the school counselors noted, perhaps the hijabat will return to school once they have children. That is a

possibility, but whether this will happen and whether they will become the teachers and nurses they would like to be, remains an open question.

CONCLUSION

Implications

Some broader implications can be drawn from this study. Perhaps the most salient implication is that key concepts such as success, identity, ethnicity, and gender must be understood as shifting processes in which the dynamic enactment of culture and religion remain highly nuanced. Research on the relationship between homes, communities, and schools ought not be limited solely to the study of social class differences. Even though the hijabat came from low socio-economic status homes in which the parents were predominantly print-illiterate, they still succeeded academically and maintained relatively high grade point averages. If anything, the hijabat's sometimes complex, self-contradictory, and individually variable experiences illustrate the multifaceted and emergent nature of identity, self, and literacy. For example, each of the chapters demonstrates that notions of success and how they are related to teenagers's views of formal education, the use of language, college, the delay of marriage, Yemen, and the being in the US—are often contradictory. The contradictions actually reflect the polyvocal and conflicted discourse around schooling and education in the hijabat's families, community, and among teachers.

Another implication drawn from this study is that the Yemeni American immigrant relationship to Cobb High School runs counter to the common sense view of "non-mainstream" cultures and public schools in general. Previous research cited above on immigrant and minority populations in the US has shown that schools historically

have resisted adapting to the needs of their new "non-mainstream" populations and have not, in general, embraced the notion of multi-cultural curricula. In this study, Cobb High School accommodates the Yemenis and the hijabat in remarkable ways. The process of accommodation remains ongoing and illustrates that schools, when need be, can reform both formal and informal curricula in order to meet the needs of all students. In addition, the high school has proved to be the hijabat's greatest source of opportunity for self-expression and openness. The openness of Cobb High affords a unique space for identity development. Understanding this, the hijabat took an active role in shaping their environment in order to ensure that they would remain in school and therefore attempt to fulfil future aspirations.

School, however, was not a uniformly liberating experience for the hijabat or their teachers. Home and school worlds sometimes collided. The hijabat's interactive performances as students, girls, Muslims, Yemeni American daughters, sisters, and wives were all context dependent and highly variable, and that variability in identity impacted their social and academic lives. The high school itself, as an institution, remained highly fragmented because teachers, administrators, and parents' visions for schooling and education differed. This fragmentation was evidenced in two ways: 1) the Arab American and non-Arab teachers held themselves responsible for their students' lives differently, thus creating a professional separateness within the building, and this often caused tension; 2) at times, the school actually reinforced the hijabat's gendered and religious identities, which could be construed as less than liberating. In such instances, in order to avoid stereotypes and ambiguity, teachers and administrators should attempt to learn

more about the communities whose children they teach and find ways to connectmore productively with their students and each other.

Many ethnographies, monographs, and histories have been written about people who occupy the often figurative and sometimes physical "border" lands. I chose "in-betweeness" as a concept for the jijabat because it ties together notions of text, literacy, space, gender, ethnicity, and identity. "In-berweeneness" is really an elusive concept which attempts to create real or imagined boundaries around to describe what people do to survive and get along with one another on a daily basis. The use of such a concept demarcates, however peripherally, an epistemological if not situational marker for understanding home and school worlds as a set of relationships in the hijabat's lives. As such, "in-betweeness" is a nebulous concept. The implication of this characterization is that for "in-betweeness" to remain in between, it must shift as its borders shift. I suspect that this occurs over time and with each succeeding generation of immigrants. The lives I "uncovered" while I lived among the hijabat in Davis are among the most unusual I have ever experienced. As they continue to navigate home, and perhaps school spaces, I remain optimistic that schools will also experiences shifting "in-betweeness" rather than remain in the same place, producing static intellectual, academic, and social spaces.

REFLECTION

The Role of a Non-threatening Presence

I ended my fieldwork at the Olive Garden restaurant, in the company of Saba, Aisha, Layla, Nouria, Nadya, Sabrina, Mariam, and Mrs. Dunbar, my main contact in the Yemeni community and who introduced me to the hijabat and their families. We chose the Olive Garden because it was close to the girls' homes and because several in the group had never had American Italian food. As we sampled the calamari, spinach dip, and various pasta dishes, the conversation ebbed and flowed around topics familiar to all of us: weddings in Yemen, Hollywood films, and school gossip. At the end of dinner, I gave each of the girls a journal as a gift and a pretty scarf to Mrs. Dunbar. I wrote, "They seemed to like these small gifts, and I am sad to be leaving them behind in the lives I've uncovered. It's very hard to just leave." I knew my work in the field was finished when we stopped at my apartment on the way home, and I gave my TV and some other household items to one of the newly married young women.

As I think back to that last dinner, I find it remarkable that their parents allowed me to take the hijabat away from the Southend, however briefly. We left the smokestacks behind and feasted happily beyond the prying eyes we all knew from the community and school. A few of the girls even considered removing their scarves in the restaurant before discarding that idea. Of course, the presence of Mrs. Dunbar testified to the safety of the event, but I knew that this dinner could not have taken place a year or even two years before, when I first arrived in the field. As I paged through my fieldnotes, there were

three key events, which I think lend some perspective to my presence and observer participation in the field and during this particular dinner. I call these, "the non-threatening presence" and the "quest for the mailbox," and "the limitations of being a woman at a funeral."

A Non-threatening Presence

I arrived at Cobb High School right after the "cafeteria incident" (see chapter four) and during a time of high tension and frustration for the teachers and students. This was a coincidence, of course, although I viewed it more as an opportunity to learn something interesting. No one knew what to make of my presence, and teachers were quick to complain about me when I first began to "shadow" the students. They worried that I was there to evaluate their instruction and that I would report back to the administration about what I observed in their classrooms. However, even before that, when I was first introduced to the principal by one of the Davis School District directors, I remember sitting quietly in the principal's office while he and the director discussed what I would be doing. At one point the director said, "It's really a coincidence that she's here when we've had all these problems. She didn't know about them until this week. I don't think this will be a problem. She has a non-threatening presence." The principal readily agreed to this estimation of my appearance (and character?), and I was on my way. It took a little more time to convince teachers that I was, in fact, keeping my observations notes to myself and that I was indeed non-threatening.

Over time, I found that having a non-threatening presence worked to my advantage in collecting data, even when I had to meet with teachers after school one day to talk one more time about what I was doing in their classrooms. I remembering agreeing to sit or stand wherever they thought I should and to be as unobtrusive as possible. After that meeting, the principal told me once again that my non-threatening presence had helped tremendously and that I could carry on.

Although I was immensely relieved to gain access to the teachers' classrooms when I shadowed students, the test to my non-threatening presence occurred with my first interview of one of the high school hijabat, Saba. A natural leader, Saba would determine the course of my relationships with all six of the high school hijabat. She knew that I was familiar with the Arab world, that I was born in Algeria and could read and write in Arabic. This had eased some of the tension before the interview. However, one of my goals was to record the interviews, but this would not have been possible if Saba had not agreed to let me record her interview. I remember scratching at my interview protocol, trying to keep up with Saba's comments; I remember telling her that I was a faster typist than writer, but I hadn't thought about typing the responses to the interview; I remember looking at her in frustration as I attempted to write exactly what she said. Finally, one third through the interview, she did say, "Ok, Loukia. I trust you. I know that if you record this interview, it will be anonymous. Plus, you don't look like someone who could be threatful." I let out a whoosh of relief and turned the tape recorder on.

I was grateful to be characterized as non-threatening. By the end of my fieldwork, my non-threatening presence enabled me to thank the hijabat properly, by going out to dinner in relative privacy and by talking openly.

The Quest for a Mailbox: Becoming an Insider

One of the more difficult aspects of conducting research as an outsider in a school on a daily basis is not having a place through which one can collect information or have others leave information. During the first year of fieldwork, I did not have a way to collect daily bulletins and other materials unless I found the material posted on the wall, or I hunted it down in teachers' classrooms and photocopied it and returned it to the wall or to them. I had also made photocopies of notes to teacher alerting them about a classroom visit when I shadowed one of the students and had no place to put those either. Finally, halfway through the first year, one of the secretaries agreed to keep a folder for me on her desk and I could check incoming mail there. Unfortunately, teachers would never remember this folder when everyone else received mail in mailboxes specifically designed for daily mail. So, during that academic year, mail was not delivered to me—I anticipated its delivery and picked it up instead.

When I returned to school during the second academic year, much to my surprise, I was given one of the empty mailboxes alongside those of the teachers. This changed my life at Cobb in a dramatic way. Teachers could now leave me notes or respond to inquiries. I would get a copy of the daily bulletin and other materials. More importantly, I felt as if I finally became an insider, part of the school culture and privy to the

information others were getting. It was easier for me to take note of scheduled meetings and to plan around teachers and students' schedules. My quest for a mailbox ended and I'll be forever grateful that the secretaries in the main office finally gave me one.

The Limitations of Being a Woman at a Yemeni Funeral

One of the most heart-wrenching moments in the field was the day I attended the funeral of one of the hijabat's brothers. She was one of the six I shadowed and her younger brother died in a car accident in front of the school one day. I remember rushing to the school to see if I could give any of the girls a ride to the mosque to attend the services, and then rushing back to the mosque for the noon prayer. I worried that my scarf did not adequately cover my head, but when I arrived, I saw that other women, who did not usually cover their heads had the same problem, so I just let mine slip and would pull it back when necessary. I sat in stuffy, basement room with hundreds of women from the community and the school. We listened to the voice of the Imam over the loudspeaker and prayed silently. I sat near the hijabat, holding the hand of one of them.

I was confused about what we were all doing in the stuffy basement room of the mosque when the body of the boy was upstairs. I was finally told that only the men could be with the body, while the women remained downstairs. Finally, we were told that we could go outside and watch the procession from the mosque to the Muslim section of the large cemetery in the Southend. What I experienced outside shocked me and it was then that I felt the limits of being a woman during this event.

We wait outside and I notice that across the parking lot, there are school buses. I walk over there and in doing so, leave the hijabat behind and find myself in a sea of men and boys. They all stare, but I walk over with the Lebanese American teachers. The buses are full of football players and cheerleaders bearing flowers. They're not sure what to do and they don't know that they've missed the prayer.

I watch the front of the mosque. The hijabat do not walk over and the Lebanese American teachers tell them that it's ok to come to the front. But the girls hang back as a group and say that there are too many men. While the men walk around in the parking lot and in front of the mosque staring at the women, the hijabat stand in one large cluster in the back, craning their necks to see what is happening. Many are crying. Yet, they stand together in a group of more than seventy-five, clustered together as the men walk past and around them, staring.

Finally, men walk out of the mosque carrying the casket. All the men (over 300) crowd around it as they all walk to the cemetery. The women hang back and very hesitantly walk toward the cemetery. The Lebanese teachers urge them on, but even Amani doesn't go into the cemetary, and she's the sister of the dead boy. Instead, the women stand on the edge of the parking lot and look across the street into the cemetery.

In every sense, the women are outsiders in this drama of grief. They fear stepping forward and becoming part of the funeral procession, and they fear being close to the men in the cemetery. They watch while the men carry out the process. They are stared at as if they are alien. At one point, a photographer photographs them, and I see what he sees: a group (about 75) of covered women (in black and white) standing so close together that one would have a hard time walking through. The men, on the other hand, are dispersed, in clusters of one to six men and walk wherever they please. The women's movements are dependent on that of the men. They maintain the appropriate distance.

The Lebanese women tell me that they've never been to a funeral like this one where women don't stand where they like and around the grave. They say that this is haram and sad. One of the teachers says that this mosque was built by the Lebanese years ago and women never had to cover themselves if they didn't want it so. Now, everything has changed since the Yemeni population has grown and taken over.

Other outsiders include school officials and non-Arab students. They stand out as different, not Arab, and they don't understand what they should do. Their clothes are different and their stance is different. They're confused. The football players' heads are shaved, a sharp contrast to the bearded heads of the Arabs.

I can't see the casket being lowered. There are too many men around the grave. I ask some of the girls when it is that women can go to

> the grave. They point out to me that there are some women standing to the right side near the grave. I see a few scarfed heads, but immediately around, it is only men I see (Fieldnotes, 10/30/98).

I still don't know how the hijabat dealt with their grief from the distance they had to maintain at the funeral. Their space was clearly demarcated by the positioning of the men—they feared the consequences of breaking away from their cluster and walking to the grave. They became observers in a drama of grief in which only the men participated and in which the women only marginally participated. As one of the women present, I, too, took on the role of observer. I could only watch, keeping my own emotions under control, as did the hijabat.

APPENDIX A

Methods

Conceptually, this dissertation is based on an interdisciplinary approach. Methodologically, it is as well. The research conducted during the first year of fieldwork, in 1997-1998, was the beginning of a conversation between the published literature and actual field experiences. Prior to being out in the field, notions of ethnicity, identity, culture, gender, etc., seemed relatively clear and uncomplicated. However, negotiating researcher space and identity in the contexts of both the published literature and the field created a dynamic and complex problem. Roland Barthes has written that "interdisciplinary work, so much discussed these days, is not about confronting already constituted disciplines (none of which, in fact, is willing to let itself go). To do something interdisciplinary it's not enough to choose a "subject" (a theme) and gather around it two or three sciences. Interdisciplinarity consists in creating a new object that belongs to no one" (quoted in Clifford, 1986, p.1). In more ways than one, this project is a new object, not only for me, the researcher, but also for my informants in the school, home, and community of Davis.

Furthermore, as Kondo (1990) so aptly put it, my own identity was beginning to fragment according to different contexts. One case in point was the uncertainty that the boys in my study would continue to participate during that first year of fieldwork. Only two out of six at the community center agreed to speak with me and only one allowed me to shadow him once. My very presence as a woman in their school and home lives constituted social embarrassment and peer harassment. The fact is that as a woman, my

work made sense to the Yemeni only in the context of women's lives. As a researcher, this was troublesome. One way to deal with this problem was to be less intrusive (not do interviews with the boys) and simply observe while shadowing girls. This might not have been the best way to gather needed information, but in order to preserve the rather fragile balance of being both a woman and a researcher in a male-dominated culture, I did just that. With the teachers at Cobb, negotiating my role was an endless process. At the very worst I was considered a spy taking note of their teaching. At the very best, I am someone who wanted to help. With each individual teacher, the process began anew as I conducted interviews or observed in the classroom.

In the community I introduced myself as a graduate student from Michigan State University. When asked about my religious and national background, I responded that my parents are Muslim and Christian, that I was born in Algeria. This helped me gain access in the community, although I was told that some considered me to be a spy from the US government or from Iraq. I became known as "that Algerian woman." The students called me "the white woman doing research." This was interesting because they are also White or Caucasian, but they considered themselves "Arab" and everyone else in the school is "White." At first, I was accepted and tolerated among these students but I am not one of them. This was both a positive and negative aspect of the fieldwork. It was positive because it allowed me freedom to move about in the community without adhering to all the rules of modesty, although movement in the community was difficult since there was not a man (such as a husband or father)present to sanction my behavior. It is negative because the underlying assumption among my informants was that I would

not understand them if I was not really Muslim as they were. As an outsider, I could never capture their reality. Wolf (1992) explains this dilemma and suggests that that it *is* possible to capture that reality.

> Obviously (or so it seems to me), anthropologists can only convey their own understandings of their observations in another culture in their ethnographies. The better the observer, the more likely she is to catch her informants' understanding of the meaning of their experiences; the better the writer, the more likely she is to be able to convey that meaning to an interested reader from another culture. Some kinds of cultural meanings may only be accurately understood and reported by one who has learned them without realizing it, but much of the cultural onion *may* be easily or even more easily picked apart by a careful analyst who is not of the culture (p. 5).

Selection of Participants

Student participants were contacted through the Davis community center and with the help of key contacts: Mrs. Dunbar, who worked at the community center, and two Yemeni American college students, Sabrina and Mariam. At first, contact with student participants was mediated by these contacts. Because the school district would not allow me to contact students through Cobb High School, I found a different venue for doing so. Davis is the home of the most successful Arab social services center in the US. By contacting the youth and education director there, I was able to meet and invite ten students who attended Cobb to participate in my study. Seven of the students (see table below) were tutors in a reading/writing program at the community center and helped newly arrived Arab immigrants (elementary and high school aged) with English and math. In October and November of 1997, I spent most of my afternoons at the community center getting to know the students. It soon became apparent to me that this was the

only place other than school where I could possibly meet and speak with them. Although I was invited to parties and other social occasions in their homes in the ensuing few months, their home worlds remained relatively closed to me although that began to change, as more of the students' mothers invited me to their homes. However, the community center served as a perfect and safe place for the hijabat to talk to me.

Fieldwork at the high school officially began after I obtained human subjects agreement approval in December 1998. Ten students, representing a range of ability and an array of dispositions towards their home and school lives, were interviewed and observed in the community and school. These students included the two college hijabat, the six high school hijabat, and the two Yemeni American boys. At the beginning I experimented with the idea of having a focus family and actually proceeded to interview one of my key informants and her two siblings. However, the parents refused to participate and the idea of a focus family became less important as other informants and their parents agreed to participate. At the high school I interviewed twenty-two teachers and counselors over the two years of fieldwork. Teacher/counselor participants were chosen in accordance with student participants and teacher participation was voluntary and was mediated by the district and school administration.

Data Collection

Data collected included semi-structured interviews with open exploratory questions (see below). Funneling (Smith 1995) was the main organizing technique for interview questions. Participant and non-participant observation was conducted at

school, in the community, and in the home. Focus students were "shadowed" at school. Artifacts such as school work samples, personal work samples, community demographic information, daily bulletins, memoranda from district superintendent to and from principals, memoranda from principals to faculty, memoranda from the community liaison, media information, were collected. Intensive fieldwork took place over 18 months. I was invited to homes on social occasions such as birthday parties and talked to mothers informally. Of course, all social occasions which took place in the home were with women, since men and women do not socialize together. In the school, I followed the six hijabat from class to class and one of the boys once, all the while observing them and their interactions with the teachers, their peers, and the content taught. I conducted interviews with the teachers attended staff meetings, Open House, a school play, school pep rallies, and a couple of football games.

At the community center, I conducted the interviews with the students and observed their interactions and language practices. I also participated in activities such as delivering food to poor Iraqi families during holidays, community center dinners, and reading/writing sessions with the tutors. In addition, the girls have a special group called *Octe* (sister). From time to time, this group met to talk about issues ranging from sexuality to school problems. It was important for me to continue these kinds of activities and to be seen as an integral part of the community. The informants all understood my research goals, but at the same time, they seemed to appreciate my participation in the work they did.

Several times I accompanied some of the hijabat to the nearby mall and to Arabic school at the mosque on weekends. Oftentimes, I would go to the mall by myself and walk there for a few hours, observing the various groups of people, especially when I knew that some of the Yemeni families had planned outings there. At Arabic school, I accompanied Nouria either on a Sunday or Saturday morning and observed second through seventh grades. The teachers there were rather suspicious of me at first but welcomed me back and were pleased to learn that I could read and write in Arabic, but they did suggest that I needed more Arabic language classes and said that I could enroll there.

Data Analysis Procedures

Analysis included the audio taping and transcribing of interviews and the coding of interview data. Observation fieldnotes were also coded. The coding was a long and arduous process. I coded in two ways. After experimenting with coding by using the Nud*Ist software, which I found cumbersome and time-consuming, I turned to a very simple hypercard program called Meyer's Hanna's Text Machine. This was a very helpful program which complemented my own color sticky labels and cut and paste method of coding. I literally spread pages and pages of notes and interviews on the floor and color coded with both markers and sticky labels and then used Hanna's Text Machine to organize the codes thematically. I had written long analytical memos to myself in the field and these helped focus the process of sifting through fieldnotes. The analytical memos served two functions: 1) They related the data to the formulation of theory, and

2) they helped me gain analytical distance from the field itself (Miles and Huberman 1994; Strauss and Corbin 1990). In addition, a case study design (see Bogdan and Biklen 1992; Erickson and Shultz 1992) was used to document the discourse practices of each of the Yemeni students and to obtain a deeper and richer understanding of their day-to-day lives at home and school. Attention to the particulars of each case illuminated their construction of their identities across contexts.

Also, and importantly, during data collection, I met with my two Spencer research mentors once a month to discuss with them methodological issues as well as substantive ones dealing with my field experiences and readings of the published literature. I took notes during these meetings which guided me in not losing sight of my goals as I became more and more immersed in the Yemeni community.

Triangulation was applied among interviews, fieldnotes, and various artifacts. A constant application of member checks (especially with key informants in the study) across time was conducted. I sent copies of my chapter to Mrs. Dunbar to read and as I wrote the dissertation, I often called the hijabat on the weekends to read sections to them or to ask questions about my understanding of the *Qur'an* or other Arabic texts. I also attempted to get in touch with teachers, but most said that they were interested in the final product and would want to see the dissertation once it was completed.

Briefly, analysis conducted included the following:

(1) Affixing codes to a set of field notes drawn from observations or interview

(2) Noting reflections or other remarks in the margin

(3) Sorting and sifting through these materials to identify similar phrases, relationships between variables, patterns, themes, distinct differences between subgroups, and common sequences

(4) Isolating those patterns and processes, commonalties and differences, and taking them out to the field in the next wave of data collection

(5) Gradually elaborating a small set of generalizations that cover the consistencies discerned in the database

(6) Confronting those generalization with a formalized body of knowledge in the form of constructs or theories (Miles and Huberman 1994, p. 9).[48]

[48] Although Miles and Huberman have organized these sequentially, the organizational nature of the data may call for a different sequence.

APPENDIX B

COBB HIGH SCHOOL

PLAN OF ACTION

(in response to student and parent concerns
regarding Cobb High School)
1-20-98

The Cobb H.S. committee met to finalize intervention methods to address concerns of parents and students regarding diversity issues at Cobb High School . Based on registered concerns at both the building and district level, the District-wide committee felt three areas (i.e., Parents, Students and Staff) needed examination as to possible interventions. With those parameters in mind, the CHS committee developed an Action Plan designed to pro-actively address these concerns. The following improvement methods have received consensus approval from the faculty at Cobb High School and therefore will be initiated according the guidelines submitted.

PARENT INTERVENTIONS

- To bridge the gap between perception and reality with community members, the addition of a COMMUNITY LIAISON person is needed. Once in place, this person along with CHS administrators would set up routine meetings with community groups to discuss concerns, clear up questions, and open lines of communication.

  The CHS committee would like to work with the community to find out what their needs are prior to hiring a liaison person. Planned community meetings at Edina and CHS will be scheduled and advertised. The purpose of these meetings will be to begin dialogue with community members regarding specific moods. Information from these meetings will assist the committee in developing and/or refining the liaison job description. The committee will then begin the process of selecting a person to fill this position. Our committee would like to have this person in place and operational by the beginning of the 1998-99 school year.

- To accomplish better communication with immigrant parents, we need the necessary computer program(s), to convert English documents to other languages spoken by families in our attendance area. Currently we wait as much as a week or two to get documents converted. We need the ability to convert documents on site.

  Our committee has already started the process of looking for programs that will satisfy our needs. We will be contacting vendors and asking for demonstrations. We hope to have the ability to convert at least English to Arabic by the end of this school year.

- The Cobb High School attendance area encompasses roughly 10 miles from the Eastern most section to the Western most section. Though not exact, CHS sits near the center of this 10 mile span. Attendance at Open Houses and Parent/Teacher conferences in often low since transportation for parents in both the Eastern and Western most

sections is a problem. Our committee believes that running a "shuttle bus service" on the nights of Open House and Parent/Teacher conferences is a workable solution.

The CHS committee will develop plans to pilot a shuttle bus service on the parent/teacher conference night scheduled for Tuesday, April 21, 1998. We will work closely with our transportation department as these plans are being developed. A focus of these plans will be advertising the service. Perhaps the community meetings and students meetings will serve as our best vehicle.

- Translate the Curriculum Guide, Student Code of Conduct and other important documents into languages other than English which are spoken by families in the CHS attendance area.

The Student Code of Conduct is already converted and will be available in the near future. The CHS Curriculum Guide will converted during the summer printing process (if not before).

STUDENT INTERVENTIONS

- The blending of students from two different middle schools has proven to require a significant adjustment period these past few years. An orientation program that affords structured blending of students from Sloan and Smith middle schools is needed. Suggestions include: having ninth grade students begin school a day earlier than the other students so that planned mixing activities and a better acclimation to CHS could be accomplished; OR having students from Sloan and Smith begin mixing during the months of May or June at a facility outside the school setting (i.e., the golf course facility, the Civic Center). Our Student Leadership students would be the main planners developing this program.

The committee decided to approach this intervention from two different levels. First, we would like to coordinate a full day orientation for students from both middle schools. This would take place in late May (target dates 5/27 or 5/28) at an outside facility such as the Civic Center. Teams of staff and students from CHS would develop activities designed to begin the process of acceptance of each other and feeling of unity as students of CHS. Major areas affected which would require funding decisions for this type of intervention would include transportation, lunch, materials for activities, and substitutes for teachers involved. All identified effected parties would be included in the planning process.

The second intervention method would involve these same students in August when they pick up their schedules. Students would not just pick up their schedules and leave as in the past. All freshmen students would be involved in a combination schedule pick-up and orientation day. The orientation would focus on building layout procedures and routines. Students would also be given an opportunity to have questions answered and be given an opportunity to walk the building to get a feel for the physical layout.

- Creation of an Ambassadors Group which would deal with the orientation of any new students. These ambassadors could come from clubs, teacher/counselor recommendations, Bilingual program, or be recommended by present student leaders. A list of Ambassadors could be compiled and given to the counseling staff. An ambassador would be assigned to each new student. This ambassador could take the new student through their schedule, eat lunch with them, and answer any questions the

new student might have. The length of time spent with the student could be determined between the two and monitored by a counselor. Time spent as ambassadors could also be credited for club membership or community service.

We would begin this initiative with the beginning of the 1998-99 school year. The committee believes time will be required to identify interested students and provide training as to their role in this process. Target date for implementation of Ambassador program would be the end of the first marking period. This program would be designed to facilitate the needs of new enrollees which join CHS after the beginning of the school year.

- Administration and other selected staff members would meet routinely with students of all grade levels, ethnic origins, etc. These meetings would be "breakfast type meetings" where small groups of students would be asked in an informal setting to provide input into issues and other concerns at CHS. Feedback from these meetings would be routinely discussed at forums such as CHS Curriculum Council, CHS Faculty Meetings, CHS Departmental meetings, CHS Student Leadership meetings, etc. Routine action plans would be developed to address these concerns and provide feedback to students where necessary.

Plans for this intervention are already underway. Dr. Principal will lead this effort with plans on meeting with small groups of five to ten students on a monthly basis beginning in January, 1998. Students to be interviewed will at times be random and at times will be selected according to areas of interest for student feedback.

- Increasing current involvement in the Student Leadership area by adding Representatives who would meet routinely with elected student leaders to discuss concerns, brainstorm strategies, or develop plans for Student involvement at CHS. These representatives would consist of those students who unsuccessfully ran for an elected office but are interested in a leadership role within the school setting.

Mr. Sajek our leadership teacher has already received consensus approval from our leadership students to advance this concept. We will be notifying and meeting student representatives by the end of January. This will be an ongoing process with regular meetings schedules.

- The committee recommends that the focus of future curriculum objectives should be placed at the Middle School level with re-enforcement activities taking place at CHS. Unfortunately, the examination of *World Religions* which was being offered at the tenth grade level through World Civilization courses was moved to the twelfth grade due to HSPT requirements. The committee recognizes that students coming to CHS need exposure to diversity as it relates to various religions. However, other than creating an elective course (which all students wouldn't be exposed to) similar to the World Cultures course offered at Groves High School, we cannot see how it will fit into the curricular objectives of current tenth and eleventh grade Social Studies courses. Exploration of diversity issues could be emphasized through writing assignments in ninth and tenth grade English/Humanities courses.

The committee will be asking our Social Studies Department chair to take this issue to the system-wide department meeting as a discussion topic. We certainly will take responsibility for any education piece. We need to discuss how and where we can fit it into our curriculum.

- The formation of a "Diversity Club" similar to the one at Churchill High School is being explored by students and staff.

Our social worker has agreed to take the initiative and contact Churchill's sponsor. A visitation of some of our students to look at their program is a strong possibility. We will officially form a Diversity Club with goals focused on awareness and tolerance of all types of diversity related issues. Target date for the formation of this club is by the end of this school year.

- Because we enroll a number of students who are unaware of many American customs including American schools, we feel that the community could take advantage of an opportunity to work with the schools in preparing immigrant students for their educational careers at CHS. Perhaps the community, through various community centers, could offer programs specifically designed to educate new immigrant students in some of the more general aspects of American schools. This would greatly assist and expedite the educational process as our Bilingual teachers work with students to obtain language and other educational skills with these students.

This will be a topic that will be explored with community members as we begin our community meetings during this semester.

STAFF INTERVENTIONS

- A heavier emphasis should be placed on future in-service days or school improvement days focusing on diversity education for staff. The focus of this training would be toward providing staff members with practices, activities, etc. which are designed to get students to become more aware of cultural differences. This emphasis would also include field trip opportunities for staff to visit cultural centers in the Detroit Metropolitan area.

Will be exploring diversity as a topic for our last In-service day this school year. Diversity, as it relates to staff working with students, will definitely be included in our school improvement plan and be the focus of In-service training next school year.

- Work with staff to establish heterogeneous grouping based on sex, grade level, and cultural and/or ethnic backgrounds. The emphasis would be on planned grouping whenever activity based classrooms (i.e., labs, groupwork, partners) are involved in a project. Seating charts would also be developed to accommodate heterogenous grouping.

This initiative is already in progress. I have already discussed this topic at a faculty meeting and will continue to stress that it is professionally obligatory on our part to take an active role in heterogeneous grouping whenever possible.

- Discuss and develop intervention methods to improve inappropriate language relative to diversity issues.

This initiative is already in progress. This topic will be the focus of a future faculty meeting where awareness and procedure will be explained. One of the assistant principals will lead this effort.

APPENDIX C

policy

BOARD OF EDUCATION
DAVIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

STUDENTS
5223/page 1 of 1

ABSENCES FOR RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS AND INSTRUCTION

The Board of Education desires to cooperate with those parents who wish to provide for religious instruction for their children but also recognizes its responsibility to enforce the attendance requirements of the state.

Upon the signed request of a student's parent, the Board will allow exceptions to the student's continuous attendance at school:

A. for religious instruction outside the school building for no more than two (2) class hours per week;

B. for attendance at confirmation classes provided the child is between the ages of twelve (12) and thirteen (13) years of age and the instructional period is no longer than five (5) months in either of those years;

C. for observance of a recognized religious holiday.

This day's absenteeism will not count toward the student's absenteeism record or jeopardize their eligibility for attendance awards.

A student must be properly registered and a copy of such registration must be filed with the principal.

The time for release for religious instruction or education shall be arranged by the Superintendent in keeping with the regulations of the State Board of Education. S/He will also assure the appropriate continuance of the instructional program in the public school during such release time.

No solicitation for attendance at religious instruction shall be permitted on District premises. No member of the staff shall neither encourage nor discourage participation in any religious instruction program.

M.C.L.A. 380.1561 (3c)
A.C. Rule R340.71, R340.74

Revised 12/11/95
Revised 3/97

APPENDIX D
Consent Forms and Interview Protocols

Date

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Parent:

I am inviting you and your child, Layla, to participate in a research study about school success. The purpose of the study is to explore students, parents, and teachers' expectations for success and achievement both at home and at school. I am especially interested in examining Layla's and your perceptions of cultural and language differences at school and home that may either hinder or support your child's intellectual growth and development. This may help me understand better how Layla continues to learn and to negotiate multiple cultural contexts at home and at school.

In order to carry out my study, I am seeking permission to observe Layla in her classes at Cobb High School without in any way distracting her from her work or that of the teacher. I would also like to interview her when it is convenient for her and her teachers. I also plan to spend a lot of time at the community center where I would like to get to know your community and the students better, so I hope to have to opportunity to talk to Leila and/or to you there. As Layla's parents, you are an important part of her life, and since I understand the significance of the family in Yemeni culture and tradition, I would welcome the opportunity to interview you with regard to your perceptions of Leila's achievement and learning in school.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the Consent Form on the following page. I have outlined exactly what will take place as I get to know your daughter through interviews and observations at school and at the community center. Please return this to Ms. --- at the community center. I've provided you with a stamped envelope. Ms. ---- has generously offered to ensure that you receive this letter and to return the consent form to me once you've agreed to participate.

Please feel free to contact me at any time at -----. I shall be visiting the community center often, so we can always meet there if you would like to talk to me. I am always trying to improve my Arabic, since I was born in Algeria and would welcome the opportunity to talk with you.

Sincerely,

Statement of Informed Consent to Participate

We agree to participate in the study "Home and School Expectations for School Success," and we agree to allow our child to participate in this study.

We understand that Loukia K. Sarroub will conduct research to explore my views and my child's views regarding cultural and language differences at school and home that may either hinder or support my child's intellectual growth and development and success at home and school. We understand that Ms. Sarroub considers this study to be a learning opportunity and a way to better understand the cultural continuities and discontinuities that your child experiences in the different worlds of home and school. This study may discern ways of educating and enabling the success of similar populations in the US, especially as more and more refugees from the Middle East make the US their permanent home and as minority students and all students and their teachers continue to struggle be become masterful learners and thinkers.

By agreeing to participate in this study, we understand that Ms. Sarroub will request interviews with me and my child. These interviews may be audio taped. We understand that she will observe, take notes, and audio tape classes in which my child is a participant. We understand that Ms. Sarroub may also collect samples of my child's work, such as papers, journal entries, oral presentations, drawings, etc.

We understand that Ms. Sarroub will analyze the data collected in observations and interviews. We understand that she will also write and speak about the research to scholarly audiences. She will always use a pseudonym for my name and my child's name both in the data she collects and when writing or speaking about the research. In addition, she will observe the precautions in how she stores and handles the tapes and the fieldnotes in order to protect my privacy. She will also always use pseudonyms for me and my child and for other identifying material such as the school or district in which my child is enrolled. She will keep all research materials in a secure place in her office or home and not permit other people to view or use them without her direct supervision. When she reports the study, it will be for research or teaching purposes, and she will include in those reports examples frommy interview or my child's interview or work samples.

We understand that my participation and my child's participation in this project is voluntary. At any time during the study, we may refuse to provide information or discontinue our participation or our child's participation without giving a reason and with no negative consequences to me or my child.

We agree to participate in the study in the manner described above.

Parent signature: _____

Name of child: _____

Date: _____

Researcher signature: _____Date_____

Date

Dear Mr./Ms. Teacher:

I am inviting you to participate in a research study about school success. The purpose of the study is to explore students, parents, and teachers' expectations for success and achievement both at home and at school. I am especially interested in examining Muslim students' and your perceptions of cultural and language differences at school and home that may either hinder or support your students' intellectual growth and development. This may help me understand better how Arab Muslim students continue to learn and to negotiate multiple cultural contexts at home and at school.

In order to carry out my study, I have asked the Davis School District and your school principal to allow me to conduct my research in your school, and they have graciously accepted. However, I am also seeking your permission to observe focus students in your classes. My aim is not to distract you or them from the learning at hand, but simply to observe their classroom activity and learning. I would also like to interview you when it is convenient to get a sense of your perceptions regarding these students' dispositions, abilities, literacy practices, and potential success.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the Consent Form on the following page. I have outlined exactly what will take place as I get to know you and your students through interviews and observations at school and in the community. Please return this to me at -----. I've provided you with a stamped envelope for your convenience. As soon as I receive your consent form, I will get in touch with you to schedule a time for an interview. Please let me know whether it is more convenient to contact you at school or at home.

Please feel free to contact me at any time at the addresses above. I shall be in Davis often, and I look forward to our conversations.

Sincerely,

Statement of Informed Consent to Participate: Teacher participation

I agree to participate in the study "Home and School Expectations for School Success."

I understand that Loukia K. Sarroub will conduct research to explore my views regarding cultural and language differences at school and home that may either hinder or support my students' intellectual growth and development and success at home and school. I understand that Ms. Sarroub considers this study to be a learning opportunity and a way to better understand the cultural continuities and discontinuities that my Muslim Arab students experience in the different worlds of home and school. This study may discern ways of educating and enabling the success of similar populations in the US, especially as more and more refugees from the Middle East make the US their permanent home and as minority students and all students and their teachers continue to struggle be become masterful learners and thinkers.

By agreeing to participate in this study, I understand that Ms. Sarroub will request interviews with me and my students. These interviews may be audio taped. I understand that she will observe, take notes, and audio tape classes in which her student informants are participants. I understand that Ms. Sarroub may also collect samples of my students' work, such as papers, journal entries, oral presentations, drawings, etc.

I understand that Ms. Sarroub will analyze the data collected in observations and interviews. I understand that she will also write and speak about the research to scholarly audiences. She will always use a pseudonym for my name and in the data she collects and when writing or speaking about the research. In addition, she will observe the precautions in how she stores and handles the tapes and the fieldnotes in order to protect my privacy. She will also always use pseudonyms for me and students and for other identifying material such as the school or district in which I work. . She will keep all research materials in a secure place in her office or home and not permit other people to view or use them without her direct supervision. When she reports the study, it will be for research or teaching purposes, and she will include in those reports examples from my interview.

I understand that my participation in this project is voluntary. At any time during the study, I may refuse to provide information or discontinue my participation without giving a reason and with no negative consequences to me.

I agree to participate in the study in the manner described above.

Teacher printed name:_____
Teacher signature: _____
Address: _____
Telphone number and/or e-mail address: _____
Date: _____
Researcher signature: _____ Date_____
Date: _____

Student Interview (adapted in part from Raissiguier, 1994)

Name: _____ Grade: _____
Date: _____ Gender: _____ Age: _____

Background:

1)What is your nationality?
Were you born here?
Where were you born?
2)What is the nationality of your parents?
Were they born here?
Why did they move to the US, to Davis?
3)How many brothers and sisters do you have?
How old are they?
Who lives at home?
4)What does your mother/father do for a living?
5)Do you have an idea of the monthly salary your father/mother earns?
6)Can you please tell me what your mother's/father's education level is?
7)Can you tell me if you've ever repeated any grade?
Which one and how many times?
8)How fluent are you in Arabic? Your English?
Speaking: fluent good fair minimal
Writing: fluent good fair minimal
Reading: fluent good fair minimal
Your father's Arabic?
Your mother's Arabic
Speaking: fluent good fair minimal
Writing: fluent good fair minimal
Reading: fluent good fair minimal
Your father's English?
Your mother's English?
Speaking: fluent good fair minimal
Writing: fluent good fair minimal
Reading: fluent good fair minimal

Questions about Cobb High School
9)What do you like about school? What don't you like about it?
10)What are your favorite classes? Why? Least favorite courses?
11)What do you see yourself doing in the future, after high school?
12)How are you school experiences different from male students?

13)Were there any courses that you didn't take because you're not allowed to? Which ones and why?

Were the boys allowed to take those classes?

14)I know that you're Muslim, and I'm wondering whether Cobb High School accommodates your religious an cultural practices in any way? What does the school do?

What are you, aren't you allowed to do?

How do teachers and administrators react to these practices?

15)Do you speak Arabic during school? When? Why?

When do you usually read, write, and/or speak Arabic?

16)When you speak Arabic, what are your friends' reactions?

Your teachers' reactions?

17)Tell me who most of your friends are at school? Why them?

18)What kinds of extracurricular activities do you participate in?

19)How do you know when you've been successful at school?

If you were to show me evidence of your success, what would you show or tell me?

Questions about community center

20)Can you tell me what you usually do after school? Why?

21)Do you sometimes spend time at the community center? How often? Why?

What do you learn there that's different from what you learn at school?

22)Who do you usually hang out with at the community center?

23)How do your parents feel about the community center and the fact that you spend time there?

How do your teachers feel about the community center?

Questions about home

24)What do you usually do at home?

Will you please describe a "typical day" for you?

Is this different from other people in your family?

Do you think that your friends at school have the same kinds of typical days and responsibilities?

When you think about your home life, how do you feel about it?

25)How is your home life different from or the same as your school life?

26)Tell me where you usually go when you go out, cafes?

Who do you usually go with?

When do you go?

How late do you usually stay out?

27)What kinds of books do you usually read?

What kinds of music do you usually listen to?

TVprograms you watch?

Movies?

Magazines?

28)How are you different from your parents?

29)Can you tell me what you think your parents think of their lives and their work?

30)Do you speak to your parents about school?

What do they think about your education and school?

What do they want you to learn?

Do they help you with your homework? Tell me about that.

Would this be different if you were a boy/girl? How?

Is this different from how you perceive your education and schooling? How?

31)How do you know when you've been successful at home?

If you were to show me evidence, what would you share with me?

32)Let's imagine you could do anything you want, what would that be?

Do you think this is possible? Why or why not?

33)Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?

Thank you!

Teacher Interview

Name:_____ Institution:_____
Date:_____ Gender _____

General questions

1) How long have you worked at Cobb High?
What subjects do you teach?
2) In general, what do you expect from your students, i.e. school work, dispositions, behaviors?
How is this different or the same for Arab and non-Arab students?
3)What do you think the Arab community expects of you (with regard to their children)?
4)What do you have to know about your students, and especially about the Arab students to do your job well?
5)I'm wondering whether the high school accommodates, in any way, Muslim religious and/or an cultural practices?
What does the school do?
How does this affect non- Muslim students?
How does it affect Muslim students?
How do other teachers and administrators react to these practices?

Questions about students:

6)In your opinion, how are Arab or Arab American students the same or different from non-Arab American students in Davis?
How are girls different from boys?
How are their views for school success different or the same?
Tell me about ……?
7)What language is usually spoken in your classroom among the Arab students? Can you tell me whether you've noticed specific instances when Arabic is spoken instead of English?
How often does this occur?
When is English usually spoken?
Tell me about …..
8) In your opinion what do the Arab students like about school? What don't they like?
9)How do you think they envision their futures?
What do they do to ensure that future?
Is this different for boys and girls?
Tell me about ….
10)What kinds of activities or sports do the Arab students participate in at school?
Is this same or different for boys and girls? Specifically about …..?

Questions community and home:

11)What do you know about the community center?

How involved is the high school with the community center?

Can you tell me anything about your students' involvement with the community center?

12)How do you think parents feel about their children attending school?

13)Have you ever had an opportunity to visit with some the families/parents of the Arab students? Tell me about this.

What do the parents do for a living?

How do the children spend their time at home?

How are the boys' home life different from that of the girls?

What language is spoken at home?

14)Are you familiar with the types of books, movies, tv shows, and music the Arab students engage in?

Is this the same for boys and girls? Specifically, about ....

17) In your opinion, how are the students different from their parents?

How does that affect home life?

How does that affect school life?

How does that affect your teaching at school?

18)What do you think the parents want their children to learn at school?

19)What do you think they want them to learn at the community center?

20)What do they want them to learn at home?

Thank you.

Parent Interview (ask these questions in Arabic if necessary)

Name: _____ Date: _____
Mother's age: _____ Father's age: _____

Background

1)What is your nationality?
Were you born here?
Where were you born?
When did you move to the US?
2)Why did you move to the US? To Davis?
3)How many children do you have?
Are they all here in Davis?
4)What do you do for a living?
5)Are you happy with the work you do? Why?
6)Can you please tell me how much formal education you've had?
7)Tell me about the Dearborn community. How is it different from your home country? How is it the same?
What kinds of social and work-related activities do you participate in?
What language(s) do you usually speak and when?

Questions about Cobb High

8)What do you like about your children's school? What don't you like about it?
How do you feel about their classes?
Are there some that you find more important than others? Why?
How do you feel about the teachers?
How do you feel about the students, both Arab and non-Arab?
9)How do you think your daughters' experiences with school are different from those of your son(s)'?
10)What do you envision your children doing in the future?
11)I know that your family is Muslim, and I'm wondering whether the high school accommodates your children's religious an cultural practices in any way?
What does the school do?
What would you like the school to do?
12)How well do you think your children's teachers know the Arab community?
Have you had any opportunities to speak with the teachers?
What did you talk about?
How did these conversations affect your perceptions of your children's learning?
13)What kinds of extracurricular activities do you allow your children to participate in? Why?
14)How do you know when your children are successful at school?

If you were to show me evidence of their success, what would you show or tell me?

15)Do your children ever talk to you about their homework from school? Tell me a bit about that?
What kind of help do they usually seek?
What do you usually help them with?

Home and Community life

16)Can you tell me what you usually do after work?
Are there any places in the community that you visit regularly?
How often do you go there?
Why is this important to you?
Do your children accompany you there?

17)Do you ever spend time at the community center?
What do you usually do there?
How often do you go there?

18)If your children spend time at the community center, can you tell me why you allow them to do that?

19)When your family is at home, what do you expect of each member? What are their "duties?"
What do you expect of your daughters?
What do you expect of your sons?
Can you please describe a typical family day?

20)In your opinion, how is home life different from school life for your children?

21)What do you envision yourself doing in the future?

22)If you could grant your family any wish, what would it be?
What do you wish for each of your children?
Is this possible?

Thank you very much for participating in this interview.

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