

RETHINKING RELIGIOUS AND CIVIC EDUCATION: HYBRIDITY, OTHERING, AND
THE CULTIVATION OF MUSLIM-AMERICAN STUDENTS' IDENTITIES

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation is based on two multiple case studies through which I examined the intersection of identity, religion, citizenship and agency. The first chapter of the dissertation explains the theoretical framework and why I rely on postcolonial theory and Foucault's theory of power/knowledge in order to interrogate the cultivation of Muslim students' religious and civic identities. The same chapter includes the methodological part of my dissertation.

The second chapter clarifies, through in-depth interviews with four Muslim social studies teachers, the dilemmas they faced in educating their students to become good Muslims and good citizens in the U.S. Teachers reported that the growing Islamophobia in the U.S., after September 11, 2001, has increased the tension between Muslim students' religious, national, and transnational belonging. This is true because Muslim-American voices and narratives were not included in the American and World history curriculum, and because of the misrepresentation of Islam in the media and the larger society. Teachers reported that they have the double responsibility to educate their students for good citizenship so that they can defend and explain their Islamic identity. Here I found two types of religious education. The first was dogmatic education which promoted the superiority of Islamic morals and ignored other system of knowing or behaving (moral absolutism). The second (moral pluralism) encouraged students to recognize other systems of morality and to think how the Islamic ethics and moral teachings may contribute to the well-being of all citizens. The same chapter shows the love-hate relationship

that Muslim students developed towards their country because of the U.S. foreign policies towards Islamic countries and how teachers dealt with this dilemma.

The third chapter shows, relying on Foucault and Bhabha's theories, the struggles that Muslim students faced in their transition from Islamic to public schools in one city in the U.S. This study explored four Muslim teenagers about their transition from one Islamic to different public schools. The study aimed to explore how these students negotiated their identities, how they faced processes of Othering and Islamophobia in public schools, and how they developed their hybrid identities. Five findings were revealed in this chapter. First, Muslim students reported that they did not get a quality education in the Islamic school and this kept them far behind their peers in public schools. That is, they felt they needed to reconcile their religious identity (Islamic and Arabic studies) and their aspirations to get good jobs in the future. Second, there is a solid evidence to show how Muslims students used the Arabic language and their bodies in order to fit within the culture of public school and the technologies of the self they use for this purpose. Third, there was a tension between students' American identity and their parents' diasporic identity. It seems that some immigrant parents use religious language in order to justify the cultural practices of their home country. Fourth, I clarify the meaning of dogmatic religious education and liberating function of public schools as it came across the interviews with students. Here I explain the meaning of reflective and critical religiosity and why it is significant for living in democratic and multicultural society. Fifth, I explore the patterns of discrimination and Othering that Muslim students experienced in their public schools and how they were related to discourses of Orientalism, Islamophobia, and imperialism.

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For my family
And all people who dare to think
Critically about their own religion

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CHAPTER ONE

Theoretical Framework

This dissertation includes four chapters. In this first, introductory chapter, I explain the conceptual framework of my dissertation and how Foucault's theory of power/knowledge and postcolonial theories contribute to our understanding of Orientalism, citizenship, and identity formation. In addition, I briefly explain the two studies discussed in the following chapters and how the concepts of agency, oppression, subalternity, and voice come across these chapters to highlight the role of schools as a space where multiple identities are examined, contested, and emergent. In addition, I explain in this introduction the methodological orientation of my dissertation and why critical case study is the most useful and appropriate method for conducting this dissertation.

The second and third chapters of this dissertation present two independent but theoretically connected studies that I have conducted in the U.S. In each chapter I explain the study's rationale, setting, and major findings. In the fourth chapter I conclude and summarize the main findings of the different chapters and their contributions to the literature.

Examining the Empire Within: The Use of Postcolonial and Power/Knowledge Theories for Educational Critique

In this dissertation I rely on power/knowledge, postcolonial, and citizenship theories in order to examine how minority students and their teachers, in the U.S., view their role as active citizens within their country and the local community, how they challenge discourses of Orientalism and discriminations in the larger society, and how students develop their own identities. The concept of discourse which was developed in the writings of Foucault (1977; 1980; 1985) can be summarized as forms and statements of knowledge, thoughts, and practices which define for human beings how to think, feel, act, and interact, and how to conceive the truth

of their lives. My interest in writing this dissertation is related to my own journey as an Arab and a Muslim, coming from Israel, who cares about justice for Arabs and Muslims in both Israel and the U.S. In fact, I feel intellectually and morally responsible to bring the voices of the less heard in both countries, particularly the perspectives of Muslim teachers and students in the U.S. I wanted to explore how Muslims in the U.S. produce their own narratives of resistance, and how this has allowed them to claim agency and to shape their civic identities.

Muslims in the U.S. have been marginalized by the mainstream culture of the U.S. They are a minority in terms of their number, culture, and religion. Many studies have shown that Muslims in the U.S., lack fair representation in the media, politics, and public life, and they suffer from a discourse of Islamophobia (Ba-Yunus & Kone, 2006; Driel, 2004; Esposito & Kalin, 2011; Haque, 2004). In this regard the use of postcolonial theory encourages us to examine what Young (1990) called “the empire within” (p. 173). This means exploring how processes of Othering in democratic and western countries are embedded within the unequal social and political relationships between the majority and the minority in the larger society, and how schools may challenge discourses of control and the ideological stereotyping of the Other and contribute to more equity in people’s lives.

Young (1990) suggested expanding the use of postcolonial theory in order to criticize discourses of discrimination against underrepresented groups in democratic societies. The concept of Othering goes back to the writings of Hegel (1770-1831), who argued that “human consciousness is incapable of perceiving itself without recognition by others” (Cavallaro, 2001). In this dissertation I assumed that Othering may happen because we are talking about asymmetrical relationships between the majority (non-Muslims Americans) and the minority (Muslim-Americans).

I believe that any practice of Othering relies, basically, on discursive and non-discursive practices which produce different system of knowledge and subjectivities for individuals in different social positions. These systems of knowledge or discourses of power determine for people how to think, behave, and interact with each other. That is, people govern themselves and their self-definition based on the knowledge they receive from the media, schools, and culture. They are, in fact, “colonized” by these discourses of power and see it as normal. I argue, in this dissertation, that both Islamic and public schools in the U.S. may work further in order to debunk discourses of Othering and how they marginalize Muslims at the personal, social, and political levels.

Following the work of Foucault’s (1980a) and his theory of power-knowledge, we should not think of Othering as “good” or “bad” in itself. Instead one needs to ask who is othered, why, in which context, and how he or she feels about it. This becomes clear in the third chapter of this dissertation where I show that Muslim students’ transition from Islamic to public schools liberates their conceptions of the self, religion, and morality. In other words, being the Other in public schools allowed these students to question the dogmatic practice of religious education and perhaps to revise and reshape their religious identities. Within the English-speaking research community, there are a host of classic studies that have investigated how schools contribute to reproducing the status quo and the continuity of oppression against groups on the basis of gender (Epstein & Johnson, 1998; Noddings, 1992), class (Anyon, 1980; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Jones & Vagle, 2013; Lareau, 2000), and race (Banks, 2004). However, very few studies have discussed religion as another possible category of marginalized people (Adams & Joshi, 2007; Blumenfeld, 2006; Burke & Segall, 2011). In addition, these studies focused on describing the structures of oppression and how organizational and pedagogical practices and policies

contributed to the continuity of injustice in education and the larger society. Unlike previous studies in that regard my dissertation examines concepts of citizenship and religiosity from postcolonial perspectives. It examines how Muslim teachers and students in the U.S. have claimed agency and tried, through schooling, to dispute the unjust conditions of their lives. Also, it explores the different dilemmas and struggles that they have faced in doing so.

The idea of agency, as I show across the following chapters, can take place at the school level –where students and teachers challenge the discourse of Islamophobia in the larger society in the second chapter), and at the personal level (third chapter). What is common to these types of agency is that teachers and students conceive of school as a place for resistance, and in the process, produce counter-discourses of citizenship, and the cultivation of alternative narratives and identities. My dissertation shows how difficult it is for Muslim students in the U.S. to negotiate their personal and civic identities and to express their voices within the sociopolitical contexts of their country.

Moving Beyond Reproduction Theory and Static Representations of the Other: The Study of Religion, Identity and Counter-Discursive Practices in the U.S

Iris Young (2010) described several types of oppression in society. These are patterns of powerlessness, exploitation, marginalization, cultural imperialism, and violence. I argue that marginalization and cultural imperialism are the appropriate terms to describe the situation of Muslims in the U.S. According to Young (2010), “Marginalization is perhaps the most dangerous form of oppression. A whole category of people is expelled from useful participation in social life and thus potentially subjected to severe material deprivation” (p. 38). As I show later in the different chapters, Muslims in the U.S. are a marginalized minority who have

suffered from being Othered because of their minority status and other socio-historical and political conditions.

The idea of cultural imperialism means that a group that is in a position of power uses its advantages in order to define what is common and acceptable in the social life of the collective whole. This concept, which represents the unequal relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, can be used to demonstrate the power relationships between dominant and marginalized groups in democratic countries. Cultural imperialism leads to making the dominant group's experience and culture the norm, and this may in turn silence the perspectives of other groups, who might be different in terms of culture, race, religion, gender, and identity. Eurocentrism, Orientalism, and Ethnocentrism are all types of cultural imperialism.

Eurocentrism, Orientalism, and Ethnocentrism are all discourses produced by privileged groups in society, and they are based on systems of both discursive and non-discursive practices and policies. "Oppression in this sense is structural, rather than the result of a few people's choices or policies. Its causes are embedded in unquestioned norms, habits, and symbols, in the assumptions underlying institutional rules and the collective consequences of following these rules" (Young, 2010, p. 36). What is common to oppressed people is that they are denied the opportunity to develop and apply their competences and communicate their needs, considerations, and feelings (Young, 2010).

Every field in social life--including education- works through a system of knowledge and power which determines what is said and what is silenced, who has authority and who needs to submit (and to whom), what is important and what is irrelevant, and what is normal and what is abnormal (Cherryholmes, 1988). In addition, Foucault's theory of power-knowledge is useful because it recognizes that discourses are context-based, and they are influenced by different

historical moments and affect the individual's conception of the self and their role in society. The idea of positioning, or positionality, as I show across this dissertation, is important if we believe that "identities are often created in the crucible of colonialism, racial and sexual subordination, and national conflicts, but also in the specificity of group histories and structural position" (Alcoff, 2003, p. 3).

That said, Foucault's understanding of reality allows us to think about schools as potential social institutions for deconstructing the oppressive discourses in society, for challenging processes of Othering, and for giving spaces to the Other or the different to express their voices and protest against their subalternity. Italian theorist Antonio Gramsci (1999) first developed the concept of "the subaltern," referring to the non-elite or the marginalized groups of his native Italy. Later on, postcolonial scholars from India, led by Ranajit Guha (1982), established The Subaltern Studies Group, and they used the term to indicate "general attributes of subordination in south Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way" (p. 35). I use the term to indicate the people who live at the margin of their society, and who are silenced and excluded by the power relationships and social discourses of their country.

In other words, schools have the potential of challenging hegemonic discourses and their truths. Schools, through their organization of values, rituals, and meanings, may transmit an alternative knowledge or truth which accepts and recognizes the Other and his/her needs, and allow for just discourses of representation and inclusion.

I use Foucault's theory of power/knowledge in this dissertation because the participants in my studies are minority students who have been marginalized by the political, social, and Oriental discourses of their country. Also Foucault's theory has a broader understanding of power

which is not only working in a top-down or oppressive manner but it is multidirectional in its function and effects. In fact, “discourses [of knowledge/power] are always and simultaneously both repressive and creative as they mask and illuminate, affirm and challenge, restrict and enable particular knowledge and knowing” (Segall, 2013, p. 480). This understanding fits my understanding of identity politics and that identities are not given, but are forged in the struggle over what it means to be “Muslim” in various national and social contexts. It is worth noting that Muslims in the U.S. include people who belong to other nations and cultures. The focus on Muslims in the U.S. is because of the increasing Islamophobia after September 11, 2001 (Driel, 2004; Esposito & Kalin, 2011).

According to Edward Said, Orientalist discourses dictate and justify the dichotomy between West and East, and contribute to the self-representation of the West as modern, superior, advanced, rational, and civilized. By contrast, the East is portrayed as the Other who is barbaric, exotic, mysterious, and inferior. Orientalism is not about non-western cultures, but about the western representation of these cultures. For instance,

If colonized people are irrational, Europeans are rational; if the former are barbaric, sensual, and lazy, Europe is civilization itself, with its sexual appetites under control and its dominant ethic that of hard work; if the Orient is static, Europe can be seen as developing and marching ahead; the Orient has to be feminine so that Europe can be masculine. (Loomba, 1998, p. 47)

The picture of the Orient in this distorted vision is merely the desperate attempt at western self-definition through the exclusion of that which it does not value, and its projection onto an Other, “the East.” According to Said (1978) Orientalism can be viewed as “the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it,

describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (p. 17).

This shows the significance of investigating the experiences of Muslim teachers and students in the U.S. and how they confront Islamophobia within their teaching or in negotiating their religious and national identities. In the next section I overview the two studies that I conducted for this dissertation, and I show how they contribute to our understanding of agency, citizenship, and religious identity formation.

Overview of the Two Studies

Untangling the Knot of National Identity: Finding Space for Religious Pluralism in Citizenship Education

The second chapter of this dissertation explores the difficulties that social studies teachers in two Islamic-American schools face while they educate their Muslim students to become participating citizens of the United States, while at the same time remaining proud of their Islamic identity. My interest in doing this study goes back to my own experience of teaching civics for Muslim and Arab students in Israel, where I faced the dilemma of unity and diversity that I will explain later in the second Chapter. In addition, this study is important considering the increased Islamophobia after September 11, 2001, which put more pressure on Islamic schools and communities to justify their practices and their loyalty to the U.S. (Ba-Yunus & Kone, 2006).

The social studies teachers presented in this chapter felt that they were responsible to help their students correct the misconceptions and misunderstandings of Islam in American society. They wanted their Muslim students to become informed and active citizens, citizens who were

able to refute the negative and stereotypical representation of Islam and Muslims in their country. That is, they wanted them to exercise active cultural citizenship.

The idea of cultural citizenship was developed by Rosaldo (1994), who explained that:

Cultural citizenship refers to the right to be different and to belong in a participatory democratic sense. It claims that, in a democracy, social justice calls for equity among all citizens, even when such differences as race, religion, class, gender, or sexual orientation potentially could be used to make certain people less equal or inferior to others. (p. 402)

This means that ethnic, cultural, and religious minorities in democratic countries should have the right of full citizenship, to be treated equally, and to enjoy equal opportunities. Education for cultural citizenship may help Muslim students develop the confidence to disrupt practices of Islamophobia in everyday life, and to think how their religion may contribute to the common good and the welfare of all citizens. In Chapter Two, I analyze two discourses of Islamic character education, as they were performed by teachers in the study, and I suggest that moral pluralism, which still maintains religious character, is very appropriate for preparing Muslim students for a life in the American democratic, multicultural, and multi-faith society

The second chapter also emphasizes the significance of recognizing students' multiple identities, and the interconnection between the local and the global in terms of citizenship and a sense of belonging. In other words, as I explain in that chapter, Orientalism, which has its roots in the asymmetrical power relationship between West and East, increases the tension between Muslim students' American identity and their transnational and Islamic belonging. This allows students to become more critical about the foreign and imperial policies of their own country and to think about alternative and democratic methods for active citizenry. This finding suggests that

we need to extend our understanding of the meaning of transnationalism and make it include global faith communities as well.

This last finding, I argue, can be relevant not only for Muslims in Islamic schools, but also for other minority students in public schools as well. In fact, teachers in both religious and public schools need to recognize that students may develop multiple identities, and some of these identities might be contested, silenced, or emergent within different contexts and discourses. Teachers need to give space to students to express their various identities, because not respecting students' ways of being or belonging is, according to the tenets of cultural citizenship, an act of oppression.

In short, the second chapter explores the complexity of developing Muslim students' religious and national identities, given the growing Islamophobia in the U.S., and how social studies teachers in two Islamic schools reported that they deal with dilemmas of unity and diversity, national and transnational, public and private in their education for citizenship and belonging in their classrooms. It shows that citizenship education cannot be separated from the sociopolitical discourse in a given country, and that religious identification can be another component of students' civic and transnational identities.

The concepts of agency, identity and Othering become even more complicated when we are talking about Muslim students who make their own transition from Islamic to public schools. It is to this chapter that I therefore next turn.

Hybridity, Othering, and the Cultivation of Muslim Students Identities in Their Transition from Islamic to Public Schools

In the third chapter of this dissertation, I show that the processes of Othering work not only at the global level (through the divide between West and East in colonial discourses) but

also within schools and at the personal level too. Exercising agency is not limited to confronting Islamophobia in the larger society (as in the second chapter), but is also present in Muslim-American students' trials to develop their third space (Bhabha, 1994) of articulation and identity development in their own personal lives.

In the third chapter, I investigate the experiences of Muslim students who transitioned from Islamic to public schools in the U.S. As I undertook this study, I assumed that this transition would have a powerful influence on students' lives and particularly their understanding of their religious identities. This chapter encourages us to rethink the distinction between the private (religious) and the public (civic) in religious and citizenship education; it also challenges the neutrality of public schools and the Orientalist discourses of the larger society.

There are increasing numbers of scholars who argue that public schools in the U.S. are not neutral, but rather are dominated by what Blumenfeld (2006) called "Christian privilege" (p. 195). This means that Christians in society enjoy social and cultural advantages which are "encoded into the individual's consciousness and woven into the fabric of our social institutions, resulting in a stratified social order privileging dominant [Christian] groups while restricting and disempowering subordinate [and other faith] groups" (p. 195). For instance, Muslim students are supposed to study on Fridays even though it is a day of worship in the Islamic religion; schools do not shorten the school day during Ramadan; and the celebration of their Eids (Islamic holidays) comes at the expense of their studying.

Blumenfeld (2006) as well as Burke and Segall (2011) argued that public schools are among the social institutions which produce and reproduce the advantages of the Christian majority in terms of values, morality, rituals, and the epistemological understanding of life and society. For instance, Burke and Segall (2011) analyzed several practices of everyday life in

public schools and found that the school's calendar, the educational function of the office, concepts of the child, the organization of classrooms, and the school's symbols and institutional and disciplinary practices are all related historically and metaphorically to Christian practices and beliefs. Therefore, they suggested viewing non-Christian students as another category of oppressed people along with race, sexual orientation, class, and gender.

The Christian nature of public schools, which is embedded in the curriculum as well as in other pedagogical and institutional practices, may oppress students from other religions who might feel excluded, marginalized, and subjugated in the educational climate of public schools. However, this analysis of religion in public education, as I show in this chapter, can be of limited utility in understanding the life experiences of Muslim students who make the transition from Islamic to public schools, because religious identity cultivation is dynamic, contested, and socially constructed (Hall, 1994), as well as being influenced by the different discourses of power and interaction in both Islamic and public schools.

In this regard, I argue, applying Foucault's theory of power/knowledge in order to see that *both* Islamic *and* public schools have their own regulatory systems of knowledge and discipline which influence how students function and interpret their lives and behaviors. In addition, the concept of identity must be understood based on the specific context of students' schooling experiences, and their desire to adapt or to reject the "truth" transmitted in these schools. Although Foucault's early theory of power did not stress people's possible agency,¹ the concept of hybridity, which was developed by Bhabha (1994), allows us to see that the encounter

¹ Foucault admitted in his late writings that reality is not that deterministic, and power relationships in society may allow people to change positions through interpreting their lives, and acting and interacting with other social agents (Besley, 2005).

between different discourses may allow individuals to develop some space of agency and resistance.

The findings of this chapter show that Muslim students face several dilemmas in their transition from Islamic to public schools. First, they feel that they need to compromise between their desire to keep up with their religious education and their inspirations to succeed in the future. Second, the students reported that they use several methods of recognition and representation in order to develop their own hybrid identity. These methods, or technologies of the self (Foucault, 1988), include the way they communicate their bodies, the use of Arabic language, and how they manage the interaction with non-Muslim peers in their school. Here, I found that Muslim students' transition from Islamic to public schools may not necessarily oppress them but may let them rethink or maybe revise their religious identities in positive, pro-democratic ways. This is because students are active human beings who interpret, think, and rethink the knowledge they receive in the contested discourses (religious and non-religious) they experience in their lives. Indeed this theme shows that the relationship between power and knowledge is dynamic, unstable, unpredictable, and related to discourses within a particular time and place (Fendler, 2010). Therefore, Muslim students' transition has the potential of liberating them through reflection upon their religious practices and beliefs, the development of better skills of religious reasoning, recognition of the existence of other faith groups in society, and the realization of how their religion may contribute to the common good of all citizens, and perhaps even to reject religion altogether.

Third, this chapter shows that there is a conflict between Muslim students' diasporic and national identity where they debate with their parents about the meaning of success and being a religious person in the American context compared to their parents' home countries. It seems

that Muslim immigrant who came from the Middle East do not recognize the significance of contextualizing their own religion and that Islam may develop different patterns of interpretations and manifestations based on the culture where it is located. In other words, living as a minority in a democratic country such as the U.S is different from living within an Islamic majority in non-democratic countries. The first example, I believe, allows Muslims or the second generation of Muslim Americans to question their own religion and to see how it communicates with other systems of knowledge and morality.

The fourth theme shows the oppressive mode of public schools (Burney, 2012; Kumashiro, 2000), how they face Orientalism in their schools, and the tension between their national and transnational identities. In fact, this theme supports the literature about the potential oppression of public schools against non-Christian students and it raises questions about American students and teachers' lack of knowledge about Islam or the miseducation they receive about this religion from the media and other resources. It shows that public schools and teachers may need to be informed more about Islamophobia and its Oriental and historical roots, and to work more, in the name of democracy and social justice, on refuting these discourses and to become more sensitive and supportive to students from other religious minorities and denominations.

The tension between one student's American and Egyptian identities in the fourth theme supports the findings about the love-hate relationships that Muslim students developed in the second chapter, and it highlights the complexity of civic belonging and the development of multiple belongings. At the same time this finding emphasizes the significance of education for critical nationalism where students and teachers may discuss the engagement of their country in global issues/conflicts, its imperial agendas, and the meaning of global justice.

Methodological Orientations

For the purpose of this dissertation I have adopted a critical stance, in which I assume, like Kincheloe and McLaren (2005), that:

All thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations that are social and historically constituted; that facts can never be isolated from the domain of values or removed from some form of ideological inscription ... that certain groups in any society and particular societies are privileged over others and, although the reasons for this privileging may vary widely, the oppression that characterizes contemporary societies is most forcefully reproduced when subordinates accept their social status as natural, necessary, or inevitable; that oppression has many faces and that focusing on only one at the expense of others... often elides the interconnections among them. (p. 304)

I chose to work on this dissertation with a feeling of moral responsibility and commitment towards improving the life conditions of Muslims in the U.S. What motivates me is the desire that Muslims as a religious minority enjoy more freedom, equity, and equality. My work, thereby, can be described as critical qualitative inquiry, because it “begins with an ethical responsibility to address processes of unfairness or injustice within a particular lived domain” (Madison, 2005, p. 5). The use of qualitative methods has the potential of capturing how the research participants produce their narratives and counter-narratives, how they influence and are influenced by the mechanism of power-knowledge, how they produce their own space of resistance, and how they construct and interpret their own identities.

I adopted a critical ethnographic stance because, as a researcher, I used my resources, skills and privileges in order to support the voices and experiences of subalterns, or subjects who are marginalized within the power relationships in their societies. I believe that schools, through

critical citizenship education, can work more to challenge discourses of Orientalism and marginalization against subaltern groups in the American society.

The concept “subaltern” has been used in different historical periods. It referred to vassals or peasants during the medieval period, and then was used to signify people in a lower position in the British army (Apple & Buras, 2006; McEwan, 2009); since 1980, the concept has been used, as suggested by Gramsci, to signify the subordinated classes and oppressed groups who suffer from unequal relations of power in society (Apple & Buras, 2006). In addition, the concept has become more common in the postcolonial literature in order to “mark the subordinate positions of groups of formerly colonized peoples who remain marginalized primarily by power relations that work on the basis of race and class” (McEwan, 2009, p. 16). For the purpose of this dissertation, I use the term to refer to students and teachers who are excluded from the mainstream culture of their societies, and to those who do not have a position from which to speak because of their social status, which is based on their ethnicity and religion.

As I showed earlier, Muslims in the U.S. are a subaltern group who do not get a fair representation in their country, and who suffer from an ideological stereotyping in the mainstream culture. As a scholar, I want to provide space for Muslim students and teachers so that they can express their voices and needs and protest against their Othering. Yet I want to do this without romanticizing or fetishizing voice--given that all people, at all times, speak from within institutions and through discourses that limit and shape what they can and cannot say. Challenging the status quo, and the negative and hegemonic representation of the Other, is an act of justice, because the way people are represented influences the way they are treated (Hall, 1997). From a postcolonial perspective, when minority students and teachers tell their stories, they in fact have the opportunity to “redo the narrative of empire” (Burney, 2012, p. 61), and to

question the hegemonic discourses of Orientalism, ethnocentrism, oppression, misrepresentation and exclusion.

For this dissertation, I used qualitative and multiple case-study methods because they are useful for inserting the discordant voices of students and teachers--people who are often voiceless, or less heard, in their societies. Using qualitative methods, such as in-depth individual and focus group interviews, is helpful for revealing how research participants are positioned and position themselves within the different discourses of power in both Islamic and public schools. I also explore how participants conceive their agency, and how they deal with the systems of power/knowledge they experience in their lives. Understanding or deconstructing processes of Eurocentrism, ethnocentrism, and Orientalism in schools and the larger society is crucial for empowering subaltern groups, allowing them to speak for themselves and to express their identities.

I believe that using ethnographic methods is appropriate, because I deal with issues of identity formation, and this is a dynamic process through which students negotiate and renegotiate their identities and develop, as mentioned by Bhabha (1994), a third space of articulation. This is particularly true in the third chapter, where Muslim students use their own technologies of the self, in order to resist mechanisms of Othering and exclusion in their schooling. This increases the significance of schooling, through which minority students can challenge the binarisms of Orient versus Occident, private versus public, religious versus secular, and cultural versus national, and establish their own hybrid identities.

Using qualitative methods is useful to capture the meaning of the liminal spaces that minority students may produce in their quest for agency, justice, and better recognition. This dissertation aims to empower Muslim students and teachers by allowing them to speak their

minds, to tell their stories and truths, and to share the difficulties and struggles they face in their work or in cultivating their identities.

Conducting in-depth individual and focus group interviews with follow-up questions was useful in that it helped research participants to speak about their feelings, and shed light on how they construct their multiple identities. According to Nunkoosing (2005),

We choose the interview because we know that the best way to get into the lived experience of a person who has experienced an important [education]-related issue is to enable the person to narrate that experience. We are interested in the person's cognition, emotion, and behavior as a unifying whole rather than as independent parts to be researched separately (p. 699)

I believe that face-to-face interviews have the potential of allowing research participants to reflect upon their life experience, and perhaps to learn how they are influenced by the different discourses in which they are engaged. This process of reflecting about the self has the potential of empowering research participants and allowing them to gain better insights about their social identities, and about how they are shaped and reshaped by systems of knowledge and structures of power in their societies.

Before conducting the interviews with participants, I prepared in advance a protocol for each study (see the protocols in the appendix of the dissertation). The interview protocol was useful because it helped me pursue a consistent line of inquiry, and it ensured the reliability of my findings. The use of open-ended questions had the advantage of revealing “what is in the interviewees’ mind as opposed to what the interviewer suspects is on the interviewees’ mind” (Krueger & Casey, 2009, p. 57). The stream of questions in these individual interviews was fluid, which enabled me to ask follow-up questions based on the dynamics of the interview and the

guidelines of my inquiry. In short, the use of in-depth interviews with open-ended questions was helpful in providing insight and “perceived causal inferences and explanations” (Yin, 2009, p. 102).

It is worth noting, as I explain later, that I did a pre-interview meetings with research participants in order to get to know them better, to explain the purposes of my study, to answer any questions they might have, to set the dates and times for the interviews, and most importantly, to develop more trust and rapport before conducting the interviews. Establishing rapport was recommended by many qualitative researchers because it may remove any barriers for answering sensitive questions and it makes the interviews more comfortable (Roulston, deMarrais, & Lewis, 2003; Seidman, 2006; Weiss, 1994). According to Lincoln (2001) rapport is “the researcher’s achievement of sufficient sympathy or empathy with the interviewee that he or she is willing to share critical or intimate data with the researcher” (Lincoln, 2001, p. 1)

In the following chapters, I explain the two multiple and ethnographic case studies that I conducted in the U.S. in 2010, and 2013. “Case study” is defined by Yin (2009) as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 18). In this regard, I adopt the naturalistic paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1982), which is unlike the positivistic approach that focuses on controlling variables, testing theories, and looking for prediction; instead, it gives priority to the setting where the study takes place, and the data is gathered in order to understand how human beings are functioning within a specific context, and how different social, political, and cultural circumstances influence their attitudes, values, beliefs, and actions. I assume that different research participants might have their own

perspectives on schooling, and their life experiences can be affected by their societal positions, values, and life stories.

The selection of participants in all chapters was based on what Yin (2009) called a “theoretical replication” (p. 54), or theoretical sampling (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). This means that each teacher or student in these chapters constituted a case, and each was chosen because it was expected that they would share different experiences related to the phenomenon under investigation. This sampling, according to Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007), helps us to illuminate the relationships and logic among the research constructs and developing/extending a theory.

In explaining the logic of using a multiple case study research, Yin (2009) stated that:

Each individual case study consists of a “whole” study, in which convergent evidence is sought regarding the facts and conclusions for the case; each case’s conclusions are then considered to be the information needing replication by other individual cases. Both the individual cases and the multiple-case results can and should be the focus of the summary report. (p. 56)

It is assumed that students’ and teachers’ experiences in this dissertation cannot be fragmented into single variables, but they are influenced by “multiple factors and conditions, all of which interact, with feedback and feedforward, to shape one another” (Guba & Lincoln, 1982, p. 242). By the same token, I assume that human beings are active exponents of the happenings around them, and they develop their own interpretations of the different events they encounter through their prior knowledge, interaction, and reflections upon these events.

In collecting data for Chapter Three I included, besides the face-to-face interviews, one focus group interview, which lasted one hour, with all research participants. The focus group

method is defined by Morgan (1996) as “a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher” (p.130). The major advantage of using the focus group interview is the interaction between the group members, which may offer invaluable data about the extent to which they are diverse or agree with each other (Morgan & Krueger, 1993a). The focus group interview helped me to learn about the similarities and differences among all students, and how they view their transition from Islamic to public schools in the U.S. My role as a researcher in this focus group interview was to manage the group dynamics, to try to let all participants talk, and to help them focus on my research questions.

To sum up, using qualitative methods in this dissertation was useful because they enabled me to capture the subalterns’ experiences, their epistemology, ways of knowing, and how they understand their religion, enact their agency, and interpret their identities. This is particularly true considering the dynamics of identity development, and that identities are socially constructed and can be influenced by multiple discourses of Othering. Ethnographic methods such as semi-structured and focus group interviews helped me to discover and to identify important categories and patterns of meaning for participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2006), how they perceive the role of schooling and citizenship education, how they faced Islamophobia, and how they developed their multiple and contested identities.

In conclusion, the different chapters in this dissertation explored how Muslim students and teachers in the U.S. challenged discourses of Orientalism and marginalization, and how they understood and constructed their civic and religious identities. In addition, it extends the use of Foucault’s theory of power/knowledge and Bhabha’s theory of hybridity in order to explore the development of Muslim students’ religious and civic identities. This dissertation helps us recognize opportunities of agency, through which minority students in western countries

negotiate between the local and the national, the national and the transnational, the private and the public in the formation and transformation of their identities. Exploring the multiple meanings of citizenship, agency, and identity in the context of Islamic and public education in the U.S. allows teachers and educators to learn more about their Muslim students, their struggles, how they advocate for themselves, and perhaps developing better strategies to support them.

CHAPTER TWO

Islamophobia and the Challenges of Citizenship Education in Islamic schools in the U.S.

When I moved from Israel to live and study in the United States, I wondered about the extent to which minorities are engaged in American life, and I started to compare, for example, the life of African Americans and Muslims in the United States to the Arab minority in Israel. Indeed, this switch between the two countries helped me to reflect upon the position of Arabs as a marginalized minority in my own county of birth, and thereby to recognize the limitations of Israeli democracy. The study described in this chapter has been a part of this process.

My own interest regarding Muslims and Islamic schools in the United States increased after attending the mosque located close to my university, and seeing how the mosque and the Islamic school connected to it help Muslim Americans both have a sense of community and preserve their Islamic identity in the larger society. As I mentioned earlier in the introduction, many Muslims in the United States often feel under threat and less understood, and maybe less acceptable to the larger society. Because of that I assume that social studies teachers in American-Islamic schools face the dilemma of preparing their students to become good American citizens, and at the same time to develop their own Islamic and particular identity in a context in which Islam and Muslims have been under attack since September 11, 2001.

This study draws upon my own experiences, interests, and areas of expertise as an Arab and civics teacher from Israel. I do this by turning to the study of four Muslim Americans, all of whom teach social studies in private Islamic Schools. I look at what drives their teaching, and the contradictions and challenges they face in teaching their Muslim students as a religious minority and in fulfilling their charge of teaching about the larger civic culture that surrounds them.

My focus on the perspectives of Muslim social studies teachers is because they can be considered as a subaltern group who need to negotiate multiple discourses of power in their teaching and their professional lives. Spivak (1994) argued that we can understand the concept of subalternity as dynamic, relational, and heterogeneous. In other words, subalternity is related to the positionality of individuals in different social institutions and within various discourses of power. This argument relies on Foucault's (1990) analysis that "power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere" (p. 93).

For instance, Muslim teachers in Islamic schools in the U.S. are supposed to meet the expectations of contesting groups and discourses. They need to satisfy parents who want them to educate their kids to become good Muslims and to follow Islamic teachings and morals. At the same time, they need to follow the public schools curriculum if they want their students to compete with non-Muslim students for admission to college after they graduate. In addition, they need to help their students become good citizens in a public atmosphere which views Muslims as dangerous people and excludes them from the imagined community of American society.

The circumstances of Muslim teachers' work and the contradicted discourses that they live in their everyday practice make their job very complicated and political. This chapter explores the voices of Muslim social studies teachers in two Islamic schools in one state in the U.S., and lets us learn about the conflicts, dilemmas, and struggles that they face in preparing their students to become good Muslims and good citizens in their country.

For the purpose of this study I have relied on postcolonial and citizenship theories. These theories are useful for understanding the issues of inclusion, representation, identity politics, and voice in education, and these topics come across in my analysis in this chapter. As I described in the introduction of this dissertation Postcolonial theory and particularly the work of Said on

Orientalism gives a framework to understand the status of Muslims in the U.S. and to understand that processes of Othering at the local and the global levels interact and feed each other. Theories of citizenship education have the potential of challenging discourses of othering in the school and the larger society and to clarify the complexity of belonging in multicultural and multi-faith societies.

This chapter has four parts. In the first section I review the literature on citizenship education, the dilemma of teaching for unity and diversity in multicultural societies, and the role of Islamic schools in the United States. In the second section I describe the procedures of the study I conducted, which includes description of participants and the process of data collection and analysis. Then I discuss the major findings identified in this study in the third section. The last section includes my conclusions for this chapter and how they contribute to the literature on citizenship education, identity politics, and postcolonialism.

Citizenship Education: A Broad Concept with Multiple Definitions

It is not appropriate to suggest one unified theory of citizenship, because different kinds of citizenship are developed under diverse conditions of political and social modernization (Turner, 1993). Abowitz and Harnish's (2006) view supports Turner's argument, which notes that citizenship is not a "natural" idea. That is, it is an invented concept that shifts with economic, political, and social changes.

There is continuous discussion among scholars and educators today as to how citizenship education is best defined, implemented, and evaluated. There is agreement, however, that citizenship education encompasses several benefits, both for students and society. For instance, some scholars emphasize the importance of civic knowledge and its positive impact on citizens' voting and political participation (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Galston, 2001). Moreover,

schools that demonstrate democratic activities (discussing public issues in the classroom as well as providing opportunities for students to participate in the life of the school) are most successful in promoting civic knowledge and student involvement (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001). It is agreed that these pedagogical practices help students to become actively and efficiently involved in their societies and to be critical and responsible citizens in the future (Crick, 1998).

In this chapter I adopt Kerr's (2003) broad definition of citizenship education:

Citizenship education is universal, encompassing local, national, and international contexts. It is an ever-present challenge for individuals and communities across the globe; for young and old, rural and urban, male and female, schools and communities to which they link. (p. 5)

I next turn to describe different levels and discursive traditions within such a citizenship education.

Multiple Levels and Discourses of Citizenship Education

Westheimer and Kahne (2004) described programs that focus on the personal, participatory, and justice-oriented aspects of citizenship education. These programs may include overlapping aspects of knowledge, values, skills, attitudes, rights, and responsibilities at local, national, and global levels.

The first level of citizenship education in Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) framework emphasizes preparing youth to have the personal capacity to be good citizens. It focuses on responsible citizenship by emphasizing honesty, integrity, self-discipline, hard work, and treating others respectfully. According to Lickona (1991), one role of schools is to develop the moral foundation children need to understand and live out the rights and responsibilities of citizenship,

such as the desire to work and pay taxes, obey laws, and develop good manners. In addition, Lickona (1991) described moral knowing, moral caring, and moral action as basic components of citizenship education.

The second level of citizenship education focuses on a participatory approach to citizenship education. For example, some researchers highlight the importance of students' participation in their communities (Apple & Beane, 2007; Arthur & Wright, 2001; Lawy & Biesta, 2006; Wade, 2008; Youniss & Yates, 1997); service learning is often an aspect of this conception of citizenship education. Scholars and educators who support this approach to citizenship say that the main goal of public education is to prepare students for their roles as active and informed citizens, and that service learning affords students the opportunity to work towards this goal (Barber, 1991; Newmann, 1989).

The third level highlights a critical democratic citizenship education (Kincheloe, 2001; Parker, 2003) that stresses enlightened political engagement (Parker, 2003) and justice-oriented citizenship (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). What is common here is an emphasis on critical participatory democracy, so that students gain the knowledge, skills, experience, and responsibility to change society for a just and better life for all citizens. Also, as I show in the following chapter, participatory and justice-oriented citizenship have the potential of allowing marginalized minority students to speak and to challenge the unjust conditions of their lives.

Torres (1998) described several theories of citizenship education that are related to the politics of difference and to the recognition by citizens themselves of the relationship between citizens and the state, and how this leads to the development of multiple civic identities that are shaped and reshaped based on the social and the political context of the country. As I show in this chapter and the following chapter, discourses of Orientalism and discrimination in western

societies influence teachers' efforts to educate for citizenship because they increase the tension between education for unity and diversity.

In addition, it is important to recognize that a person may have "multiple" allegiances or, put another way, be a multi-citizen (Heater, 1992). This is particularly true in multicultural societies where citizens may have to negotiate different, overlapping, and possibly contested rights and responsibilities.

A more useful and comprehensive approach to understanding citizenship education in schools is to think about it as a discourse or a body of knowledge and practices that control meanings regarding "membership, identity, values, and rights of participation and assumes a body of common political knowledge" (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006, p. 653). According to Foucault (1980), different social institutions have their own norms, values, and codes of behaviors which are internalized by individuals as the truth, and school is one of these social institutions.

Abowitz and Harnish (2006) suggested six discourses of citizenship education. The first is the civic republican discourse which encourages the cultivation of students' civic identities, respecting the laws of the country and its national symbols, and contributing to the common good. The second discourse highlights the citizens' individual rights to have and pursue their own interpretations of the "good life" and not to interrupt other people's right to do so.

The next three discourses of citizenship are similar to what Westheimer and Kahne (2004) described as justice-oriented discourses, because they "challenge the liberal and civic republican notions of civic membership, civic identity, and forms of civic engagement" (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006, p. 666). These are the cultural, reconstructionist, and queer discourses of citizenship education. Cultural citizenship describes the needs of minority students and students

of color to be integrated into the larger society without losing their own particular and cultural identities. The reconstructionist discourse focuses on students' agency, and their ability to challenge unjust structures in their societies. The queer discourse emphasizes the importance of providing opportunities of expression especially for "those identities that have enjoyed few 'legitimate' spaces for political expression and agency" (p. 674).

The last discourse is transnational citizenship education, which means that citizenship education in schools should not ignore processes of globalization, immigration, and the interconnectedness between people across countries. Because of these processes, as well as the advancements in economy and technology, people in the world enjoy overlapping memberships and belonging to multiple nations (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006).

My critique of the Abowitz and Harnish (2006) typology is that they did not include religious education as another possible component in people's civic life, or how interpretations of religiosity and moral education may undermine or promote the development of students' democratic character. In other words, they did not discuss how discourses of civic and religious education may overlap and how this may bridge the distinction between the private and the public in citizenship education.

As I show later in this chapter, cultural citizenship might be the appropriate conception for describing the status of citizenship education within Islamic schools in the U.S. This is because it recognizes the minority status of Muslims in American society and their request for inclusion, fair representation, and justice. According to multicultural scholars such as Banks (1990) and Parker (2003), the idea of teaching for cultural citizenship can be difficult, considering the dilemma of teaching for unity and diversity in social studies education. This dilemma, I argue, is relevant not only in public schools, where teachers need to recognize the

particular needs of minority students and to engage them within the mainstream curriculum, but also in private and religious schools, where teachers are supposed to help students develop their own particular identities, and at the same time to contribute to the public life of their country.

As I show in the following section, one of the major dilemmas in multicultural and democratic societies is how to educate for diversity-to give space to minority students and to listen to their needs and particular identities, and at the same time to enhance their sense of belonging to the country and to be integrated in the larger society (Banks, 2008; Parker, 2003; Torres, 1998). In this chapter I examine how Muslim social studies teachers in two Islamic schools prepare their students to live in the United States, and at the same time to maintain their own Islamic identity. In the next section I explain further the complexity of education for minority groups in a multicultural society, and how scholars suggest finding possible balance between competing identities.

The Dilemma of Citizenship Education in Pluralist Societies

One of the continuing dilemmas of education in pluralist societies is to recognize the differences among citizens in terms of their cultural, ethnic, and religious identities, and at the same time to educate them to have a sense of a common, shared, national identity (Banks, 2001, 2008; Parker, 2003). Both identities are important because national identity gives citizens a sense of territorial solidarity, self government, patriotism, and political participation (Torres, 1998), while particular identities “help students to develop positive self-concepts and to discover who they are, particularly in terms of their multiple groups memberships” (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997, p. 171).

It is worth noting that identities are not constructed in a vacuum. Instead, they are built and influenced by multiple discourses within different times and places (Elliot, 2011). According

to Hall (1994), we should not think about identity as something fixed or static; instead it is produced through a dynamic process of cultivation, modification, and representation. Identity is a matter of becoming as well as of being.

Therefore, one of the educational challenges in multicultural societies is that schools and teachers recognize what students of color bring to school from their homes and communities, and at the same time teach the mainstream curriculum. In trying to solve the dilemma of teaching for unity and diversity in multicultural societies, Banks (2001) suggested the concept of multicultural citizenship education:

Because of growing ethnic, cultural, racial and religious diversity throughout the world, citizenship education needs to be changed in substantial ways to prepare students to function effectively in the 21st century. Citizens in the new century need the knowledge, attitudes, and skills required to function in their ethnic and cultural communities and beyond their cultural borders and to participate in the construction of a national civic culture that is a moral and just community that embodies democratic ideals and values, such as those embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (p. 6).

In short, many multicultural and democratic societies face the challenge of acknowledging the diverse experiences, cultures, and languages of minority groups, and of allowing them to contribute to the public sphere and the mainstream culture of the larger society. This is particularly true in the United States, because it is a nation of immigrants, one that has accepted and continues to accept people from diverse countries, with different national backgrounds, from across the world.

I assume, for the purpose of this study, that school is a major player in helping students negotiate their multiple identities and allegiances, and that teachers can take a principal role in such a process. However, too few researchers have examined how teachers can help their minority students find a balance between their particular identity (Gibson & Pang, 2001; Salinas & Castro, 2010) and their national or global identifications (Abu El-Haj, 2007).

The situation of citizenship education for Muslim students becomes even more complicated if we consider the increased Islamophobia in American society since September 11, 2001. Islamophobia can be considered one form of Orientalism (Said, 1997), which associates Islam with violence and terrorism. This kind of association puts Muslims in the U.S, including teachers and students, at the margin of American society and defines them as the Other who is denied the right to speak for him or herself, or to show the peaceful face of Islam and how it might be compatible with democratic values and principles.

In the next section, I briefly explain the status and the role of Islamic schools in the U.S., the meaning of Islamophobia, and the problem of Islamic representation in American culture.

Islamic Schools in the United States

Proponents of religious schooling in general, and Islamic schools in particular, argue that parents who send their children to Islamic schools want to ensure cultural coherence in future generations. This means that they do not want to send their children to public schools because the educational environment does not fit or support the Islamic values and norms they have in their homes (Merry, 2007). It is worth noting that religious and private schooling is not limited to Islamic education, as there are many Catholic and Jewish schools that serve both conservative and liberal Christians and Jews in American society as well (Jones, 2008). Proponents of Islamic schools in the United States want their children to study and practice the fundamentals of Islam,

such as wearing appropriate clothes, eating *Halal* [Kosher] food, celebrating Islamic holidays, learning about the Islamic religion, and praying five times a day—all of which are generally not available in public schools (Haddad & Smith, 2009).

Muslim parents who send their children to Islamic schools believe that this helps them develop and maintain their Islamic identity (Cristillo, 2009; Haddad & Smith, 2009). In his comparative study about strategies of funding, choice, and control in Islamic schools in three democratic western countries (the United States, Belgium, and the Netherlands), Merry (2007) found that parents who send their children to Islamic schools give high priority to religious identity, with ethnicity coming second, and national identity third. In addition, Cristillo (2009) found that Islamic schools are viewed as an important cultural alternative to the perceived hegemony of White Anglo-Protestant culture prevalent in public schools. He said, “For many Muslim Americans today, the Islamic school represents an institutional firewall against the loss of religious identity by the wholesale assimilation of future generations of American Muslims” (p. 69).

According to the literature, three factors explain the increased demand for Islamic schools in American society. The first is the recent increased immigration of conservative Muslims (Jones, 2008) who care about preserving their Islamic identity through following the Islamic dress code, dietary restrictions, daily praying, and sending their children to Islamic schools in order to learn the Arabic language and to study Islamic morals (Haddad, 2000). These immigrants want their children to avoid peer pressure from their counterparts in public schools, and they worry about the difficulty of practicing Islam in a culture that does not care about the needs of conservative Muslims. According to Haddad and Smith (2009), “Many [Muslim] parents object to the teaching of sex education in mixed classes, or to having their girls forced to

participate in physical education or other activities in which they are not allowed to wear appropriate Islamic covering” (p. 8).

The second reason is the growing number of converts to Islam; according to Cesari (2004), more than a third of American Muslims are converts, and these converts want their children to learn the Arabic language as well as the basics of Islamic faith and teachings. Other parents think that Islam is not represented adequately or correctly in public school textbooks and that these texts perpetuate “old stereotypes forged out of centuries of imperialist western views of Islam” (Haddad & Smith, 2009, p. 9). A third reason for the increased demand for Islamic schools in the United States is related to the high socio-economic status of Muslim parents, who are able to pay several thousand dollars as tuition for private Islamic schooling (Merry & Driessen, 2005).

In the United States, however, the majority of Muslims do not send their children to Islamic schools (Haddad & Smith, 2009; Merry, 2007). Many of these parents worry that Islamic schools may isolate their children and prevent them from being integrated successfully into the larger society (Haddad & Lummis, 1987). The debate among Muslims in the United States about the purpose of Islamic schools:

carr[ies] special significance for how Muslims living in the West choose to carve out identities for themselves and their children that are true not only to their individual or collective faith, but also to the societies of which they are an integral part. (Merry, 2007, p. x)

The majority of Islamic schools are accredited by the states in which they are established, and they adopt other public school practices such as state standardized testing, learning targets, and nationally recognized textbooks. Obviously, state recognition is important for Islamic schools in

order to be eligible for state-funded programs and scholarships (Merry & Driessen, 2005). The majority of teachers in Islamic schools are Muslims, but it is common to find non-Muslim educators, given the short supply of certified Muslim teachers (Keyworth, 2009). These teachers are usually well-educated, many have a teaching certificate, and many have long experience teaching in American private or public schools. When non-Muslims are hired, they are expected to respect Islamic principles and cultural norms (Merry, 2007).

There is thus no agreement among Muslims in the United States about the necessity of Islamic schools and their potential of isolating or integrating Muslim students in the larger society. In addition, there is a debate among scholars about whether public schools support or deny Muslim students' needs and their right to nurture and practice their Islamic identity (Niyozov & Pluim, 2009). What is agreed upon in the literature is that Islamophobia is a growing phenomenon in American society, and it is manifested in different walks of American life (Esposito & Kalin, 2011). Islamophobia refers to "an irrational distrust, fear or rejection of the Muslim religion and those who are perceived as Muslims" (Driel, 2004, p. x).

Islamophobia, according to Esposito (2011), leads to the exclusion of Muslims from economic, social, and public life; discrimination in the blatant form of hate crimes and subtler forms of disparagement; the perception that the religion of Islam has no common values with the West, is inferior to the West [or to Judaism and Christianity], and that it really is a violent political ideology rather than a source of faith and spirituality. (p. xxiii)

Researchers agree that the phenomenon of Islamophobia has its roots in the historical relationship between the East and the West and the European colonial project of discovering and controlling the East (Esposito & Kalin, 2011; Rizvi, 2005; Said, 1997). In the U.S., Islamophobia

has been justified through the writings of scholars such as Huntington (1996), who talked about the clash between the civilization of Islam and the West. However, Rizvi (2005) criticized Huntington's theme and argued that it is a narrow-minded description and does not recognize the mutual and historical influences and exchanges between the East and West. In addition, he argued, "The problem with this thesis is that it casts the differences between the West and Islam as absolute and constructs them in terms of a range of metaphysical postulates rather than the political conflicts that produce them, through a range of material historical processes" (p. 174).

Generally speaking, and given the negative portrayal of Muslims and Islam in the media after the terror attack of September 11 (as terrorists, as religious fanatics, and the like) (Haddad, 2000; Noakes, 2000 Rizvi, 2005), one might be tempted to see Islamic schools as places where these narrow types of views and practices are reproduced. Put more bluntly, one might speculate that Islamic schools institute a citizenship education narrowly focused on character education and ethnic/religious particularism. Yet, as we have seen, the literature on Islamic schools complicates that view.

As evidenced in the literature review, the issue of unity and diversity in multicultural and democratic societies is often discussed from more of a philosophical and less of an empirical perspective. My own research aims to reveal the patterns of citizenship promoted in two Islamic schools, and does so by examining in particular how Muslim social studies teachers in these schools report or handle the dilemma of unity and diversity, how they conceive their role in the process of students' political socialization, and how they want their students to deal with the growing Islamophobia in the larger society.

As I mentioned earlier, the study in this chapter tries to explore the voices of Muslim teachers in Islamic schools because they are in the middle of mediating the expectations of the

school's Islamic community and the country's emphasis on civics education. In essence, this chapter explores minority teachers' understandings and practices of citizenship education in Islamic schools, where both Islamic and American identities are defined, shaped, and cultivated.

Research Methodology

Setting

Considering the atmosphere of “guilty until proven innocent” that developed in the United States after September 11 (Ba-Yunus & Kone, 2006, p. 6), I assumed that accessing Islamic schools might be a challenge for me, or for any other researcher who might be interested in citizenship education in these schools. Generally speaking, I found this to be the case. Two of my research participants said that they consulted their relatives and they decided to quit the research, and a third teacher told me that the principal of the school asked him to stop answering any more questions. Fortunately, this happened after the second interview and after getting enough data to complete this study. I think that, because of the sensitivity of this topic, some of my participants are still skeptical about my purpose for doing this study.

To overcome these obstacles and to gain access to the sites, I first contacted a friend in order to get initial information about community leaders who might support this study. My friend, who used to send his children to an Islamic school and to donate generously to the school, contacted one of the leaders in the Islamic community in one city, explained my research purposes, and then gave me the contact name of this person for further approval. For the purpose of accessing the second school, I sought to “snowball” from my first site, and therefore I contacted the principal directly and explained my research topic. The fact that this study would be conducted in another Islamic school had convinced the principal to do it in his school. In fact,

he said that he wanted to discuss the issue further with his staff, and later he allowed me to access his school and to contact the teachers.

After getting the principals' agreement, I visited the two schools for the first time in order to meet the potential research participants (teachers), and to explain my research purposes and procedures. In this meeting I also tried to develop a basic rapport with my research participants. I answered their questions, and I asked them to fill out consent letters. We then scheduled the date and time for the interviews in the school building.

It is worth noting that in my first conversation with teachers in one of the schools, I felt that some of them were excited to talk about their experiences of teaching social studies, and one teacher mentioned that it is very timely to share how he prepares his students to become good Muslim and American citizens. Others, however, seemed suspicious about my research interests and why I had decided to come to their school. In addition, not all teachers agreed to participate in this study; some of them said that they could not do it because of personal reasons, and others did not explain their decision. I believe that my being a Muslim, one who knows Islamic culture and its practices, and quite possibly also being a foreign student in the United States, helped me to establish basic trust with those teachers who did eventually agree to participate in my study. The process of building trust so as to ensure reliable data, however, was not simple.

Participants

My purposeful sample included four social studies teachers in two Islamic K-12 schools in Michigan, two males (David and Edward) and two females (Diana and Mona), each of whom volunteered to take part in this study (all names are pseudonyms). In one school two teachers were selected because they were the only social studies teachers in the school. In the other school, two from a total of three teachers agreed to participate after I presented the study to them.

All of the teachers are U.S. citizens, and they work full time in their schools. David, Edward, and Diana are American converts to Islam (David and Edward are African American, and Diana is European American); Diana converted to Islam 28 years ago, David 30 years ago, and Edward 15 years ago. Mona is a female from Syria; she arrived in the United States 28 years ago in order to live with her husband, who was a student in the United States. She received her teaching certificate in English literature from the University of Damascus in Syria, and then migrated to the United States. She has taught Arabic and Islamic studies in the school since 1991; the principal asked her three years ago to teach social studies, and particularly the geography of the Islamic world, because, as she noted, “the principal noticed that students lack the knowledge about Muslim people who live in other countries.”

Edward got his social studies teaching certificate after completing a series of professional development courses recommended by the school’s administration. He said that he was inspired to become a social studies teacher by an African American teacher he had as a secondary student. He has been teaching World History and American History for 19 years, and he works as the *Imam* (An Arabic word meaning a religious leader) for his school’s community. He decided to work in the Islamic school three years after he converted to Islam, and he argued that this has empowered his faith.

David got his teaching certificate in social studies from a university in Michigan. He previously taught social studies in U.S. public schools, in Germany, and in another Islamic school prior to teaching in his current Islamic school, all for a total of 17 years of social studies teaching experience. He has been teaching American and World History in his school for two years. He said, “I am glad to teach in this Islamic school even if they pay me less than public schools, because I am concentrating on teaching and less on solving students’ social problems.”

Diana has been teaching in Islamic schools for 20 years; she received her social sciences degree and Masters in counseling from a university in Virginia. She chose to work in Islamic schools because, “I am a Muslim and want my children to be educated in Islamic schools.” She is teaching all the high school social studies classes: U.S. Government, World History, and American History.

Data Collection

In this multiple case study I conducted two in-depth interviews with each teacher in a private room at the teachers’ schools. In the first interview, which lasted one hour, I asked teachers about their perceptions and understandings of citizenship education and of being a good citizen. The second interview was conducted after the initial analysis of the data collected in the first interview. The second interview lasted one hour; it was less structured and highly individualized as I tried to understand how teachers achieve their citizenship goals in terms of pedagogy and instructional methods. For example, in this interview, using what I had learned in the first interview as a foundation, I tried to understand why teachers chose to put some pictures and posters in their classrooms, and how these materials represent their own understandings of citizenship and preparing Muslim students to become good citizens. All the interviews were audio-taped and transcribed for further analysis.

Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study was based on an inductive and thematic approach: “Inductive reasoning moves from the particular to the general, from a set of specific observations [interviews in this study] to the discovery of a pattern that represents some degree of order among all the given events” (Babbie, 2004, p. 24). First, I reviewed the whole data set in order to get some sense of the scope of participants’ responses. Second, I read each transcript carefully,

and I wrote some comments and keywords about the attitude of participants toward different concepts, such as Islam, citizenship, identity, the school's curriculum, and other issues related to my research questions. Third, I compared and contrasted the different responses, which helped me to develop new questions for further investigation (the second interview with all teachers) in order to deepen my understanding of their responses. Fourth, I reviewed the whole data set once again for similarities and differences among respondents on repeated and similar topics. Finally, I identified three major themes from the data: Islamophobia and teaching for American identity, education for moral absolutism versus moral pluralism, and a conflict between national and transnational identity. Readers might notice that Mona's voice in this study is not as strong in comparison to those of other teachers. I believe this is because she was not certified to teach social studies, and she had been teaching World History (with a focus on Islamic countries) for only three years. In what follows, I present and discuss these themes in a format so that the reader can gain insight into the lived struggles of these teachers as they attempt to balance teaching for and with various types of cultural and civic identities and practices.

Findings and Discussion

Islamophobia and Teaching for American Identity

The four teachers in this study recognized the challenge of teaching their students to be Muslims and at the same time to be proud of their country. The analysis of the interviews showed that these teachers tried to develop their students' sense of national identity by rereading American history, and by highlighting the Islamic roots of some historical events and American leaders. Given the increased Islamophobia in the American context, propaganda against Islam by some Jewish-Christian institutions (Ba-Yunus & Kone, 2006), and a series of attacks on mosques and Islamic institutions (Haddad, 2000), the teachers agreed that it is important to educate

students so that they are able to defend Islam intellectually. David said: “On September 11, Islam was hijacked by extreme Muslims and this distorted the real face of Islam.” He added that if Muslims are to change the distorted face of Islam in the United States after September 11, they need to learn about the history of Islam and the contribution of Muslims to U.S. history.

David felt strongly that social studies textbooks do not include the contributions of Islamic heritage and Muslim scholars to American history, Western civilization, and the world. He fills this gap in his teaching of American history by bringing in examples of American Muslim leaders such as Malcolm X, and American-Islamic institutions such as the Nation of Islam. He explains that many Americans consider Malcolm X a controversial figure in American history, and as a person who did not align himself with “American values.” This might be correct, David argued, if we consider the first half of his life, but “when he converted to Islam, and particularly after his pilgrimage to Mecca, he became a very positive leader, and tried to unify both White and Black Americans in the name of Islam.”

This example shows the significance of including the narrative of minority students in the mainstream curriculum because this gives them voice and allows them to identify with the collective history of their country. According to Banks (2007), “Teachers can help students to acquire new perspectives on the development of American history and society by reforming the curriculum with the use of paradigms, perspectives, and points of view” of other ethnic and minority groups. Banks (2007) called that “transformative academic knowledge” (p.87). I think that challenging the Eurocentric nature of the social studies curriculum should not be limited to Islamic schools but should include the public schools as well. This, I believe, has the potential of bridging the gap and the dichotomy between East and West (Burney, 2012) as it is produced by Oriental discourses in American society.

In another case, David described the challenge of answering his confused students about the negative representations of Arabs and Muslims in the mass media. He explained that he does not have definitive answers for his students, and in order to reduce the confusion regarding their Islamic and American identity, he shares with them his own reflections on the history of African American citizens in the United States, in order to predict the future of Islam in this country. In other words, he teaches them that what happened to African American people in the past with respect to negative labeling in public life and the media is happening right now to Muslim Americans. He said he explains to his students:

The United States since the very beginning seems like always to have the good and the bad guys. In the past, the Indians, the Chinese, the Japanese, the African American, and the Jews were the bad guys, and now Muslims are the bad guys.

David, however, encourages his students to be optimistic, and he brings to the class his own personal experience as an American in the United States:

When I was a kid, the idea of a Black man to be a president of the United States was laughable. It was unbelievable. I tell my students all the time that one day we will have a Muslim president. I tell them that one of Barak Obama's advisors is a Muslim woman.

In addition, he argues that over time Muslims will contribute more to life in the United States, and as people come into more contact with Muslims, they will see the real face of Islam.

Diana and Edward suggest a practical perspective on how to prepare their Muslim students to face increased Islamophobia in American society and to negotiate their Islamic and American identities. For example, they think that in order for their students to succeed in American life, they need not only to get a good education and to succeed in school, but also to

develop their own confidence, communication, and cooperation skills. This means that supporting the subaltern or the Other in American society requires not only allowing students to speak in the school setting but also to produce the conditions of power or the skills that they can use to be empowered in the future.

In emphasizing the importance of building Muslim students' confidence, Edward described the lack of confidence among Muslim girls who stop wearing the *Hijab* [headscarf] in order to become "accepted" in American society. He mentioned that he has often managed debates and public speech workshops in the school in order to help his students face possible cases of racism and discrimination in their lives. Expecting Muslim girls not to wear the Hijab in order to "fit in" the American culture is not only an indicator of Orientalism (which views the headscarf as an act of oppression against women) and how it seeps into the social and public spheres of American society, but also an act of epistemic violence (Spivak, 1994). This means imposing the western system of knowledge or the Eurocentric "gaze" on the subalterns and ignoring their epistemology- the way they want to live their lives, perform their religion, and construct their subjectivities.

Diana and Edward also agreed that Muslim students need to develop their communication skills in order to correct misconceptions about Islam among non-Muslims, to explain their religion to the public, and to know how to protect themselves in case somebody attacks their Islamic identity. Diana agreed with Edward's argument that girls fall under greater pressure to give up their Islamic practices in order to fit into life in American society.

Edward and Diana's beliefs tend to align with the participatory citizenship camp as identified by Westheimer and Kahne (2004). They talk about encouraging students to cooperate with Muslims and non-Muslims, and to contribute to the common good of the larger society. For

example, Diana said that she encourages her students to become active in their communities (volunteering and participating in community service), and to believe that they can make a difference in their country.

She mentioned that some of her students expressed their opinions in a local newspaper, and others wrote letters to their congressional representatives. For instance, students sent letters to President Barack Obama about issues that were important to them, such as lower tuition for college, better schools, and better ways to help the less fortunate. Diana added, “I am actually very proud of my kids every year. They always want to solve real issues and write about important things, not childish things.”

She explained that she teaches her students that participating in democracy is the main difference between life in democratic and non-democratic countries, and that “if you limit your participation to voting, this is an unwise decision. There are so many different ways of participation, like writing a petition, lobbying, signing petition, writing bills, writing letters and to arranging a rally.” In this regard, Edward said that Muslims do not sufficiently participate in different walks of American culture, such as the media and the film industry. He mentioned the contributions of the Hollywood Muslim director Mustafa Al-Akkad and his “Killer Halloween” movies, and then added “imagine that we have a Muslim Steven Spielberg.”

It seems that social studies teachers in Islamic schools believe in American democracy and that challenging stereotypical understandings or bad representations of Islam requires Muslims to work harder and to be engaged further in American life. At the same time, teachers view schooling as the springboard where students learn about their rights, and how to be involved successfully in civilian and political life.

Mona believes that educating Muslim students to become good citizens means to help them understand the meaning of rights and duties. She said that students “need not only to take, but also to give to others.” She added, “I do not think that our school isolates students from the life in the larger society. In fact, we have many graduates who become successful doctors and engineers in their lives.” Mona also mentioned that she teaches her students about the importance of treating non-Muslims as equal human beings and respecting the laws of their own country.

Mona, who teaches the youngest students in the school, argued that she did not discuss many citizenship issues with her students because they are very young (10-12 years old) and because she focuses on world and not American history. She said, “[Students] do not have the real feeling of loyalty to the U.S. For example, they recognize themselves as Americans, but they do not yet understand the meaning of having rights as American citizens.”

In short, social studies teachers in this study recognize that the American sociopolitical context is antagonistic toward Islam. They want their Muslim students to be informed about the historical continuations of Islam in the United States, and to develop the skills that enable them confidently to protect their Islamic identity. This finding shows the challenge of education for unity and diversity in Islamic schools, and the significance of bridging the personal (religious) and the political (civic) in citizenship education for Muslim students. Apparently Muslim students, as described by teachers, have a double responsibility of not only being good Muslims, but also working as citizens against the increased Islamophobia in the larger society.

From postcolonial and multicultural perspectives, social studies teachers in this theme try to empower students by bringing their voices from the margins of American history and cultural production to the mainstream curriculum. They do that through a critical reading of the American history, highlighting the contribution of Islam to the American narrative, the use of

their personal histories to instill a hope for change in their students, and to educate their students for critical and active citizenship education.

It is worth noting that although the teachers agreed on the significance of participatory citizenship (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004), and that Muslim students need to contribute to the common good in the larger society, a further analysis shows that they have two different views of Islamic education and how it fits their conception of democratic citizenship. This is discussed in the next section.

Education for Moral Absolutism versus Moral Pluralism

All four teachers in this study share the idea that Islamic schools provide the right environment for American Muslims to learn about Islamic morals and codes of behaviors. For instance, Diana said that she decided to teach in an Islamic school because she wanted her children to be educated based on Islamic morals. Also, Edward argued that “after converting to Islam I found that working in Islamic schools is a great place to learn more about Islam and to become a good believer.”

The idea of Islamic morality can be observed in the two schools’ cultures and practices. For example, I noticed that boys and girls sit on different sides of the classroom. I view this as an innovative approach to designing the classroom because I know that some Islamic societies have separate schools for boys and girls, and others prefer mixed schools. I am not sure if this design reflects a new interpretation of Islamic education in the United States, or a convenient arrangement that fits the number of students enrolled in these schools. All students wear a school uniform, and the vast majority of girls wear a headscarf. In addition, both schools offer *Halal* [kosher] food, and there is a specific time in each school’s schedule for praying in the mosque.

Edward and Diana represent two different conceptions of morality as the basis for character education and teaching for citizenship. Edward expressed a conservative attitude, which can be described as moral absoluteness (Smagorinsky & Taxel, 2005), and Diana represented the idea of moral pluralism. In other words, Edward believes that Islamic morals are *the right* values, and therefore Muslims students need to adopt Islamic values and to act upon them in their personal, social, and political life, while Diana seems more inclined to a type of ethical thinking that transcends any particular religious tradition. I shall consider each of these approaches in turn.

Moral absolutism. According to Edward, the idea of morality transcends the usual Islamic practices; he talks about Islamic values as a starting point for understanding and evaluating American culture and its politics. That is, he views Islam as a holistic religion, and Islamic thinking, according to his view, is relevant to all fields of life. He explained, “As you know, the Qura’an is not only for Arabs or Muslims; it is supposed to guide all human beings.” He continued by describing how Islamic morals give solutions to controversial issues such as abortion and gay marriage. In addition, he reported that during his teaching he brings out many examples from the Prophet Muhammad’s life in order to teach his students how Muslims behave in different situations.

In another case, Edward said that he does not want students to vote for Muslim candidates just because they are Muslims. Instead he wants students to examine the candidates’ views in many fields and how they fit Islamic teachings and morals. He says that it does not make sense that students vote for candidates who advocate abortion or gay marriage, or who support Turkey’s model of Islam, because these contradict Islamic morality and values (is there only one form of Islamic morality and values? I believe the past and present in the Middle East

demonstrate quite the opposite, even when assuming a “conservative” view). Edward wants his students, and American Muslims more generally, to believe that Islamic ideals and morals fit all kinds of peoples and societies and this is because the prophet Muhammad was the last messenger of God and he intended to guide all human beings and not only Muslims. In this regard he argues “the verse, ‘Wama arsalnaka illa rahmatan lilAAalameena’ in the *Qura’an* explains that Muhammad, is the prophet for all human beings and not only for Muslims.” There is a difference between advocating that Muslims should apply Islamic morality in all areas of life to saying that Islamic morality should be for all people. He believes that the *Qura’an* and the Prophet Muhammad’s instructions are good not only for Muslims, but they are relevant to all human beings.

I believe that Muslims in a democratic country can believe that their values are better in solving social problems in their society but this needs to be followed by understanding why these values are superior to other values in society, and to agree to put them under the serenity of democratic deliberation. That is, there is a difference between thinking about religion from a paternalistic perspective and between advocating the religious ideals and sharing them for reflection and public examination. By the same token, One might wonder if Edward’s view of Islamic character as based on moral absoluteness is appropriate for preparing Muslim students for life in America’s multicultural and multi-faith society.

In addition, I think that dogmatic religious education may not allow for diversity within the same religion and this may lead to oppression against people who are less represented in the mainstream religion or those who hold a different interpretation of the religious text. According to Feinberg (2006), this kind of religious education has the potential of promoting illiberal values

“toward other groups, toward socially and politically weaker members of their own group (e.g., women and homosexuals), or toward democracy” (p. 171).

I argue that living in the United States requires students to recognize, respect, and tolerate other conceptions of morality, ones that may not necessarily fit the Islamic faith or its ethical principles. Other scholars may criticize Edward’s conception of morality by arguing that it represents an act of indoctrination and educating students for a narrow understanding of morality (Kohlberg, 1981), and this may prevent Muslim students from developing their deliberative skills or moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1981; Lockwood, 2009), both of which are crucial for life in democratic and diverse society (Gutmann, 1999; Parker, 2003).

I think that Islamic schools and perhaps other frameworks of faith-based education in the U.S. have the right to teach their own doctrine and core values, but this should not be done in a dogmatic way. This is true if we assume that Islam, like other religions, tries to adapt to the social changes in contemporary life and is a universal religion that tries to appeal to people from various cultures and backgrounds. In addition, Islamic religion scholars might have different interpretations of the same texts or Islamic laws (*Sharia*), and therefore it is important to let students practice moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1981; Lockwood, 2009) and critical thinking about religious issues so that they become more informed and make better choices in their lives.

The limitations of moral absoluteness are illustrated in David’s interview. He mentioned that sometimes he does not know how to answer students’ questions about moral issues, and he does not want to give his students answers that might contradict what their parents believe or tell them. For example, he described how one day students asked him if listening to music is acceptable, or *Haram* [prohibited], according to Islamic teachings. David said, “Personally, I don’t believe music is *Haram* and, you know, I myself enjoy playing some instruments, but I

cannot share this opinion with my students because this might get some parents angry.” As a Muslim I can tell that listening to music is controversial among Muslim scholars, where some prohibit it, and others support it with some limitations.

The idea of moral absoluteness, I believe, is limited, not only in preparing students for life in American society, but also in letting students have a critical understanding of their own Islamic values and principles. Lockwood (2009) criticized this conservative view of character education because it is based on transmitting a “bag of virtues” to students, and it does not recognize that the values might have different meanings in different contexts, and that they might, in some circumstances, conflict with each other.

Moral pluralism. Unlike Edward’s understanding of character education, Diana has a critical and flexible viewpoint on how to prepare students for life in America’s multicultural society. Diana is flexible because she recognizes that Islamic moral principles are not the only legitimate standards for judging the rightness of American social and cultural practices. She argued that her students need to recognize and be able to communicate with Americans who share different morals or ethical systems. Diana said,

I teach them that because you are a Muslim, does not mean that you are better than anybody else. You may value the Islamic religion but this does not make you better than anybody else. Because a person does not believe the way you believe does not mean that you need to treat them less or to treat them with disrespect; God is the judge, not you.

In addition, Diana argued that there is no one understanding of Islamic texts. She wants her students to think critically, and to examine the different interpretations of Islamic teachings in order to develop their own understanding of Islamic values, and how to act upon them. Diana

told me about an incident that she had with the principal of the school when she decided to teach the story *Frankenstein*. She said, “I had a disagreement with the principal who believed that this novel, because of the creating story, is against the Islamic teachings. I did not give up and I convinced parents that this is a good story for their kids to know.”

This example shows that critical thinking and teaching for morality can be debatable within Islamic schools as well. Social studies teachers in Islamic schools face the dilemma of developing students’ religious morality, and at the same time to become critical citizens. This shows that the divide between the private and the public, and between the moral and the civic as it portrayed in the literature, does not hold in real life. Deliberative skills that students acquire in their education for democracy can be used to evaluate religious interpretations, and religious morals can be also used to evaluate civic and cultural practices. Diana’s view of character education promotes the recognition of moral pluralism in American society, and this might be much more appropriate for preparing Muslim students for an informed and tolerant life in the future.

David and Mona also appeared to represent the approach of moral pluralism in their teaching of social studies. David mentioned he believes that there is no one interpretation of Islamic teachings, and that Islam is a universal and flexible religion that adapts to different contexts and different cultures, including American culture. In another situation, he mentioned that he teaches his students about the importance of respecting other religions, something which is embedded in the core values of American democracy. Mona also said that she wants her students to recognize the diversity of religions in the world, and that many Islamic countries in

the world respect the rights of religious minorities (to practice their religions, to have their own leaders and holy places, and to participate in the public life)²..

The analysis above shows that social studies teachers in Islamic schools have different views on how to teach for Islamic identity, and how to fit religious morals to their understanding of citizenship and preparing students for life in America's multicultural society. Promoting the idea of moral pluralism and exposing students to other ethical principles might be appropriate in developing Muslims' democratic character, but it may not prevent social studies teachers from a possible confrontation with parents and community members who have a different understanding of morality.

This finding highlights that citizenship education in Islamic schools (and perhaps other religious schools) cannot be separated from a discussion of moral issues, and of the place of religion in evaluating and discussing social and political issues. Perhaps scholars need to rethink and reconsider the empirical separation between religious and citizenship education, or between religion and public life, and to further their investigation of the moral roots of students' political socialization and teachers' citizenship practices.

A Conflict between National and Transnational Identity

Diana, David, and Mona reported another dilemma they faced when they taught World History class. It is about how to help students manage and negotiate their multiple identities, and particularly their American and transnational Islamic identities. For example, David reported that he wants his students to know about the contributions of Islam to American history, but also to Western civilization and to the world. David referred to one poster in his classroom that says,

² I am not sure if Mona's statement is still realistic considering the recent Arab uprisings in the Middle East which show the lack of tolerance and lot of hatred crimes against non-Muslims in these countries and even between diverse Islamic groups.

“How did Islam contribute to the world?” This poster explains the contributions of Muslim scholars, from the rise of Islam in Spain to the Renaissance in Europe.

What David tries to challenge by this poster is the Orientalist theme of the clash between Islam and the West, which I described earlier in this chapter. A deeper analysis of history shows that the distinction between East and West, us and them, in the western literature is a result of the political construction of difference. However,

It is important to remember that, during the Middle Ages, the Judeo-Christian West borrowed heavily and learned a great deal from Muslims, both in the appreciation of arts and the humanities as well as in scientific and technological innovation, just as Muslims had done earlier from Athens and Rome (Rizvi, 2005, p. 175).

In addition, Mona described how she and the principal in the school decided to replace the regular World History textbook with another one that focused on life and cultures in different Islamic countries. She said that she teaches about geography, population, official language, religion, and ethnic groups in these countries. She added, “This topic is important because American students usually do not know anything about life outside of the U.S.”

Mona’s and David’s instructional efforts reflect Islamic schools’ intentions to develop students’ sense of being part of a global and imagined Islamic community. They want students to see the contribution of Islam to other human beings beyond the borders of the United States. However, given the fact that many students’ parents emigrated from Islamic and Middle Eastern countries, some students, David reported, hear a lot of critiques from their parents of the United States, and its intervention in these countries. This increases Muslim students’ confusion and they come to the school with hard questions about American foreign policy.

David added that his students watch the news on television, and they wonder about U.S. policies in these countries. They come to class with questions about American military intervention: “What is the purpose of having American soldiers in Iraq? Why did the U.S send more troops to Afghanistan?” He concluded that some students have developed a kind of love-hate relationship with the United States. On the one hand, they identify themselves as Americans; on the other hand, they have their own loyalties to their parents’ countries.

This dilemma represents the challenge of education for citizenship in particular transnational immigrant communities. Education for a transnational Islamic identity may conflict with teachers’ efforts to educate for an American national identity. The increased intervention of the U.S. government in Islamic countries after September 11, and the fact that the majority of Muslim students’ parents emigrated from these countries, makes teaching for American identity particularly difficult. According to Tindongan (2011), “The cultural and religious identities that Muslims [parents] carry with them from their ancestral homes tie them to their homelands” (p.74). Therefore, Muslim students may feel that being an American citizen contradicts their loyalty to their parents’ transnational and Islamic identity.

This dilemma indicates that many people who live in western countries today are postcolonial subjects who feel a strong commitment and love towards their countries of birth and at the same time an objection to their host countries’ imperial agendas. This kind of postcoloniality becomes more ambiguous when immigrant parents transmit their feelings to the next generation of Muslim students who love the democracy of their host country, but hate its global injustice.

From an educational perspective, this kind of postcoloniality gives Muslim students an advantage in terms of being able to debunk how processes of Othering against Muslims at the

global level are produced and reproduced in their own country at the social and political levels. I assume that very few social studies teachers in public schools in the U.S. will have the knowledge or courage to discuss these issues with their students because they may challenge the hegemonic discourse and the public and political push towards national pride and patriotism after September 11.

In this regard, Diana shared the struggle on how to help Muslim students manage their sometimes-conflicted American and transnational identities. She has relied on her understanding of democracy and the significance of deliberation in democratic societies in order to legitimize students' thoughts and their disagreement with American international policies. She reported that she taught her students that not all Americans support the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan, and that it is fine to disagree with American foreign policy about the Middle East, or American military intervention in other countries.

In addition, she wants her students to know that there is no one policy that is right or wrong, and that people in the United States may come to similar conclusions based on different lines of reasoning, or have different conclusions on the same topic: "I tell [students] how boring will be the world if we see things the same way. It is okay to be different."

Furthermore, Diana explained that she wants her students to believe in American democracy and its judicial system, and to recognize the advantages of living in the United States compared to other non-democratic countries. For instance, she reported that when students complain about things, "I teach them, 'yes, we have a lot of problems; our government is not perfect, but compared to other places, our system is quite good.'"

Diana added that she wants her students to believe that, as American citizens, they have the power to change things they do not like. For instance, she said she explains to her students:

In the U.S we can fight against the decisions of the government by different ways, you know, it may take a long time, but as citizens we have the option to change things. You can protest and not [be] afraid [of] somebody gunning you down or of being arrested or of being disappeared.

The dilemmas that the social studies teachers in this study face underscore the role of family, media, and the sociopolitical and global contexts in education for democratic citizenship. The tensions between the national and transnational, the religious and the civic, are all contested components that Muslim students face in cultivating their personal and political identities.

Conclusions

The study in this chapter shows that teaching for citizenship in schools is context-based, and it is influenced by the sociopolitical conditions of the country at the local and the international levels. Teachers in this chapter agree that developing students' Islamic identity is one of the major missions of Islamic schools in the United States. But this mission is not easy, considering the increased Islamophobia in American society after September 11, 2001, and the fact that social studies textbooks do not provide an adequate representation of Muslims and their contribution to American history and the world. These social studies teachers believe that educating Muslim students for American citizenship means that they need to be knowledgeable about their religion, know how to defend it, and communicate effectively and positively with non-Muslims who either fear or misunderstand Islam.

David brought his own story of subalternity as an African-American living during the segregation period in American history, and his hope for change to come true. He in fact teaches them that the discourses of Othering are not static, because they reflect the dynamics of power/knowledge and how they function within different moments of American history. I

believe that this is a good strategy through which teachers and students in public schools can learn the discourses of Orientalism, eurocentrism, and ethnocentrism, and how they function within schools, the popular culture, and the larger society.

This kind of education, I argue, has the potential of empowering minority students, letting students from dominant groups unlearn their privilege (Spivak, 1994), see how the production of knowledge (in school, politics, culture, and media) reflects the power relationship between interest groups, and understand how it perpetuates injustice at the social and global levels. For instance, students need to be able to deconstruct or investigate how the emphasis on patriotism and national security in the American context overlap with discourses of Orientalism, and how this may lead to further silencing of the Other (Muslims in the U.S.) or other citizens who seek more justice in the world.

In addition, the four teachers in this study face the challenge of educating their students for Islamic identity, and at the same time living in a multicultural and multi-religious society. The teachers, in fact, expressed two lines of thinking. The conservative line expects students to examine the social and political aspects of American culture only from an Islamic perspective. This line of thinking represents moral absolutism, a strong belief in the superiority and the rightness of Islamic morals, and their potential to fix social problems and to contribute to the welfare of all citizens.

However, moral absolutism might not be appropriate for developing students' democratic character, as this may lead to what Parker (2003) called the reification of group identity. This means that "the more naturalized the group [and Islamic] identity, the more likely are its members ... to mistake their particularity for a universal norm, and the less apt they may be to negotiate or modify some of their customs for the sake of the larger public" (p. 28).

Indeed, in a liberal and pluralist democracy, religious schools need to educate students for tolerating and respecting other groups and “voluntary associations that are based on religion, ethnicity, gender, language, race, sexual orientation ...[and] interests of all sorts” (Parker, 2003, p. 26).

The second way of thinking underscores the concept of moral pluralism and the view that Islam is not the only legitimate ethical system in the United States, because democracy allows heterogeneous groups to celebrate their differences and to have their own moral systems. Like other scholars (Banks, 2007; Torres, 1998), I argue that this line of thinking is more appropriate for preparing Muslim citizens in the United States, because it allows them to preserve their particular identities and at the same time to recognize the significance of religious and cultural pluralism in American society.

The results of this study evoke further questions about the politics of morality and its place in the process of political socialization within schools. The study encourages us to question the divide between the moral and the political in teaching for citizenship in the academic literature. It seems that there is an overlap between teaching for character and citizenship education in Islamic schools, and this might be relevant to non-religious schools as well. For example, I believe that moral reasoning should be added to students’ repertoire of citizenship skills because it aims to:

Foster rich understanding and assessments of value-related issues in human interaction, to appreciate and recognize the critical importance of morality, and to promote autonomous virtuous behavior consistent with sound ethical principles.
(Lockwood, 2009, p. 70)

Practicing moral reasoning in social studies classes is important because it encourages students to examine how their ethical principles work and perhaps compete with other models of morality. I also believe that the idea of moral reasoning in social studies classes in public schools has the potential of legitimizing students' different religious identities and at the same time reducing the possible tension between the private and the public in the political sphere and in understanding citizenship in pluralist societies. As I show later in the Chapter Three, recognizing students' religious identities and their moral reasoning is important if schools want to appreciate students' funds of knowledge and to support their academic and social development.

The tension between diversity and unity in teaching social studies becomes more intense in Islamic and maybe other religious schools, because social studies teachers are expected to meet the parents' and the community's expectations in terms of transmitting Islamic culture and teachings. At the same time, teachers are required to teach for a democratic citizenship which recognizes the diversity of ethical systems, and is based on critical reasoning, pluralism, and multiculturalism.

Also, this chapter shows the challenges teachers face in educating for American and Islamic transnational identities. Dealing with American foreign policy in the Middle East and other Islamic countries is another burden that social studies teachers in Islamic schools need to cope with. As explained by Tindongan (2011), "Applying a transnational orientation to the educational lives of Muslim students seems apt because they, or their parents, experience trans-societal or trans-organizational realities based on their movement from homeland to the United States" (p.74).

As described by one teacher, American foreign policy is a controversial topic in American society, but this can be a good opportunity for social studies teachers to discuss the

complexity of life in democratic countries such as the United States, the advantages and limits of democracy, and the power of citizens to promote change in governmental policies. Hess (2009) argued, in this regard, that discussing controversial issues in the classroom makes social studies teaching more authentic, related to real life, and engaging; it develops students' reasoning and deliberation skills, and it helps them to express their intellectual and political freedom and to appreciate ideological diversity.

With regards to the discourses of citizenship education, the findings of this chapter show that education for citizenship in Islamic schools can be located within three discourses of citizenship. These are the republican, the cultural, and the transnational (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006). The first and the second themes show the possible tension between the republican and the cultural discourses of citizenship because all teachers see themselves committed to preparing their students for informed and active life in their society, and to contributing to the common good and welfare of all Americans, and at the same time to developing their own religious and cultural identities. According to Rosaldo and Flores (1997), "Cultural citizenship refers to the right to be different (in terms of race, ethnicity, native language, or religion) with respect to the norms of the dominant national community, without compromising one's right to belong in the sense of participating in the nation-state's democratic processes" (p. 57).

In addition, the third theme clarifies a tension between the republican and the transitional discourses of citizenship in Islamic schools. According to Abowitz and Harnish (2006), a citizen in the transnational discourse "is one who identifies not primarily or solely with her own nation but also with communities of people and nations beyond the nation-state boundaries" (p. 675). In this chapter, students' Islamic identity and their identification with the postcolonial conditions

of their parents encourage them, as citizens, to question and to criticize American foreign policies and its consequences for the life of other Muslims in the Middle East.

In short, this chapter shows the power of ideology in schools, and that citizenship education can be driven not only by economical or political desires (Apple, 1990), but also by moral and religious ones. Students in both religious and public schools need to learn how discourses of Othering are produced in American history, how they exclude peoples of color and minorities, and how they support the imperial agenda of the U.S. across the world.

Preparing minority students to live in multicultural, multi-faith, and democratic societies such as the United States requires teachers to recognize the influence of multiple political agents (family, school, community, and the media) on students' experiences and their lives. They need to help them manage and negotiate their multiple and contested identities at the local, national, and international levels.

Concepts of Othering, cultural citizenship, and Orientalism are not unique to the U.S. They can help us understand issues of citizenship, identity, and agency in other western countries. The following chapter describes how Muslim students cultivate their identities in their transitions from Islamic to public schools and how they develop their hybrid space of identity negotiation, resistance, and representation.

CHAPTER THREE

The Educational Experiences of Muslim Students in Their Transition from Islamic to Public Schools

In the second chapter of this dissertation I showed the dilemmas that Muslim teachers face in the education of Muslim students in Islamic schools in the U.S. and how they confront the Oriental discourses of Islamophobia in American society. In this chapter I focus on the voices and educational experiences of Muslim students in one city in the U.S., and in particular, their transition from an elementary Islamic to a public high school.

In this study I want to learn about the stories of Muslim students and their struggles, conflicts, and accomplishments while they transition from an Islamic to a public school. I want to explore how this experience and their interaction with their peers, teachers, and family shape their Islamic and American identities. This study assumes that identities are socially constructed and that they are influenced by multiple discourses within different times and places. According to Hall (1994),

Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural [and religious] practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a “production” which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation. (p. 392)

This means that human beings are active actors who develop, negotiate, and interpret their identities based on their life experiences and the different discourses and contexts they are exposed to. As I mentioned earlier in the introduction of this dissertation I am using Foucault’s theory of power/knowledge because I am investigating the experiences of Muslim students who

make the transition from Islamic to public schools and these schools represent different discourses, values, and ideals. Discourse is defined by Foucault (1980a) as a system of power/knowledge with discursive and non-discursive practices which define what is normal and acceptable in society in a given moment of history and which help to shape people's lives and subjectivities.

Following Hall's (1994) analysis about the flexibility and the unfixed nature of identities, and because I am exploring the change Muslim students experienced in their transition from Islamic to public school I found Bhabha's (1994) theory of hybridity very helpful in understanding and analyzing how Muslim students view and understand this educational transition and how they narrate the development of their own identities. The use of Foucault's and Bhabha's theories assumes that identities:

are both imposed and self-made, produced through the interplay of names and social roles foisted on us by dominant narratives together with the particular choices families, communities, and individuals make over how to interpret, and resist, those impositions as well as how to grapple with their real historical experiences. (Alcoff, 2003, p. 3)

I argue that Muslim students' transitioning from Islamic to public schools challenges the way they perceive their religiosity, and discourses of Orientalism and Othering in the larger society. Muslim students who make the transition from Islamic to public schools, I assume, experience a process of "othering" (Burney, 2012), through which they develop hybrid identities and a third space of articulation, which encompasses elements of both Islamic and American cultures. The idea of third space which was developed by Bhabha in his description of the encounter between the British colonizer and Indian people is very appropriate idea in this study because the

encounter between Islamic and public education produces an alternative space where Muslim students develop their own strategies of resistance and adaptation in order to develop their own hybrid identities.

This process of continuity and change in Muslim students' identities, which happens when they move from Islamic to public school, is not easy. This is because of the growing Islamophobia among non-Muslim Americans who misunderstand or do not know much about Islam. Islamophobia is viewed not only as a result of the terror attack on September 11, but also as a result of the discursive practices and patterns of knowledge through which Muslims and Arabs are viewed as the Other who is not civilized, is undeveloped, and is barbaric. The conception of Muslims as the Other contributes to the self-definition of the West, and this leads to the subjugation, oppression, and deprivation of Muslims' identities and their voice (Burney, 2012; Said, 1978).

I argue in this study that our understanding of the Oriental discourse in western countries should not be limited to political, academic, or cultural production; it also needs to encompass practices within public schools and within educational systems as well. Studies, in general, discussed the role of schools in marginalizing minority students on the basis of socioeconomic class (Anyon, 1980; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Willis, 1981), gender (Botkin, Jones, & Kachwaha, 2007), race (Delpit, 1988; Solomon, 1992), language (Valdes, 1998) and ethnicity (Valenzuela, 1999). However, these studies adopted a neo-Marxist stance which is not appropriate to investigate the development of religious identities. Perhaps I can argue that unlike the categories mentioned above, religion, in the context of the U.S., is less fixed and it is open for people's negotiation, interpretation, and choice. Therefore, the lack of religion in public schools, or the encounter between students from different religious backgrounds has the potential to either

oppress or liberate students who come from religious schools, depending on how they interpret and view themselves within the power relationships of their schooling. This study focuses on the storied experiences of four Muslim students in the Midwest and how they describe, negotiate, and compromise the formation of their hybrid Islamic and American identities.

Personally, my own transition as an Arab and Muslim from Israel to the U.S., and in working with social studies interns in American schools, has opened my eyes about the Oriental discourse in the larger society, and how it is reproduced within public schools. At the same time, my own twists between the East and the West and between religiosity and secularism have helped me to develop a sense of critical religiosity through which I have become more critical in understanding my own Islamic identity, and in questioning seriously the possible contribution of Islam to life in democratic and multicultural societies.

Review of the Literature

Islamophobia and the Status of Muslims in the U.S.

Islam is a fast growing religion in the United States. This is because of the high birth rate among Muslim families, the increased number of converts, and the continuity of Muslim immigration to this country (Haddad & Lummis, 1987). It is important to know that Muslims in the U.S. and across the world may belong to different social, cultural, language, and ethnic groups (Clark, 2003). In addition, “Muslim immigrants in the United States are very diverse in terms of their educational levels, occupations, socio-economic backgrounds as well as geographical origins” (Callaway, 2010, p. 218).

A further review of the literature shows that Muslims in the U.S. are a misrepresented minority group (Callaway, 2010). It is estimated that there are three to six million Muslims who live in the United States, mostly in urban areas of the East and West coasts, the Midwest, and

parts of the south, such as Texas and Florida (Haddad, 1991; Haque, 2004). Given the increased Islamophobia in American society (Esposito, 2010), many Muslims in this country feel that they need to justify and explain their religious practices and perhaps their loyalty to the United States (Ba-Yunus & Kone, 2006). Islamophobia is defined by Driel (2004) as “irrational distrust, fear or rejection of the Muslim religion and those who are (perceived as) Muslims” (p. x). From Foucauldian and postcolonial perspectives, Islamophobia can be viewed as an Orientalist discourse that is produced by the media (Noakes, 2000), academia (Said, 1978), cinema (Shaheen, 2001) and other cultural/political mediums.

Historically, the idea of Othering and discrimination on the basis of religion happened not only against Muslims but also within Christianity and against other minority groups such Native-American Indians (heathens), African Americans, Asians (Buddhist, Hindu, and Confucian Japanese), Jews, Arabs, and Catholics. For instance, “The religious sanctioning of military, racial, and cultural domination enabled devout colonists to perceive divine purposes behind their appropriation of Native American lands, villages, and farmlands by conflating religion (Christian versus barbarous and heathen) with civilization (civilized versus primitive and savage), and both with race” (Adams and Joshi, 2007, p. 257). Adams and Joshi added that “Colonial American history has many examples of religious persecution in the name of Protestant sectarianism: the persecution of Quakers in Plymouth Colony, the tradition of anti-Catholicism and the exclusion of Jews from political life throughout the 18th and 19th centuries and the violence against Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses” (p. 252).

Apparently discourses of Othering were produced by white, protestant, and Anglo-Saxon Americans in which religion was used in order to legitimize the oppression and the control of other people who were natives, slaves or immigrated to the U.S. In fact, reviewing the American

history shows that there were different waves and nativism which restricted the naturalization of non-Christian immigrants of color and non-Protestants. For instance there was anti-catholic movement between 1830s and 1850s against Irish and German Catholics which it took place in part through a Protestant-dominated system of public education. Other discriminatory acts restricted the immigration of people from southern and Eastern Europe and Asia such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the Immigration Act of 1917, the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act of 1924, and the limits conducted on the immigration of Jews from Europe during the 1930s and the Holocaust of 1940s.

According to Adams and Joshi (2007), “These targeted legislative restrictions on immigration were part of the nativist opposition to non-Anglo-Saxon and non-Protestant immigrants, within a longer national tradition of identity-based protests against non-English-speaking, darker-skinned, working-class or farming Catholics and Jews, Buddhists, Confucians, Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs” (p. 260). In addition, these xenophobic acts show how white-Anglo-Saxon and Protestants use their own religion in order to define and American nationalism and to decide who could benefit and who was excluded from the American citizenship. In short, “Christian meant superior, was associated with whiteness, [the western and European heritage,] and conveyed moral and cultural attributes considered necessary to the benefits of citizenship, democracy, self rule, and naturalization as American” (Adams & Joshi, 2007, p. 258).

That has been said, Islamophobia can be viewed as another discourse of Othering which has been increased in the U.S. in the post-cold war era (Abu Sway, 2006) in order to justify the American imperial agenda and its intervention in the Middle East. Islamophobia views Muslims and Arabs as terrorists, aggressive, and irrational (Ba-Yunus & Kone, 2006; Haque, 2004). This is because Islam is portrayed by the western media as oppressive, monolithic, outmoded, anti-

intellectual, restrictive, extremist, backward, dangerous, and the source of global conflict (Said, 1997). Other scholars (Kumar, 2012; Rizvi, 2005) agree with Said analysis and they view Islamophobia as a colonial discourse which explains the imperial agenda of western powers and justifies their control of the Middle East. In fact, a person does not need to be a scholar in order to understand the meaning of Islamophobia and how it comes into practice within American society. The recent public debate about the construction of an Islamic center in New York, and Terry Jones' provocative announcement to burn the Qur'an in 2010, are some examples of the growing Islamophobia in American society.

Perhaps the general atmosphere of hostility against Muslims and the mistrust between Muslims and non-Muslims in the U.S. explains the growing number of Islamic schools, and the desire of Muslim parents to let their children grow up in a safe environment. However, it is worth noting that the idea of religious education is not limited to Muslim communities; Christians and Jews have their own private and religious schools as well (Jones, 2008). It is assumed that they all want their children to establish specific cultural and religious identities in safe environments. In reality, however, the majority of Muslim parents in the U.S. send their children to public schools (Haddad & Smith, 2009; Merry, 2007), and the very idea of Islamic schooling is debatable in the American-Islamic community.

For many Muslim Americans today, as explained by Cristillo (2009), "the Islamic school represents an institutional firewall against the loss of religious identity by the wholesale assimilation of future generations of American Muslims" (p. 69). Other parents think that Islam is not represented adequately or correctly in public schools' textbooks, which perpetuate "old stereotypes forged out of centuries of imperialist western views of Islam" (Haddad & Smith, 2009, p. 9). By contrast, other Muslim Americans express their concerns about whether sending

their kids to Islamic schools will isolate them from the larger society, which may not help in their future integration in the larger society (Haddad & Lummis, 1987).

I suggest in this study the importance of asking new questions about the status of Muslim students' education. Instead of asking whether Islamic schools are useful in preserving students' Islamic or cultural identities, I propose asking what kind of Islamic identity is taught in these schools and how this will facilitate Muslim students' engagement later in American democratic and multicultural life. This is particularly true if we recognize that Islamic schools in the west are very diverse and are influenced by the politics of local communities, reflecting "varying degrees of orthodoxy, strictness, and ethnic affiliation" (Merry, 2006, p. 51). In addition, instead of asking if public schools are good or bad for Muslim students, which is debatable in the academic literature as well (Niyozov & Pluim, 2009), it is worth exploring how Islamic schools prepare students for life in a pluralistic and multicultural society.

In addition, current debates about Muslim students' education in the U.S. represent a static and deterministic understanding of identities and the purpose of schooling. They do not recognize that identities are plural, multiple, and fluid. Also, they are missing the evolutionary and transformative nature of identities. Identities as described by Hall (1994) "belong to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history, and culture" (p. 394). This means that identities are influenced by a constant process of relational positioning which reflects multiple patterns of knowledge, power, and representations. Therefore, it is very appropriate to investigate how Muslim students' identities are developed and change overtime, and not within only Islamic or public schools.

In short, given the increased Islamophobia in American society, and the dynamic process of identity formation, there is a growing need to explore how Muslim students experience the

transition from Islamic to public schools, and how this shapes their understanding and practices of their religious and civic identities. In the next section, I review the relationship between religion and education, and the related shortcomings for developing students' democratic identities.

Religion and Public Education

Religion, as defined by Banks and Banks (2001), is “a set of beliefs and values, especially about explanations that concern the cause and nature of the universe, to which an individual or group has a strong loyalty and attachment. A religion usually has a moral code, rituals, and institutions that reinforce and propagate its beliefs” (p. 430). In other words, religions can be viewed as very powerful systems of beliefs and practices which give meaning and a feeling of belonging to many people; they guide people in terms of moral behaviors; and they help people cultivate their individual and collective identities (Uphoff, 2001).

Reviewing the literature shows that multicultural education has not paid adequate attention to the issues of religion and its possible contribution to the education for citizenship in democratic countries (Salili & Hoosain, 2006; Uphoff, 2001). In criticizing the current practices of multicultural education in schools, Ryoo and McLaren (2010) concluded that:

In superficial response to America's increasingly diverse student body, schools are combining assimilation ideologies with conservative, institutional multicultural education that pays shallow homage to respecting differences by celebrating ethnic holidays with decorative posters and international potlucks. (p. 103)

I argue that religiosity should be considered as another component of students' funds of knowledge; therefore, ignoring or disrespecting what conservative students bring from their homes and communities can be viewed as an act of oppression.

Here I adopt the argument by the American Association of School Administrators (1964) that:

A curriculum which ignored religion would itself have serious implications. It would seem to proclaim that religion has not been as real in men's lives as health, or politics, or economics. By omission it would appear to deny that religion has been and is important in man's history – a denial of the obvious. In day by day practice, the topic cannot be avoided. As an integral part of man's culture, it must be included. (p. 53-55)

Recently there has been a growing literature that criticizes the exclusion of faith and religion from public debates in democratic countries (Weithman, 2002), as well as from education in public schools (Arthur, Gearon & Sears, 2010; Kunzman, 2011; Noddings, 2006). The discourse of secularism, or thinking about religion in public education as a conversation stopper (Rorty, 1999), may not help religious students share their own ideals of the good life within schools and later in the larger society. At the same time, living within a pluri-religious environment in public school may push religious students to rethink the meaning of being religious and to develop a hybrid space where they can become accepted and contributing citizens. This leads me to the following section, in which I explain the formation of hybrid identities from Foucauldian and postcolonial perspectives.

Theorizing Hybrid Identities

One can view religious and public education in the U.S. as two different discourses that have dissimilar conceptions of what the good life is, and what liberal education means. Therefore, Muslim students' transition from Islamic to public schools may invoke several conflicts, struggles, and tensions. If we think about religion as a social space or a cultural field that has its own habitus (particular philosophy, values, and performances) (Bourdieu, 1984), then Muslim students' transition from Islamic to public schools may require them to adapt to new habits of mind, dispositions, norms, and attitudes.

I assume that the mismatch or the lack of synchronicity between the habitus of Islamic education and the cultural field of public education may produce an identity crisis through which Muslim students need to revise their own values and moral codes, and perhaps compromise their own faith, practices, and religion. In light of this transition, Muslim students may develop a hybrid identity which brings their religiosity into articulation and re-examination in light of the “new” knowledge, interactions, and experiences of public education. This study aims to explore how Muslim students manage this transition, and how they understand and interpret the challenges they face in developing their hybrid identities.

For the purpose of this study, I found Foucault's (1980b) theory of power/knowledge very useful to understand Muslim students' transition from Islamic to public schools. As I argued earlier, we can view religion (Islamic) and secularism (public) as two different discourses that have their own norms, forms of surveillance, values, ethos, and logics. This means that these two discourses have already established different regimes of truths that are based on different narratives, ideologies, demands, and idealizations.

When Muslim students move from Islamic to public school, they are exposed to a new normalizing power/knowledge system, and this may push them to revise their own subjectivities and to develop new hybrid identities. This study examines how Muslim students experience the cultivation of their hybrid identities, the technologies of the self they use (Fendler, 2010), and how they interpret their own space for agency, struggle, and adaptation. Technologies of the self were defined by Foucault (1988) as the techniques that human beings use in order to communicate with and understand themselves. He argued that these technologies “permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being... in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality” (p. 17). One can view “technologies of the self” as Foucault’s effort to add the hermeneutic aspect to his theory, to recognize human being’s possible agency within discourses of knowledge/power, and to make his theory more applicable and less deterministic.

If practicing and learning about and through religion is celebrated in Islamic schools, this kind of education is pushed to the margins in public schools. Therefore, a secular conception of education which denies what Muslim students bring from their families, communities, and religious education can be viewed as a process of Othering, leading to students to feeling alienation and subalternity. At the same time, living within a secular climate may push Muslim students to develop a “third space” in which they refine their religious identities and try to achieve a balance between their religious identity and the mainstream culture of public schools.

I assume that the meeting between Islamic and public education leads to producing hybrid identities among Muslim students in the U.S. and other western countries. The idea of hybridity is often used in the postcolonial literature (Andreotti, 2011; Loomba, 1998), and I show

in this chapter how it can be extended to explain students' religious and civic identities.

Hybridity is a term used by Homi Bhabha (1994) to criticize the binary in the relationship between the colonizer (West) and the colonized (East), as it was described by Said (1978) in his seminal work *Orientalism*.

In the context of this study I assume that Muslim students' encounter with public education is similar to the encounter between the colonizer and the colonized. But unlike Said (1978) who viewed the colonized as passive and who submit to the authority of the colonizer, I adopt Bhabha's theory which views the colonized as active player in terms of interpreting, negotiating, and perhaps modifying the colonial discourse. Bhabha (1994) focused on the relational construction of identities and the ambivalence of colonial discourse. Ambivalence was conceptualized as "a complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between the colonizer and colonized" (Ashcroft, et al., 1995, p. 12).

In summarizing this point, Andreotti (2011) said that "colonial discourse wants to produce subordinate subjects who reproduce its assumptions, values, and behaviors (mimic the colonizer), but it does not want to create subjects that are too similar to the colonizer as this would threaten the colonizer's sense of superiority" (p. 26). Later on, and following Bhabha's (1994) intellectual tradition, the mutual influences between the colonizer and the colonized and the idea of hybridity is "celebrated and privileged as a kind of superior cultural intelligence owing to the advantage of in-betweenness, the straddling of two cultures and the consequent ability to negotiate the difference" (Hoogvelt, 1997, p. 158).

I argue in this study that the idea of hybridity can be expanded to include not only the encounter between the West and the East in postcolonial countries but also within western countries. That is, the way a colonial discourse influences and changes the subjectivity of the

colonized is similar to how a secular discourse in public schools affects the religious identity of Muslim students. If Islamic schools nurture an “authentic” religious identity which is based on a specific epistemology and moral understanding, then the transition to public schools challenges the boundaries of this identity through exposing Muslim students to a new system of knowledge, truth, and morality and this may challenge the way they conceive of themselves and understand their own religion.

I think that Bhabha’s (1994) argument that colonial identities are always a matter of flux and agony is appropriate to describe the cultivation of civic and religious identities as well. Bhabha (1985) also added that the gap between the appearance of the colonial discourse and its repetition produces a space of resistance. He explained that:

Resistance is not necessarily an oppositional act of political intention, nor is it the simple negation or the exclusion of the content of another culture, as difference once perceived...[but] the effect of an ambivalence produced within the rules of recognition of dominating discourses as they articulate the signs of cultural difference. (p. 153)

Similarly, I assume that when Muslim students move to public schools, they may experience some kind of acculturation which may challenge their religious knowledge and expand the boundaries of their Islamic identity. For instance, students may borrow some vocabulary of the secular discourse in order to establish a new hybrid and “religio-secular” identities. At the same time, the transition may lead to a feeling of epistemic violence (Spivak, 1994), which may in turn lead to a self-conscious resistance against the hegemonic and secular discourse of these schools and their practices.

As described by Shohat (1993), living in a liminal position may produce several patterns of hybridization. She claimed that we need to “discriminate between the diverse modalities of hybridity, for example, forced assimilation, internalized self-rejection, political co-optation, social conformism, cultural mimicry, and creative transcendence” (p. 110). This study assumes, as described by Hall (1994), that the cultivation of cultural, religious, and civic identities is a matter of becoming as well as of being. It also assumes that religion and culture are interconnected and they inform and shape each other (Hart, 2000; Roy, 2010). In the U.S., following the work of Ogbu and Simon (1998), I can argue that Muslims constitute a voluntary minority who came to the U.S. by choice, and therefore they might be more open for assimilation and for developing a hybrid identity which includes elements of both religion and the American culture.

This means that Muslim students’ exposure to secular categories of knowledge may increase their feeling of “otherness” in the public school and may promote, at the same time, a process of conciliation and the formation of hybrid and mixed identities. This study examined four Muslim students’ experiences of the in-betweenness condition, and how and to what extent they produced their own hybridity during their adaptation to the new climate of public schools.

In short, if Islamic communities in the U.S. are interested in religious education that cultivates students’ cultural and religious identities, and at the same time helps students integrate into the larger and secular society, then the transition from Islamic to public schools in western countries has the potential of inventing a new authenticity which is “a matter of choice, relevance, and feeling of rightness... [and allow] enough room for multiple rootedness” (Radhakrishnan, 2003, p. 316). Radhakrishnan added that “there need be no theoretical or epistemological opposition between authenticity and historical contingency, between authenticity

and hybridity, between authenticity and invention” (p. 316). This study cared about exploring this new authenticity as it was produced within the educational experiences of Muslim students when they transited from Islamic to public schools.

To sum up, this theoretical framework shows the significance of investigating how Muslim students experience the transition from Islamic to public schools, and how they reflect upon and negotiate the mixture between the private and public, and the personal and the political, in the formations of their hybrid identities.

Research Methodology

Setting

I chose to do this study in one Islamic school which was not far from the campus where I was studying for my doctoral degree. I chose the school because it was the only Islamic school in town and because I knew some leaders of the Islamic community who helped me access the school. The school was established in 1996 when some community leaders saw that there was a demand to teach Muslim kids about their religion. The school has 169 students from kindergarten through eighth grade. Students in all grades get, on a daily basis, lessons in Arabic language, Quranic studies (reciting and interpreting the Quran) and Islamic studies (learning about the life of the prophet Muhammad and his teachings). The school includes students from diverse backgrounds but the majority of them are Somali; more than half students in the school qualify for free lunch. The school does not receive any funding from the state or the federal government and it is in the process of getting accreditation. Most teachers are certified and three of them are non-Muslims.

The mission of the school, according to its website, is “to offer an excellent comprehensive elementary education that will enable students to be competitive. The school

resources will be used to promote the cultural, spiritual and intellectual heritage of Islam. Islamic School also promotes the development of self-disciplinary skills that will enable students to be life-long learners, contributors to the betterment of human culture, and vice-regents on earth.”

Students who complete their 8th grade move to different public schools in the city. These schools, according to the website of the city, have a diversified population with students from more than 50 countries, speaking more than 44 languages. There are 405 total staff members in the district with 228 serving specifically as teachers in eight schools. I can add after working for two years as field instructor in some of these schools that they are liberal and serve relatively middle and upper class students.

Participants

For the purpose of this chapter I recruited four male students who studied in the same Islamic school and then moved to a different public school. Their pseudonym names are Faris, Hamza, Dani, and Adam. Hamza studied in the Islamic school from kindergarten until sixth grade and then moved to a public school in his city. Hamza’s dad is from Egypt and his mom is a second generation Egyptian American. Hamza was in his freshman year (ninth grade) when I interviewed him. Faris attended the Islamic school from second to sixth grade and then he studied seventh grade in a public school, and then he returned to study eighth grade in the Islamic school when I interviewed him. Faris’s parents migrated from Syria; his father is Palestinian and his mom is Syrian from a Palestinian origin. Dani studied from first to third grade in the Islamic school and then moved to a public school. His parents migrated from Somalia, and he was in seventh grade when I interviewed him. Adam was in ninth grade in a public school when I interviewed him. He studied a total of three years in the Islamic school in the U.S. and one year in an Islamic school in Jordan, and five years in public schools in the U.S.

His father migrated from Jordan, and his mother is a second generation Jordanian-American. All participants in this study are U.S. citizens. It is worth noting that focusing on students in grades 7th to 9th grades is appropriate for this study because this is the time when adolescent males seek to become more independents in their thoughts and behaviors and to develop their own identities (Erikson, 1968).

The following diagram summarizes the descriptive information of the research participants:

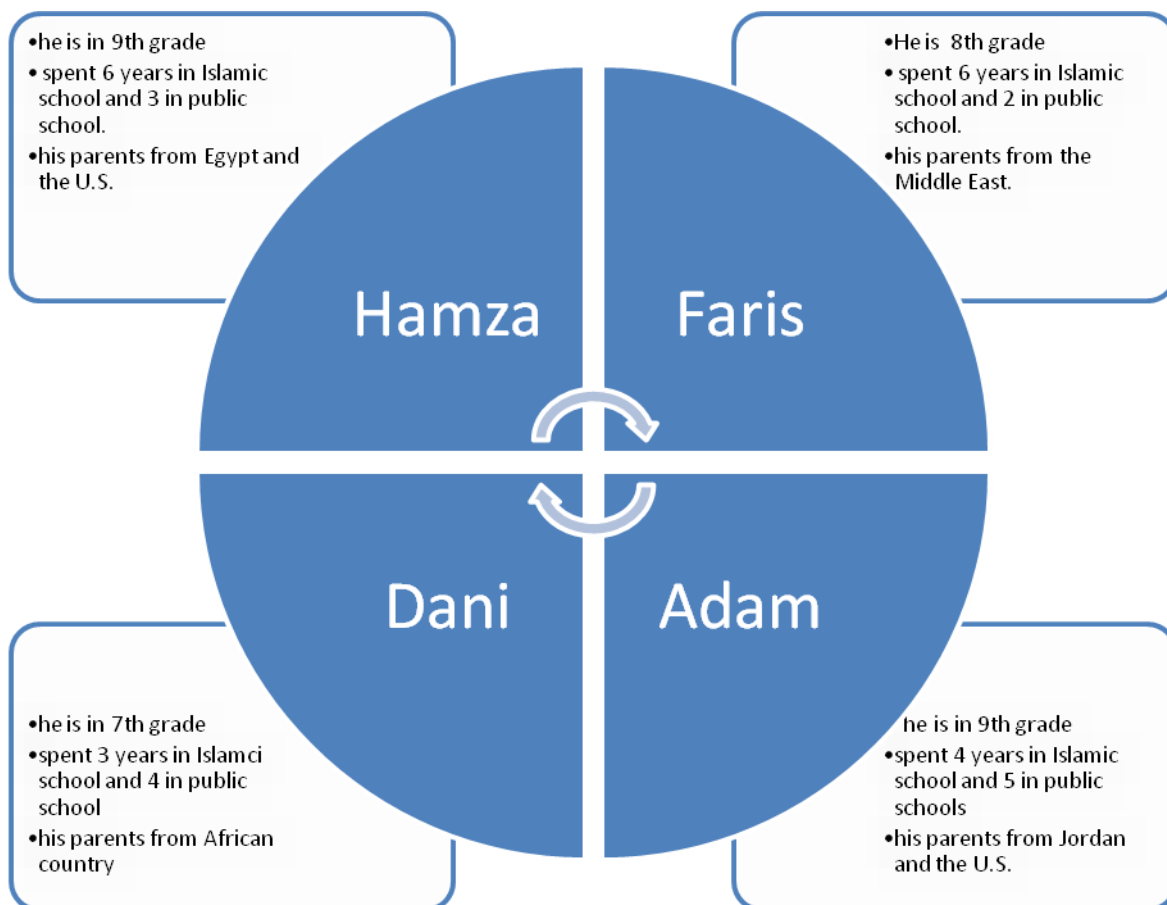


Figure 1: Descriptive Information of the Research Participants

Collecting Data

I chose to focus only on the experiences of male students because many parents whom I contacted refused, because of religious concerns, to allow a male to interview their daughters.

The recruitment of research participants was conducted through the help of two Islamic community leaders that I used to meet in the mosque of one city in the Midwest. I contacted two parents by a phone call and they agreed to let their children participate in this study. In addition, they gave me the name of other potential parents who might agree to take part in my inquiry. After calling these parents I had four participants.

In order to let my participants get basic information about the study's procedures, I invited them all to a short orientation, in which I explained the rationale of the study and its procedures, and I let them read and sign an assent letter. Also, I answered students' questions about the study, and we discussed possible dates and times for the interviews. At the end of this orientation, I delivered the parents' consent letters and asked the students to ask their parents to sign them and bring them to our first interview. The orientation was conducted in the Islamic Center, which was not far from my university.

As I mentioned earlier in the introduction, this is a multi-case and ethnographic study which included one face-to-face interview with each student. All interviews, in accordance with parents' request, were conducted in one room in the Islamic Center. All the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed later for further analysis. Each face-to-face interview lasted 1.5 hours and it included open-ended and follow-up questions, depending on the dynamics of our conversation, the research questions, and the responses of each participant.

The purpose of the interviews was to explore the students' life histories and their educational experiences regarding Islamic and public schools. I explored the meaning of making the transition from religious public education, and I learned more about the moments of struggle, misunderstanding, conflict, and dilemma that they faced in their adaptation to the new environment of public school. In addition, I wanted to understand how students' transition and

their identities were influenced by their interactions with teachers, other students, the school's community, and its curricula.

Data Analysis

As I mentioned earlier in the introduction of the dissertation, the purpose of this study is to move beyond descriptive claims or the insider perspective in order to examine and see how Bhabha's theory of hybridity and Foucault's theory of power/knowledge may help us understand how Muslim students negotiate their religious and public identities.

My analysis included three stages. First, I read each interview transcript separately and wrote my comments in the margins of each interview. Here I wrote keywords that were related to students' understanding of their religion, academic identity, and interactions with non-Muslims, and of the strategies they used to adapt to public school, students' confusion, and their personal struggling. Second, I made a cross-case analysis, through which I conducted a comparison between these keywords or categories of meaning and came up with new patterns or themes which fit across all the interviews. Third, I systematically reviewed each interview transcript in order to collect the evidence which most richly supported the themes of my study.

At this stage I contacted some of the interviewees via email and asked them to clarify some of the points they mentioned in their interview. The purpose of the member check (Guba & Lincoln, 1982) or the respondent validation (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) is to increase the accuracy of the data, and to let participants clarify their experiences; this, I believe, makes my analysis more plausible and valid. This stage of analysis helped me to see the similarities and differences between students with regard to each theme of this study. Later in my writing I used Bhabha's and Foucault's critical theories in order to explain the connection between the different

themes and how they are related to broader themes of religiosity, hybridity, Othering, and identity politics.

Findings

The analysis of the data revealed five themes. The first theme shows the dilemma that Muslim students faced when they needed to compromise between their religious education and academic success. The second theme explored the struggles that Muslim students faced in their experience to adapt to the new environment of public school and, at the same time, to preserve their own Islamic identities. In the third theme I discuss the liberating Othering of public schools and how it challenged the dogmatic education of Islamic schools. In the fourth theme I explain the contestation between American and diasporic identities as it was disclosed by one participant in this study. Finally, I explicate the processes of Othering and Orientalism in public schools and how it affected the life and national identities of Muslim students in these schools.

The Dilemma of Islamic versus Academic Identity

All students in this study reported the problem of not being prepared for academic life and studying in public schools. They all mentioned that the Islamic school they had attended did not provide them with the core skills in math and science. For instance, Hamza said, “It was like science and math and like the classes I remember where we were always up to date were Arabic, Islamic studies and English. Those were the three classes I remember that we did everything at, when it was supposed to be done. So it was science and math, that was kinda iffy.”

Dani added that his math skills were improved since he moved to public school. He said that the Islamic school spends more time on Islamic studies than on other core subjects, such as math, English, and science. Adam agreed with this point, and he suggested that Muslim students

who move to public school study on their own and try to get help in order to catch up with their schooling.

When I asked students why this was the case in their Islamic school, Hamza said that teachers in his public school are more organized and more educated. Adam added that because of the small number of children in the Islamic school, teachers are expected to teach all ages of students, starting from first grade until seventh grade, and this makes teachers lower their standards. In addition, the lack of staff and resources in Islamic schools did not allow the schools to support students with special needs. Adam explained, “We were, we were very hyperactive. Like we couldn’t sit in our seats for more than an hour. We would, we would try to walk around and talk to our neighbors. And we would lose focus very, very quickly.” Teachers, he added, did not know how to handle the situation, and they used to send him very often to the main office.

Although students in this study were not satisfied with the quality of their education in the Islamic school, they all shared appreciation of the Islamic studies in this school, and they thought this was something they missed in their public school. For instance, Dani explained the significance of religion in his life: “It’s always like good to know about your religion and where you come from and what happened, to have your religion secured. And I think it’s just really important to know Islam.” He explained that he used to be an excellent student in Islamic studies, and he even got a scholarship to study two years for free, but when he left the Islamic school he became frustrated to see that he was behind in Quran studies compared to his friends who stayed in the Islamic school.

Hamza agreed with this point, and he said that he started to appreciate the significance of Islamic education when he moved to a public school. He explained that he became less religious, and therefore he recommended that all kids complete the eighth grade before they move to public

school. Hamza added that one time he did not succeed in spelling the sentence: *bismi-llāhi r-rahīmāni r-rahīm* (in the name of Allah, most gracious, most merciful) in the Arabic language, which is the start of each chapter in the Quran, and this made him feel very bad. Because of that he recommended to Muslim students in the Islamic school, “I will say stay there till eighth grade or as long as you can. And then you can move onto public school. Because you’re gonna need the Islamic background no matter. Who cares if you get the nicest job, the most money, this, this, as long as you have a job, as long as you have Allah, as long as you have Islam, you’ll be fine.”

Dani supported this point and said that moving to public school made him weak in the language of his religion. He said, “Like in a sense, I actually knew how to read and understand Arabic but as I left, I completely forget everything I learned.” At the same time, Dani hopes he will move in the future to an Islamic high school in another city so that he can catch up with his religious studies. He also hopes that teachers in this Islamic high school will be good in both Islamic and academic studies so that he can achieve his dream and attend medical school at the University of Michigan.

Also, the journey of Adam and his multiple switches between Islamic and public schools shows the dilemma of religious versus public education, in which Muslim parents and students feel that they need to compromise between education for religious identity and education for social mobility. As I mentioned earlier, Adam studied three years in the Islamic school and five years in public schools in the U.S. He explained that he had multiple transitions in his elementary education because he was falling behind in studying math, science, English, reading, and writing. Adam’s parents, he argued, were not satisfied with the quality of education in the Islamic school and therefore they decided to send him several times to a public school and to return him again to

the Islamic school because of religious studies. Adam added that he believes that Islamic schools need to hire more teachers, to support special education students, and to provide more hours for the core curriculum, if they want to improve the quality of their education.

All these examples show that Muslim students feel the advantages and disadvantages of learning in both Islamic and public schools, and that the lack of resources and quality teachers in Islamic schools works against their desires to succeed in public school and later in their lives. Personally, I do not think that Muslim students need to compromise between their academic success and religious identities. In fact, identity is something people develop, change, and revise within the whole span of their lives. Therefore, knowing the basics of Islam, why it is important, and how it adds to students' moral being might be adequate for developing students' religiosity at this stage of their lives. Now I move to the second theme of my study, on students' reflections on their transition to public school and the different strategies they use in order to develop their hybrid identities.

Language, Body, and the Construction of Hybridity

In this theme I explain how Muslim students in this study viewed and experienced the transition from Islamic to public school, how they developed their hybrid (religious and non-religious identities) and what technologies of the self they used in order to adapt to the new environment of public education. Students in this study drew on several strategies in order to negotiate their Islamic and public identities. These strategies revolved around the use of language and body, which helped Muslim students cultivate their hybridity and subjective identities. It is worth noting that Muslim students developed, through their interaction and communication with other students, different levels of hybridity.

Counter-discourse and the use of Arabic language. Apparently language plays a significant component in defining the borders of students' religious identities. For instance, Hamza said that "cursing" was one of the behaviors that he adopted in order to fit in the culture of public school. He said, "I started cursing. Oh, sorry. I started cursing because immediately as soon as I walked in there, he said, how the are you doing today? I was like, I can't say that. And so I thought, okay, first thing, I guess I guess first thing to fit in, talk like everybody else talks. Talk like you're ghetto. Cuz, talk like you're ghetto, cuz. So that's what most kids did so I thought I'd do that to fit in."

When I asked him about the meaning of "ghetto," he said "like everyone around you." Hamza argued that his Islamic school wanted him to be a perfect Muslim, which is something impossible to achieve. He added that the problem with Islamic education is that they want to develop a perfect Muslim, which means, according to the school, "do no evil, say no evil, hear no evil." But Hamza disagreed with their concept of the perfect Muslim because "there's no such thing as perfect Muslim, unless you're the prophet."

By contrast, Faris thought that it was important to keep up with the Islamic morals, even in public school. For him, "cursing" is strongly against his Islamic identity; therefore, he decided to develop with other Muslim students a "cursing free" environment, "because sometimes they say bad words and stuff, like the other, my other friends, the non-Muslims, they sometimes say bad words in front of me. And in Islam, we can't say those bad words. We get bad deeds for it so my Muslim friends, we just say good words." In order to avoid the use of bad words, Faris and his Muslim friends developed a subculture with a new word.

Faris: I'm like, okay. And then me and my Muslim friends, we say, like when we, like you know the S H I T?

I: What's that?

Faris: It's like another bad word. Instead of saying that, we say. like, sloop.

I: What's a sloop?

Faris: We don't know. We just made it up. So whenever someone gets hurt or something, we say "oh, sloop."

In another situation Faris said that he preferred to spend more time with his Muslim friends because they can use terms from the Arabic language in their conversations. For instance, "Like if something happens, I can say *wa-llahi* (by God) to my Muslim friends but then when you go to the American people, when you say *wa-llahi* they're like, 'what's that mean?'" In addition, Faris added that having Muslim friends in public school is empowering for him because students can remind each other about Islamic manners and acceptable behaviors.

Another example of the significance of the Arabic language in Muslim students' identities was expressed by Hamza, who was very frustrated to see that he was losing the Arabic language and therefore his Islamic identity. He reported that one day during his eight grade he was shocked for not being able to spell the sentence *bismi-llāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīm* (in the name of Allah, most gracious, most merciful), which is the start of each chapter of the Quran. He expressed his frustration by saying:

It scared me, to be honest, because if I didn't know how to write, "in the name of Allah, most gracious, most merciful," how am I gonna read the Quran? How am I gonna write my name? How am I gonna be able to write Quran? How am I gonna be able to write the *hadith* [words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad]? How am I gonna be able to do all these things if I can barely speak it cuz my Arabic was very broken at the time. My writing wasn't gonna happen. I didn't know the

alphabet letters, the little thing, I just spelled it to you. I didn't know any of that stuff. So when this happened, I took it upon myself to start speaking more Arabic, learning more Arabic, praying more often, so I did this and the end of the school year came, then summer, I slacked off the entire summer, and this year came. This year, I was probably the most unreligious person ever.

Also, Faris and Dani expressed their desire to learn Arabic as a second language in their public schools because this would help them maintain their Islamic identity. For instance, Faris said that he preferred to study Arabic and not Spanish or French as a second language in school. Also he considered to moving to an Islamic high school in another city because of this reason: "I want to go, I want to go there because everyone's Muslim over there. And I like, I want to learn Arabic as another language. I don't want to learn Spanish and French. I want to stay with Arabic. And I want to keep up with Islamic studies and Quran."

Communicating bodies as a strategy for resistance. Muslim students in this study mentioned several strategies that they used in order to stay on the "right path" and not to give up their religious values and ideals. In fact, students' bodies became a site for resistance to the non-religious practices and culture of public schools. Through communicating and interpreting their bodies, they performed their religiosity and developed a third space of hybridity. For instance, Hamza said that he decided to wear the *Kofi*, which he believed was what prophet Muhammad used to wear, and that this helped him to become a better Muslim. He said that the teachers and the principal allowed him to wear it in the school when he explained that it was a religious symbol. He explained why he decided to wear the *kofi*:

The reason I decided to put it on in the first place was because I had to get my life back together, because I was messing up badly recently, so I'm trying to be a

better Muslim, step by step, so for the past three weeks, praying every prayer, trying to... I want to prove to everyone that I'm serious about this religion. I want to prove to Allah I'm serious about this religion. I want to prove to everybody I'm serious about this religion. So I went to school, expecting to get made fun of, called a terrorist, all this kinda stuff, just tough it out throughout the day. Nothing happened, but just respected my space.

Also Dani reported that he tried to keep up with his religion in public school by getting the school's annual permit to leave his classroom and pray the Dhuhr (the second prayer of the daily five obligatory prayers in Islam) everyday in another room.

The dilemma of how to treat girls in public school was repeated by three participants in this study. The participants' answers represent different levels of resistance and adaptation. For instance, Hamza found it weird to have a friend who was a girl. He said,

I don't really think it is *haram* but it just felt weird at first, having a close friend that was a girl, and then eventually, in high school, [I] developed something called the "friend zone," where there's a girl, knows you for way too long, so you're officially just her friend, nothing more. So that's where I kinda put myself in. Most guys don't do that on purpose. I most the time do that on purpose.

Hamza believed that dating or interacting with girls is not against his religion as long as he stays in the "friend zone," which fits well with his Islamic values. He argued that he could not have sexual contact with a girlfriend like other students in the school because of his religious duties, but he disagreed with the Islamic teachings that he cannot communicate or interact with girls at all. However, staying in the "friend zone" is not easy. Hamza clarified his struggles by saying:

one girl tried to set me up with her best friend. So it's like, they're trying to push me into this culture that I'm not used to, so I kinda try to drift away. But eventually you get caught in there. So that happened to me, like eighth grade and beginning of ninth grade and then something happened where it clicked. I'm doing something bad. This is *haram*³, I should not be doing this. So before I got a girlfriend, I came to the mosque more and more and more. And Alhamdulillah (Praise be to God), Allah (God in Arabic) saved me so I'm here.

It seems that the mosque became an alternative institution that Hamza could attend in order to recover his Islamic identity and to improve his resistance to what he perceived as the non-Islamic behaviors of public schools.

In another example, Hamza reported, "Like I remember the first, I told myself, I'm not gonna hug a girl, I'm not gonna do anything with a girl until I get married. Public school, my first year there, a girl hugged me, so I hugged her back. That was like basically for me, surrendering at the time." This statement shows that Hamza started to develop a new identity which encompassed elements of both Islamic and American cultures. His struggle to do that was in part because of his previous Islamic education, where he barely used to interact with girls, and because of the separation between girls and boys in classrooms. Hamza argued that not all teachers in his Islamic school agreed with this separation. He said, "Now, for the teachers that were Arab Americans, they didn't really mind it cuz this was their culture." I assume that Muslim teachers who were born in the U.S. have already developed their hybrid identities and therefore they share a flexible understanding of Islam which is more adaptable to American life, while teachers who emigrated from Islamic countries promoted a conservative approach towards

³ Haram is Arabic word which means sinful, or the things that are forbidden by God in the Islamic religion

their religion with a paternalistic desire to protect their students from complete assimilation into American society.

Adam agreed with Hamza about the dilemma of communicating with girls, and he criticized the openness of public schools by saying, “Girls, I mean, there’s, I see people kissing, making out, and what they wear, too, is very loose and you can see much of a girl’s body.” Like Hamza, he put himself in the “friend zone,” but this, he argued, did not solve the problem because this made him even more attractive to girls who wanted to date him. He explained that this increased his status among the girls in school because he was considered more loyal, and therefore was more wanted.

Adam: Because some boys, they date every girl and people talk badly about them.

Because I’ve never had a girlfriend, I’m, I’m considered, I’m considered... how should I say this? Like I’m considered, like, a... I don’t know how to explain it.

I: Like wanted?

Adam: Yeah, like wanted, yeah.

I: Like somebody who’s loyal?

Adam: Yeah.

Communicating the body became more demanding in the case of Faris, who struggled more than the others to maintain his religious identity. Faris decided to stay away from girls as much as he could. Faris suggested the following advice for Muslim students, who will make the transition from Islamic to public schools: “Because everywhere you look, there’s gonna be like maybe a girl or something that’s doing something bad or something like that so you have to tell them to watch out for that, lower your gaze, look down... For Muslims, they have to look down

and they can't look and they have to keep on walking... because it's okay if you look once on mistake but you can't look again."

When I asked him how he spent his lunch break in the school, he said, "I just went and ate and I sat with the boys' table. And whenever there's a girl that comes to the table to sit next to me or sit next to someone else, I just finish, I get up, and I sit somewhere else." I asked him what if a girl was wearing the *hijab*? He answered, "If she was a Muslim and had *hijab*, she wouldn't come to the boys' table anyway."

I assume that Faris's position represents the stricter interpretation of religion, which is not applicable in modern life where males and females work together, communicate with each other, and contribute to the progress of humankind. At the same time, I doubt if Faris, given the intensity of interactions in public schools, will continue holding this perspective and not join Hamza and Ahmad and to develop his own more flexible identity.

The examples above show the technologies of the self that Muslim students use in order to negotiate their identities. Technologies of the self, as I explained earlier, are the techniques through which people police their "selves" within systems and discourses of power. Practices such as wearing the Kufi, producing new words, staying in the "friend zone", and praying during the school day are all indicators of how Muslim students divide themselves (Foucault, 1982) from non-Muslims in order to maintain their Islamic subjectivities. When Muslim students move from Islamic to public schools they become divided from inside (Foucault, 1982) which means that they have the opportunity to recognize and perhaps revise the technologies of the self used in Islamic school in order to adapt to public schools' regime of truth. Being divided from inside, and revising the Islamic subjectivities and behaviors, as I show in the next section, is the start of developing a hybrid identity which encompasses elements of both religious and secular

discourses. Technologies of the self then help Muslim students to define and redefine who they are to themselves and to people around them.

Dogmatic Education and the Liberating Function of Public Schools

Another theme which was revealed after conducting the cross-case analysis is the difference between dogmatic and non-dogmatic Islamic education. The idea of dogmatic religious education assumes that religious studies are the best way to educate children for a moral and good life. Fienberg (2006) clarified here that “religious morality is associated with a set of rules, principles, and virtues that from the inside appear divine but from the outside sometimes appear dogmatic and inflexible” (p. xviii). Non-dogmatic education, by contrast, allows students to think critically about religious texts, to recognize multiple interpretations and attitudes among religious scholars, and to realize that religious understanding is context-based, can be biased, or may not fit life in a democratic society. Perhaps I can put the participants in this study on a continuum of less to more critical in terms of their understanding of religion. I think that Faris and Dani can be viewed as less critical while Hamza and Adam represent the more critical stance in exploring their religious identities.

One example of dogmatic education that I mentioned above was raised by both Faris and Dani, who mentioned several times that they wanted to memorize the Quran in order to become good Muslims. However, when I asked Faris if he knew the meaning of what they recited from the Quran in their classrooms, he said that the teacher usually does not explain the meaning “unless somebody’s asked about that.” I argue that preparing students for life in a democratic and multicultural society requires students not only to recite the Quran but also to explore how Islamic teachings and moral values may contribute to social justice and to life in a democratic and plural society. I think that the idea of critical thinking about religion is crucial in developing

good believers who can see how their religion may contribute to the common good of their society and not to fall victims to the interpretations of religious scholars who might have anti-democratic and political agendas.

Another example of dogmatic education was reported by Faris, who thought that he could judge non-Muslims based on his Islamic values. He argued that non-Muslims are not on the right path “because first they do stuff that we don’t do. Like they drink beer and all that stuff which is *haram* and they have parties with girls and everything which is *haram*. And they say bad words and they act bad. They don’t pray and make Dua [personal prayer or supplication] and read Quran and stuff like that.” This kind of thinking represents what I called in Chapter Two as moral absolutism. This means holding to your own religion in order to evaluate the attitudes and behaviors of other people. I think that Faris has the right to reject all these behaviors, but he also needs to reason why it is *haram* and to respect the rights of non-Muslims within a democratic country to live the way they choose to.

Judging other people’s beliefs was repeated by Faris, who said, “See, Christians, if they were still like following Jesus, then like if they, like when Jesus came and, and he was told them, like that was the right religion. If they still followed it until today, they would probably go the Janna (heaven) but they messed it up. They changed the Bible and they changed everything.” When I asked him why he believed so, he said, “That’s what my Islamic studies teacher said. They said the Christians, they changed the Bible so that’s why they’re, they’re doing the wrong, they follow the wrong path. But if they just listened and they didn’t change the Bible, they would be like Muslims, good believers and everything.” When I asked him what was changed in the Bible, he said he did not know, and that the Islamic studies teacher did not explain that for them.

This kind of education is another example of moral absolutism, which may not prepare Faris and his classmates to communicate, accept, and live with other people who follow a religion different from their own. I think that students in a multicultural and democratic society have the right to question other people's religions, and to try to understand how and why their religion is different from others, but they need to keep in mind that this is part of learning about diversity within their society, and how to deliberate in a democratic way the meaning of good life and not to judge if other people are on the right or the wrong path.

The idea of moral absolutism may lead not only to judging people from a different religion but also to judging people within the same religion. According to Faris, all Muslims need to follow Islamic instructions. Otherwise, they are bad Muslims. He explained, "Because they just act like Americans. Like they don't pray, they don't do Dua [personal prayer or supplication] they don't read the Quran." I believe that this is another indicator of a deterministic understanding of religion as if there is only one group of Muslims who hold a monopoly over God's instructions, which may lead to intolerance within the same religion.

In another example, Faris said that the Islamic studies teacher told them that if they are not praying three times a day, then they are not Muslims. In addition, he said, "If he's not acting it [the prayer], he doesn't care. Let's say he says, 'oh, no, it's okay. I don't want to do it. It's okay if I only pray once a week,' then I'll say, 'okay, he's not acting like a real Muslim and he's not doing what he's supposed to do, even though he knows he's supposed to do that, that means he's not a Muslim.'" I think this is another example of a dogmatic teaching about Islam where students think they have the right to judge the religiosity of other Muslims. In addition, ignoring the moral purpose of praying and how it is connected to good citizenry should be another component of religious education.

Unlike critical scholars who believe that Othering leads to an automatic feeling of oppression (Burney, 2012; Kumashiro, 2000) this theme shows that a transition from one regime of truth to another may lead to a better understanding of the self and one's religious identity. In other words, the encounter between Muslim students and their interaction with non-Muslim students who are different from their own faith, culture, and life style can lead to liberating them from a dogmatic understanding of religion and to question other issues regarding their religiosity. This insight is useful at the theoretical level in terms of understanding that Foucault's (1980a) theory of power-knowledge and Bhabha's (1994) conceptualizing of hybridity challenge the zero-sum assumption in some critical theory, which assumes that in education there are always two groups, dominant and dominated people, and that schools are the site for either resistance or social reproduction.

For instance, Hamza said that the encounter with students who do not believe in God lets him think about his own faith and to try to reason why he believes in what he believes. For instance, he met a student who believed in the Big Bang theory, and in order to justify his own faith, he said, "Eventually, I'm like, there has to be a creator to all of this. So to say you believe in God for a second, God created the atom. The atom created the chemical. And the chemical created your Big Bang that you keep talking about. And then the dust of the earth was formed." But this process of questioning or having critical thinking about religion is not an easy mission, and Hamza reported that he felt guilty in doing that. He said, "I didn't, I never fully said, 'oh, I'm gonna be Christian.' I started thinking this and this happened but in Islam, this and this and this happened. They're similar but not the same. I just started questioning it and I knew as soon as I questioned it, it was bad. It was really bad."

Also, Hamza started to question other Islamic practices and why he was doing them, “Like oh, why do you guys pray five times a day? Said I honestly don’t know. Now that I look back on it, I should’ve said, ‘oh, to remind us that there’s always a God, he’s always watching us and that there’s always gonna be a hereafter that we have to prepare for.’ So mostly just prayer and my view on religion that was questioned.”

In this regard I agree with (Feinberg, 2006) that one of the dilemmas in religious and faith-based education is how to teach religion in a non-dogmatic way. On the one hand these schools want to convey religious values and ideals from one generation to the next, and on the other hand living in a multicultural, democratic, and multi-faith society such as the U.S. pushes religious citizens to question and to rationalize their own practices and to accept the fact that their faith is one among multiple systems which claim the truth about the meaning of life or the nature of the good life in a democratic society. In other words, the transition from Islamic to public schools lets Muslim students develop some kind of critical religiosity where they feel that a religion can be open for review and discussion and that human beings can choose the religion which fits their needs and common sense. This, I think, will help Muslim students to explain to others and for themselves why Islam is a good religion.

Another example of the dogmatic interpretation of religion was raised by Hamza, who told a story of one female Muslim student who decided to take off the *hijab* when she moved to public school. He said, “She wanted to fit in. She said she never liked the *hijab*, whatever you want to call it, and she said, ‘oop, I don’t like it, I’m not gonna wear it, cuz no one else is wearing it. Very few people were wearing it.’” Adam added, in this regard, that the idea of wearing the *hijab*, although it was mentioned clearly in the Quran, should be a personal decision and should not be forced on females, as it happens in Islamic schools.

I think that the act of taking off the *hijab* is another indicator of the lack of moral reasoning in Islamic education; students need to question why the *hijab* is important, and how this is going to help them become good believers. That is, I think that the idea of piety is a matter of individual decision, which can be shaped or reshaped through dialogue with difference. The encounter between Muslim students and public schools let them think beyond the collective nature of their religious education, where they used to practice their own religion in order to meet the cultural expectations of their parents and other believers. This kind of thinking, I believe, is key element in helping students understand the rationale behind religious practices and developing their critical religiosity.

Living in a liberal and democratic society will push Muslims and perhaps other religious groups to become critical about their own religion and to revise it if needed. This allows Muslim students to understand the need for Islamic values and ideals and how they fit within the life of a democratic and pluralistic society. My understanding of critical religiosity challenges the postcolonial dichotomy between Islam and democracy as it is portrayed by some scholars who viewed the West as democratic, and Islam and the East as incompatible with democracy (Huntington, 1996; Fradkin, 2013).

In explaining the liberating function of public education, Adam argued that he did not recommend that Muslim students stick with their friends from the Islamic school, and he wanted Muslim students to think of their transition as a learning opportunity. He said, “When I hear Muslim, usually Muslims usually have, usually, the same theories as each other. But non-Muslims, they, they have different theories than us. So my theory and their theory, when they get combined, it’s a great theory.” In addition, he recognized that he cannot judge non-Muslims’

behaviors based on his own values because they might have different religious and cultural values.

In addition, the lack of reasoning in religious education may lead to misinterpretation of religious teaching. Adam protested not allowing male kids to wear shorts in school by saying, “Some people say it’s wrong if boys wear shorts. I think it’s right.” He explained,

Because *'Awrah* [the intimate parts of human body which must be covered in public in Islam] is from your knees to your belly button and that’s a very, if you think that’s a very freely, your chest is showing and so is your legs. I think that’s very freely but people think that you should just cover; people think boys should cover, should just wear pants and long sleeved t-shirts or short sleeve t-shirts.

As a Muslim, I do not know about any Islamic tradition which prevents children from wearing shorts, as Adam described above. This is another example of the danger of monopoly over religion, which may lead to oppression in the name of God. It seems that advocating for Islam in the West requires not only explaining this religion to non-Muslims but also correcting some of the Islamic misunderstanding among Muslims too.

Also, Adam supported the liberating function of public schools by arguing that public education allowed him to see the rationale and the benefits of some of his Islamic values. Adam said that he appreciated his religion much better when he was not in the Islamic school, because this allowed him to see the consequences of breaking the laws of Islam, such as drinking alcohol. He explained, “But in Islamic school, they just say drinking is *haram* and I don’t, I don’t understand why it’s *haram* and what kind of consequences it can get you into. When I go to public school, I see what consequences it can get you into and the kind of trouble and I thank Allah for making it *haram* in that situation.” He added, “Because I see what, I see why Allah

made it *haram* and what kind of trouble it can get you into. And I also, I also learn new ideals and new thoughts, new reasons.”

In short, as Muslim students transition from Islamic to public school, the process through which they develop their hybrid identities includes both elements of resistance, Muslim students’ desire to keep their own religious identity, and liberation, where they think critically about their own religious values and beliefs and how they fit with common sense and life in a democratic country. The liberating function of Othering in this study challenges the meaning of oppression as it is viewed in critical theory, and it gives an alternative interpretation to students’ agency as a discourse-based and dynamic activity.

The Tension between American and Diasporic Identities

Adam expressed another dilemma in his need to negotiate between the diasporic culture of his father and the liberal values of public education. He argued that public schools allow Muslim students to challenge some of the thinking patterns that their parents bring from their home countries before they migrated to the U.S. For instance, he argued that “Arabs, in general, Arabs think that their sons and daughters have to be engineers, lawyers or doctors. If you ask my dad what he wants me to be, it’s a doctor.” He explained that his mom and dad are different in their thinking in this regard, because his mom is American born, she does not think he needs to become a doctor. He added that many Arab students are forced to study subjects that they do not like, and that public schools expose students to different jobs that they can do later in their lives. The limited understanding of success among Muslims parents was repeated by Dani who said, “Well, my parents, they want, like me and my brothers, to become like doctors or engineers so we can make, like, we’d have a good profit and a good family and a great life. And that everything will hopefully become easy for us.” At the same time, he argued that in his public

school he got the opportunity to participate in a program which confirmed his interest in the health jobs.

Apparently many Muslims who migrate to the U.S. believe in education as a mechanism for social mobility, but at the same time they have a limited understanding of success, which makes them push their kids towards specific jobs where they can get good money and prestigious status. Perhaps we can explain that based on Ogbu's and Simon's (1998) cultural-ecology theory who explained that voluntary immigrants and refugees who come to the U.S. tend to perform better than native minorities because they hold an optimistic belief that they will go ahead in the social ladder after they adapt to the new society and pass its linguistic and cultural obstacles. Warikoo and Carter (2009) added "Although they [immigrant students] potentially face both cultural invisibility and conflict in classrooms, voluntary minorities will perform better than native minorities, as they take a relativist stance and perceive that their conditions are better than those in either their parents' or their native lands" (p. 370). However, liberal education in public schools challenges the Muslim parents' definition of success by allowing kids to know and think about alternative fields and jobs that they can do in their lives.

Adam added that when students choose their career they will enjoy their work in the future and they will do it much better and this will help in defending Islam as well. Apparently, Muslim students' learning experience in public school will help them rethink the cultural assumptions of their parents about schooling and to establish an alternative view of their future. Ahmed added that his dad wants him to become a doctor, and his mom does not think so, because she was born in the U.S., went to public school, and she thinks that there are other jobs that he can do if he decides to. Adam added that he got the opportunity to listen to his dad's and

his mom's views, and that he sometimes agreed with his mom's side, and sometimes with his dad's perspective.

In addition, by having parents from the U.S. and from the Middle East, Adam came to distinguish between Islamic-American culture and Islamic non-American culture. For instance, he said his dad's family thinks that it is wrong to interact with girls, and that he needs to marry at the age of 18. However, he disagreed with his dad's family by arguing, "That's the culture of, that's the culture of Muslim countries, of marrying young. But here, the culture is finishing school so you can help better support the family. So I mean, I, I get, like most, most non-Muslims, or no, most Americans get married at 26."

Because of these situations Adam came to understand that there should not be confusion between culture and religion. In other words, what is not acceptable in Arabic culture in a Middle Eastern country should not be translated into *haram* or forbidden in the American culture. I assume that this confusion happens because some immigrant parents want their kids to be educated the way they were themselves educated in their countries of origin. Because of that, they use the Islamic religion in order to justify and to approve their cultural practices. For instance, Adam said that if wearing shorts for boys is not acceptable in his dad's culture, this should not be banned as if it was *haram* in the U.S. He argued, "*Haram* and wrong are totally different things. *haram* is forbidden. It's, it's bad to do. It's forbidden by *Allah Subhānahu wa ta'āla* (the majestic and perfect God) in Islam. Wrong is when it's in the culture, when it's wrong in the culture. That doesn't mean it's *haram*."

Adam argued that he has an advantage from having parents from both Arab and American cultures, and studying in both Islamic and public schools, because he can get the ideals

from both sides and to establish his own theory of understanding of culture and religion. He argued,

So I get to see both views and I get to learn from one side and I get to be in the middle so I get both ideals and I get to, I get to interpret. Like my mom, she gives me her ideals and my dad gives me his ideals on a situation, but the end, it's my ideals that I take.

This section shows that Islam, like any other religion, can be interpreted differently in different cultures and that religion and culture may interact, inform, and shape each other. It also shows that immigrant Muslim parents in the American context need to be more flexible in terms of allowing more space for their children to develop their own religious and American identities. Apparently, it is not enough for Muslim parents to use the religious language in order to defend their own culture and they need perhaps to be open for alternative interpretations of Islam and to develop better and more convincing arguments in explaining their own culture. The story of Adam in this section shows the tension between first and second generations of Muslim Americans about the meaning of hybridity and the interpretation of religion and culture.

Islamophobia, Transnationalism, and Ideological Stereotyping in Public Schools

Two of the students in this study explained that they faced several discriminatory incidents because of their status as minority students in their public school. These incidents, I argue, reflect the lack of knowledge about Islam or the general fear of Muslims in the larger society. For instance, Adam told the story of being othered because of his food and because of his beliefs, and this led to bullying against him. He said, "Bullying, because I'm a minority. I'm from a different... people think, people think I was not born in this country. People think that I'm... actually, people think I'm stupid and I don't know what."

In addition, he added that one of the students wanted to fight him because he was different. He said, “Yeah. A kid wanted to fight me because he called me a terrorist and I ended up fighting him. I don’t, I’m not, I believe it’s wrong to fight but I had to fight in that situation because it was something I stood up for and I believe in and I wouldn’t let it be talked down upon.” This example shows how the discourse of Islamophobia and the fear of Islam lead to ideological stereotyping against Muslims in public schools. Adam added, “Muslims these days are considered terrorists. I mean, if you look up the definition of terrorism, it’s a group of people that try to change government or economic ways... And most people think Muslims are terrorists, or jihadists, or *Jihād*⁴ [to struggle in the way of God] is when you fight for the sake of God. Only in a war, that people are killing other people, not just to go out and like 9/11, not just to go out and bomb people. Those are not, they may say they’re Muslims, but they’re not Muslims.” Adam feels that there is a misconception and misunderstanding about Islam in American society, and that Islam needs to be clarified, not only for non-Muslims but also for Muslims who misinterpret Islamic concepts and view terrorism as an act of *Jihād*.

Adam mentioned another story of one social studies teacher in the fifth grade – who was the leader of the students’ council – who wanted him to play Osama Bin Laden in the talent show of the school. When I asked him why the teacher chose him for this role, he said “because of my Islamic name.” He added that he told his parents about that and they contacted CARE (Council on American-Islamic Relations), who came and talked about Islam in the school’s assembly. He said, “The principal thought it was wrong for the teacher to, to do it so he allowed CARE to

⁴ According to Ayoob (2008), the term has been conventionally interpreted as armed struggle by Muslims to defend or Advance Islam against unbelievers. After a saying of the Prophet, some traditions emphasize “greater *Jihad*,” which means struggle against one’s inner temptations, as opposed to “lesser *Jihad*,” which connotes armed struggle.

come and give a speech and he, he made the teacher write a hand written apology note to me and my parents.”

This example shows that practices of Othering may function not only in the media and at the political level, but also in the relationships between Muslim students and their teachers as well. Assuming that the discourse of Islamophobia has penetrated public education in the U.S., I argue that teacher education programs and different districts in the U.S. need to pay much more attention to the growing hatred against Islam and Muslims in this country, and to how schools and teachers in public schools, can provide a safe environment for Muslim students in which to live, based on their values and ideals, and to express their own identities.

Dani reported other incidents which support my argument. For instance, he said, “There’s a couple people here at my school, like they’re always coming up to me, they call me like terrorist and stuff.” He added, “I think I have two hours with them but like whenever we interact in the hallways or maybe at lunch, there’d definitely be like some discrimination. And there was actually one point where they called me a terrorist and I showed them the definition of terrorist in the dictionary and it said nowhere that you had to be, it didn’t say that you had to be a Muslim to be a terrorist.” He also complained that when he told the teachers and the principal about these students, “nothing really happened”.

In another situation, after the Boston bombing, one of his classmates said, “Where’s Muhammad at cuz he didn’t see me that day and he said you guys heard about what happened in Boston, right? And that’s the reason he’s not here right now. Cuz he was presuming that I was being, like I was the one that bombed it.” Dani said that one teacher promised to punish this student and other students who used to tease him, but nothing happened. When I asked him how he dealt with this problem, he said that he did not fight them because violence will make the

situation worst, and he preferred to solve this problem verbally. He said that he tried to talk to these students in order to explain why they were wrong in their views about Islam, but few were listening to him, and this was, he argued, because of ignorance or arrogance.

In another incident, he said, “There was something on Facebook. My friend, well, not really my friend but he put a picture of a camel sitting in a parking lot...And then he wrote as the caption, this is when you know Muhammad Dani’s at an airport. So I got really mad about that. I’ve blocked him and done everything I could to stay away from him. Even at school.” The use of the camel as an indicator for the primitive East is another example of ideological stereotyping; it shows how Oriental discourse in the U.S. is produced and reproduced through the social media and the pop culture of American society. At the same time, it shows the need for action at the system level in order to challenge the stereotypical understanding of Islam and Arabs in the west, and to protect Muslims children from such racial statements.

When I asked Dani where these behaviors or racial discrimination came from, he said, Well, I think it’s the way that the Western society’s media portrays how Muslims are acting because of a few occasions that they’ve actually been liked tied to. For example, the 2001 terrorist attack, after that example, a lot of media sources in the United States have been targeting Muslims as their like prime topic and you hear a lot on the news about something Muslims have done. And sometimes, like I wonder why it is always Muslims that they’re blaming. There has to be like other people in the world besides Muslims that are doing something.

Dani’s point highlights the need for a critical social studies education where students become more critical about the influence of the media, because they need to learn how important it is to make the distinction between facts and opinions and that the media may reflect biased agendas in

the larger society. I believe that classes in world and American history can be great spaces where teachers can discuss with their students how discourses of the Other have been produced against different groups in American society, and how, for instance, individuals such as Martin Luther King in the U.S. and Mahatma Gandhi in India produced the counter-discourse of resistance against racial segregation in America and the British colonization of India. In addition, social studies teachers can discuss with their students how discourses of Orientalism may influence American foreign policy and U.S. intervention in Islamic countries. Achieving more justice in American society requires students to develop a better understanding of the politics of difference and that discourses of Othering, which work through discursive and non-discursive methods, may take place within the historical, social, and political spheres of our everyday life.

Dani added that he was frustrated because of the lack of action against the students who teased him, and therefore in the future he wished to be able to move to the Islamic high school in another city. He believed that “racial discrimination just gets worse with age, especially in high school where there are like people that would really bully you for your religion. So I think it would be safer to go to an Islamic high school.”

Although these Muslim students faced patterns of Islamophobia in their schooling, Adam was optimistic in terms of how to change the stereotypes against Muslims in public schools. He said, “So if like let’s say I didn’t go to [name of one city in Midwest] and 9/11 happened, they’re gonna think, they’re gonna think Muslims are terrorists but because I go to [the same city mentioned above] and they know I’m a down to earth, humble, nice guy, they’re gonna be like that’s wrong. And they’re gonna fight for Islam.” In other words, Adam viewed his transition to public school as an opportunity to let non-Muslims learn about his own religion. He believed that

advocating for Islam should not be limited to Muslims, but also non-Muslims who will get to know good Muslims, will learn about this religion, and will advocate for Islam as well.

In addition, being a minority student in school allowed Adam to challenge the Eurocentric bias of the social studies curriculum. He said, for instance, “Most teachers are usually white so the textbook is written also by mostly white people so the whites in the textbook are, are put in a much greater status than minorities are”. He added that the knowledge about Islam and Muslims is lacking in the world history textbook and there is only one page about Islam. Because of that the social studies teacher allowed him to share about his own religion and to answer students’ questions. Involving Muslim students in such activities can be an empowering experience for them because it legitimizes their own identities. In addition, it brings the voices of students from the margin into the center of the mainstream curriculum, and this can be a good method to challenge the increasing Islamophobia in American society.

Adam in this study had a similar idea to the one mentioned by Edward in Chapter Two. He believed that advocating for Islam requires that Muslim students in the U.S. be more active in American life through occupying jobs beyond being a doctor or a lawyer. He said, “We have enough doctors as Muslims. We need, we need journalists, we need psychiatrists, we need teachers. We need, we need everything to help increase Islam. Doctors are not gonna help, and I mean, they’re gonna help increase Islam but not as a journalist would. Cuz a journalist, if he’s writing about 9/11, he’s gonna write good about Muslims, not bad.” This statement echoes Edward’s argument that Muslims need to be more engaged in the American life and to share their input in order to fix the misconception about Muslims and Islam in the U.S.

Adam added, “Most people, most people listen to media and most media says Muslims are terrorists. But when you’re a social worker, social workers interact with many people, and

when those people know you're Muslim, and they know how good you are, they change their views and ways." All these examples show that Adam felt that his religious identity needed to be protected through changing the image of Islam in his society. Perhaps the limited understanding of success within the immigrant Muslims – which I mentioned earlier in the previous theme – has to be changed in order to make Muslims more invisible and perhaps influential in the American society.

It is worth adding that Muslim students' identification with their own country and their sense of belonging can be interrupted by the history of their country and its imperial agenda in the Middle East. The tension between national and transnational identities that I described in Chapter Two appeared again in the interview with Hamza, who said, "Well, the way that I was brought up was the old school style of Egyptian... So I consider myself just flat out Egyptian cuz I just, I enjoy my culture and enjoy my life. I enjoy my nationality. I'm very proud of it." But when I asked him if he defines himself as Egyptian-American he said "Do not call me American ... Well, 1973, America fueled Israel with weapons to help destroy Egypt when they were having a war, battle. So it kinda irks me that instead of helping out the Egyptians, it kinda helped out our enemy. Like out of all the enemies, they chose Israel that was trying to destroy us all. So I look at myself more of the Egyptian because, an Egyptian American that doesn't really mix with me." Later on and towards the end of the interview, Hamza admitted that he liked the American life but he felt the Egyptian heritage and life-style as stronger in his life.

This finding supports the results from Chapter Two in this dissertation about the love-hate relationship that Muslim and Arab students develop towards their own country. In fact, it emphasizes the ambivalent relationship that Muslims students develop towards their own country

and how elements of history, religiosity, and culture increase the tension between their national and transnational identities.

Conclusions

In the literature review I assumed that religious and secular education represent two different discourses, apparatuses of knowledge, and forms of normativity that naturalize certain concepts of being and of living. In addition, I assumed that identities are socially constructed, and they are positioned within a specific time, place, and context. Exploring the meaning of being educated in both Islamic and public education adds to our understanding of how Muslim students negotiate different discourses of education, how they advocate for themselves, and how they establish a balance between their religious and civic identities.

Indeed, this chapter shows that schools are not neutral institutions, but they are social spaces with a disciplining power which works through specific language, knowledge, and pedagogy and influence students' subjectivities and their identities. These discourses determine how students behave, think, feel, and interact with each other. In fact, schools are places where identities are shaped, reshaped, contested, and emerged. This study examined the storied experiences of Muslim students who have studied in both Islamic and public schools, and brought their struggles, conflicts, and efforts to balance their religious identities and the cultural expectations of public education.

This chapter aims to bring the voices of Muslim students from the margins to the mainstream culture of schooling in the U.S. and to explain the conflicts and struggles they face in order to fit in within public education. It shows that these students used several strategies through which they negotiate their identities and develop their hybrid identities with some kind of critical

religiosity. That is, students used their bodies, language, and communicating with peers in order to maintain and revise some of their particular values and ideals.

It is worth noting that developing a hybrid identity among Muslim students in this study was not symmetric and it was influenced by the way individual students positioned themselves and others (non-Muslims) and interpreted the two discourses they experienced in their transition. The idea of hybridity, or perhaps multiple hybridities in this study, highlight the significance human beings' agency and the dynamic process through which they defined and redefined their identities.

The study showed how the politics of difference within public schools contoured the way subaltern students communicated their bodies, revised their conceptions of the self, challenged processes of Othering, produced a counter-narrative of resistance, and developed their own space of self-expression. In this regard, the use of Bhabha's theory of postcolonialism, and Foucault's theory of power/knowledge challenged the neo-Marxist understanding of power which assumed a zero-sum game between the oppressor and the oppressed and instead it allowed for a relational conception of power where individuals can claim more agency and active role in the developing of their identities. According to Dussel (2010), "There is no single power that can be located at a given place; it is some sort of an analytic grid or logbook that helps us understand how subjects relate to each other and how institutions are organized. It is a relationship that can be exercised from outside inside and from inside outside" (p. 29).

By the same token, and as I showed in this study, the relational perception of power challenged the one-dimensional and repressive meaning of Othering (Kumashiro, 2000) and that students who transit from religious to public schools may experience some kind of liberating Othering. Apparently the meaning and the effect of Othering is very subjective and it is related to

how students are positioned and how they situate themselves within the power relationships of their schooling.

At the same time the study raised questions about the role of Islamic and public schools in helping Muslim students to have a smooth transition from their religious to public education. As I explained earlier, dogmatic education in Islamic schools will increase students' tensions and misunderstanding of the American multicultural and multi-faith society and this adds to their alienation and struggle in public schools (and perhaps in the larger society as well). In addition, teachers in public schools may need to work more in terms of listening to Muslim students and learning about their cultural, ethical, and religious needs. For instance, all students in this study talked about the significance of studying Arabic as a second language in order to keep up with their religion and this can be one idea that public schools may consider since many of them require their students to take a foreign language class.

Furthermore, and considering the growing Islamophobia in the larger society and the lack of knowledge or the misrepresentation of Muslims in the U.S., public schools may cooperate with local Islamic organizations in order to counter the misconceptions about Islam, to show the diversity among Muslims in the world, and to encourage students' critical thinking about the media and its role in producing and reproducing the negative images about Muslim people. Individual teachers may invite guest speakers from the local community to their classrooms so that they talk about their religions, its universal values, and how it may contribute to the welfare of all citizens.

CHAPTER FOUR

Rethinking Religiosity, Othering, and the Cultivation of Muslim Students' Identities in Islamic and Public Schools in the U.S.

In this dissertation I have explored the intersection between religion, identity, and democracy, how Muslim social studies teachers understand the meaning of citizenship education, and how Muslim students develop and negotiate their identities in their transition from Islamic to public schools. In this dissertation I used postcolonial theory for three reasons. First it gives a better explanation about the status of Muslims in western societies in general, and in the U.S. in particular, and considers the growing Islamophobia in these societies and its problematic roots in the relationship between the West and the East. In addition, postcolonial theory, and particularly the contributions of Edward Said (1978), Robert Young (1990), and Gayatri Spivak (1991), provide a good framework to understand the dynamic relationship between western societies and their Islamic minorities and the processes through which these minorities are marginalized and represented as the Other. My dissertation shows the significance of schooling in challenging these discourses through bringing in the voices of the subaltern Muslim students and teachers and their struggles.

Summary of Major Findings

As I showed in Chapter Two, Muslim social studies teachers do not think there is adequate or accurate representation of Islam and Muslims in the curriculum, and therefore one teacher mentioned that he brings in his own personal reflections and historical experiences in order to explain that Islamophobia is just one discourse of Othering among others which have occurred against other minority groups in American history. In fact, he wanted his students to believe in American democracy, and that active citizenship, social movements, and democratic

deliberation do make a difference in the life and status of minority groups such as African-Americans, Jews, and Chinese in American society.

Chapter Two shows that the idea of subalternity is not detached from the mutual relationship between the local and the global because discourses of Othering and imperialism at the global level inform the discourses of marginalization against Arabs and Muslims at the local level. The love-hate relationship that Muslim-American students develop towards the U.S. allows us to see the complexity of identity politics and that social studies teachers' efforts to educate for multicultural and democratic citizenship may need to consider concepts of empire, postcolonialism, and transnationalism; to explain how they function within our interconnected and globalized world; and to learn how they influence people's sense of belonging, recognition, and representation. Since Islamophobia is an Oriental discourse which increases the tension between Muslim students' religious and national identities, and since Islamophobia has its own roots in the historical divide between West and East (Said, 1997), postcolonial pedagogy (Merryfield, 2001) in Islamic and perhaps in public schools may help students learn how systems of knowledge (education, media, popular culture, and the political system) produce and subjugate the Orient, and how this is related to the asymmetrical power relationship between the U.S. and Islamic countries.

Chapter Three supports this argument and it shows how the discourse of Orientalism affects the interaction between Muslim students, their non-Muslim peers, and teachers in public schools. This chapter shows that the lack of knowledge and the misrepresentation of Islam in the larger public, and the misunderstanding of Islam among non-Muslim teachers, may lead to further discrimination and stereotyping against Muslim students. Here I support Adams (2007) and Burke and Segall (2011) in their analysis of the oppressive mechanisms of public schools

and why religious belonging should be included as another category of oppressed group besides gender, race, class, and ethnicity.

The use of postcolonial theory was very useful in understanding the development of Muslim students' religious identities. Here I relied on Bhabha's (1994) theory of hybridity in order to explain the lived experiences of Muslim students in their transition from Islamic to public schools in one city in the Midwest. I found that this transition allowed students to develop some kind of hybrid identity which is similar to the encounter between the colonizer and the colonized in previously colonized societies. This encounter between Muslim students and public schools let them develop a third space of identity negotiation where they questioned their own religiosity, and at the same time the secular climate of these schools. This finding fits other scholars' analysis of identity formation, which is a dynamic, socially constructed, and ongoing process of "becoming" (Hall, 1994).

From a theoretical perspective, Rizvi, Lingard and Lavia (2006) argued that the idea of hybridity is the antidote for cultural essentialism, but it is still not clear "how hybridity takes place, the form it takes in a particular context, the consequences it has for particular cultural groups, and when and how particular hybrid formations are progressive or regressive" (p. 254). In my dissertation, and particularly in Chapter Three, I clarified some of these concerns, such as the meaning of hybridity in the context of religious education and the different methods used by Muslim students in establishing their third space of articulation. In this regard I found that religious hybridity is context-based, and it is personal and related to the status of individuals within different systems of knowledge and how they interpret them. It is an ongoing process of trying to achieve equilibrium between individuals' past and present educational experiences. It may help students to achieve a deeper understanding of their own religion, and it is manifested

through the use of language, body, and interpersonal relationships. At the same time, and from a critical perspective, the idea of hybridity disproves the concept of religious and cultural essentialism which is at the heart of Oriental discourses in showing Islamic identity as static, and not flexible or compatible with the life and values of western societies.

Also, in developing hybrid identity students may experience both the oppressive and liberating sides of public education through which they revise their understanding of the self, their religious subjectivities, and how to function within the changing environment around them. Here I found Foucault's theory of power/knowledge very useful, because he assumed the dispersion of power does not necessarily function as a form of oppression which works in a top-down direction or through one central organizing principal (as assumed by neo-Marxist scholars). Foucault's understanding of power/knowledge is very helpful for understanding the politics of difference and that human beings construct and reconstruct their subjectivities based on the discourses of power they experience in their lives. Following Foucault's analysis, one can argue that religious and public schools represent two different regimes of truth, and this truth is determined through multiple practices and performances which verify what students wear and eat; how they behave, speak with friends, and interact with peers and teachers; and how they think and view their own identities.

According to Foucault, as we saw in Chapter Three, power embodies productive mechanism; it is never singular, one-directional, or fully controllable. Also, power relationships within a specific discourse have the potential of shaping the subjectivity of human beings. Therefore, I assumed that both religious and public education have their own practices, norms, values, and a "gaze" through which they define for students how to see, experience, and understand the world. If students who study in Islamic schools develop a specific subjectivity

which fits the disciplining power (values, attitudes, and behaviors expected in these schools), then their transition to public school requires them to develop alternative technologies of the self in order to meet the norms and knowledge circulated in public schools. In fact, each Islamic and public school exercises power upon its students through defining the meaning of private and public space differently. Muslims students, as a result of this transition, develop a hybrid space of continuity and change through which they rethink their behaviors, beliefs, and values in order to fit the new environment of public education.

The disciplining power of Islamic and public schools “applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects” (Foucault, 1982, p. 781). What Foucault means here is the production of a subject who “is tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge” (p. 781). The analysis of the findings in Chapter Three confirms Foucault’s analysis on the power of discourses and that we can view religious and public schools as two different systems of power/knowledge which influence students’ identities and their perceptions of the self.

Chapter Three does not explore the nature of the power relationships or how they function in Islamic or public schools, but how they are conceived and interpreted by Muslim students. Here I found that the idea of Othering in public schools may not necessarily lead to students’ oppression. This insight recognizes the possible oppressive aspect of public schools, as they rely in their practices on many of the Christian values and heritage (Blumenfeld, 2006; Burke & Segall, 2011), but I emphasized also the agency and the active role of students in interpreting, revising, and even rejecting the epistemological and ethical classifications of

knowledge they face in their schools. Perhaps scholars should be more careful when they talk about religious oppression in public schools because religious identity, as I show in this dissertation, is constantly changing and is negotiated through space, time, and place. If Islamic schools ascribe a religious identity to Muslim students, then their transition to public schools may allow them to choose, understand, reject, and declare some aspects of their identities. That is, the transition from Islamic to public schools and their interaction with non-Islamic students, teachers, ideologies, and perspectives may help them develop some kind of critical and reflexive religiosity.

Chapter Three of this dissertation shows that religion can be carried by individuals, and it can be open to discussion and negotiation based on people's interactions and their engagement in systems of representation and recognition (Nasir & Hand, 2006). This chapter shows the power of schools as social institutions in drawing the boundaries of their students' identities and the possibilities for students to define, negotiate, and shape their religious identities through questioning, critical thinking, religious performance, and the use of other symbols and methods of representation.

As I said earlier, being the Other in the context of religious education does not necessarily mean to be oppressed. Apparently, this may also lead to students' enlightenment in terms of being more critical about their own beliefs and religious practices and to become more aware about the place of Islam within the larger and multi-faith society of America. Thus, the consequences of Othering depend on how Muslim students conceive of themselves within systems of knowledge, power, and representation, as well as their interaction with non-Muslim students and teachers. It will be interesting to explore, for a future research, if this is unique to Muslim students or if it is also relevant to students from other religious minorities.

Chapter Three clarifies some of the technologies of the self used by Muslim students in order to adapt to the new environment of public schools. Technologies of the self according to Foucault are “the many ways in which we as individuals engage with the laws and norms of our culture, respond to the discourses and the forces of power that have shaped our identity and sense of self, and thereby manage ourselves” (Schirato, Danaher, & Webb, 2012, p. 164). This chapter showed that the construction of religious identity encompasses a self-representation and the management of verbal and visual impressions. For instance, Muslim students in this chapter developed a counter-discourse of resistance to some behaviors in public schools through their use of the Arabic language and the communication of their bodies.

Another important contribution of this dissertation, something discussed in both Chapters Two and Three, is the significance of students’ critical understanding of the ethical foundations of their own religion and how it contributes to the common good of their democratic and diverse society. Education for critical religiosity can be relevant not only to Muslim students but also to students who belong to other denominations and who need perhaps to question how their principles and values may contribute to life in a multicultural and democratic society. In this regard I argue that religion, like any other system of morality, may contribute, if considered in a democratic deliberation, to the welfare of many citizens.

According to Habermas (2010), “If religiously justified stances are accorded a legitimate place in the public sphere, however, the political community officially recognizes that religious utterances can make a meaningful contribution to clarifying controversial questions of principle” (pp. 21-22). This means that secular citizens in liberal states need to recognize that religious expressions and thoughts might have their own logic and rationale, and they should not be automatically excluded from political and social deliberation in democratic societies. Other

scholars of education (Arthur, Gearon, & Sears, 2010) argued that it is not only unjust, it is also unwise to exclude religious voices and communities from processes of public deliberation because, “Religious world views offer an important counterpoint and check to the dominant secular ideology” (p. 5). Even if religious propositions and claims may not work in harmony with democracy, the possible conflict between them is valuable for democracy (Arthur, Gearon, & Sears, 2010).

In addition, as I showed in Chapter Two, educators in religious schools should be careful not to indoctrinate their students to believe that their religion is the only way to interpret or fix injustices in social life. Perhaps they can help them think why their way or life is much more “moral” than other people, but students need to recognize that they cannot impose their morality on other people, and that there are multiple moral systems and beliefs in a multicultural and multi-faith society. In addition, moral absolutism or a monopoly over religion can be dangerous not only for life in a democratic society but also for diversity within the same religion. When Muslim students think that they have the right to judge other Muslims based on their own knowledge and understanding of Islam, this may lead to further discrimination and the exclusion of other narratives and identities within the same religion. Critical religious education requires teachers in religious schools to have a balance between education for religious purposes (conveying the religion as the right doctrine for a good life) and teaching religion for educational purposes (to learn how religious values and principals can contribute to life in a democratic and multicultural society).

Non-dogmatic religious education may allow students to recognize and respect other arrangements of morality within the larger and diverse society, and to recognize that there might be multiple and contested interpretations of the same religious text. Critical religiosity, which is

based on moral reasoning, reflective thinking, and critical questioning, enables students to examine the attitudes, agendas, and truth claims by different scholars and religious leaders. This is important because religion, like any other system of knowledge, can be used in the service of cultural, ethnic, and racial groups too (Adams, 2007). According to Smith (2011), schools in a diverse society need to teach students a way of not avoiding moral dilemmas and conflicts but to be engaged actively in a process of moral deliberation. In this regard, the story of Faris and his narrow-minded and strict understanding of religion, presented in Chapter Three, shows the significance of teaching that any religious text is open for multiple interpretations, can be debatable, and may not fit life in a democratic society.

The idea of moral reasoning came across in the interviews with Hamza and Adam, presented in Chapter Three, who started, after leaving their Islamic school, to question their own faith and behaviors, to compare them to other philosophies and perspectives, and to rationalize the meaning of *Haram*, and why they are not supposed to behave like their peers in public school.

Habermas (2010) rejected the polarization between faith and knowledge “which became an empirical feature of European modernity” (p. 22), and he argued that religious claims should not exclude scientific reasoning or what he called postmetaphysical thinking, if it aims to be legitimized as another source of modern reason. He said, “...it is also a matter of religious consciousness becoming reflexive when confronted with the necessity of relating its articles of faith to competing systems of belief and to the scientific monopoly on the production of factual knowledge” (p. 21). Thus, I believe that critical Islamic education which allows students to discuss the rationales behind Islamic values and ideals in their classrooms will prepare them for a smoother transition to public school and life in a democratic country.

Finally, I show in Chapter Three that Muslim students feel that they need to compromise between their own religion and their desire to succeed in the future. It is not clear why education in an Islamic school, besides the lack of resources, is not compatible with the standards of public education. Further research is needed in this area in order to clarify if it is a problem of the school under inquiry, or if it is a general phenomenon regarding Islamic education in the U.S.

Recommendations for Practice

The experiences of Muslim students in Chapter Two and Chapter Three raise the significance of education for diversity in public schools, and the importance of recognizing the life experiences of religious minority students, their needs, funds of knowledge, ethical world, and their conceptualizing of the self. According to Thouless (1971), religion serves several functions in the lives of human beings. For instance, it gives them guidance on how to behave at the moral level, and it fills some of the needs which are not fully satisfied elsewhere, such as “the need for security, the need for love, the need for self-esteem, and the need created by the inevitability of death” (p. 17). In addition, religion gives “a framework for understanding the meaning and direction of human existence...connections among individuals or groups of individuals and a greater whole...legitimacy for actions taken by individuals, groups, or nations” (Adams, 2007, p. 248). In short, religion helps human beings to organize their realities in meaningful ways, it influences the way they know, and it provides them with methods of feeling, thinking, acting, and relating.

Therefore, educators need to produce a safe environment where they allow their students to bring their voices, experiences, and histories through curriculum deliberation, delivery, and other school practices. I think that a mutual and peaceful interaction between Islamic and democratic identities will benefit both Islam and western culture. That is, Muslims in the West

have the opportunity of developing a critical, liberal, and inclusive understanding of their own religion. And the inclusion of the Islamic view point will challenge the exclusion of religion in the public sphere and may enrich the ethical foundations of western societies (Habermas, 2010).

The results of this dissertation highlights the significance of critical religiosity which enables students to think critically about the moral teachings of their religion and to explore how they fit within the life in democratic and multicultural society. If Muslim students, and perhaps students from other religious minorities, do not get such education in their religious or private schools then they may not develop the civic virtue which is necessary for living in a pluralistic society.

The civic virtue can be defined with regarding to moral education as “a widespread willingness and ability to articulate our disagreements, to defend them before people with whom we disagree, to discern the difference between respectable and disrespectable disagreement, and to be open to changing our own minds when faced with well reasoned-criticism” (Gutmann, 1994, p. 24). It seems that public schools has the advantage of exposing students to multiple ways of living and therefore to allow for some kind of moral autonomy. Moral autonomy might not be accepted by religious students and their parents but it pushes them, I believe, to develop a better reasoning which goes beyond the transcendental or divine understanding of morality. Education in public schools shows the significance of what I call as critical religiosity which enables students from religious minorities to develop their moral reasoning and perhaps to advance their position in democratic deliberation in the future.

Also I suggest that public schools move beyond the descriptive (the beliefs about the nature of deities, about the world, and about the hereafter) and the ritual (learning about the rituals celebrated by different religions during the life cycle) dimensions of world religions, and

instead include other components such as the social, experiential, and ethical dimensions of religion (Smart, 1968). The social dimension “includes all of the ways in which a religion is organized, its social structure, history and relationships with the cultures in which it exists. It includes “sacred space, sacred time, sacred persons and roles” (Engebretson, 2006, p. 656).

The experiential element is related to the many ways people experience the sacred. The ethical aspect “covers the laws of a religion and the values that are inherent in these laws” (Engebretson, 2006, p. 656). Kunzman (2006) suggested the idea of ethical dialogue in public schools which helps students to “talk and live together respectfully across ethical difference, and thus contribute significantly to their ethical growth and the health of civic society” (p. 8). Including these elements in public education may allow students to bring in their own voices and religious experiences, and to become more informed and tolerant, and to condemn Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, or any other religious hate crimes in the larger society.

Teaching against Islamophobia has been discussed by other scholars (Kincheloe, Steinberg, & Stonebanks, 2010; Subedi, Merryfield, Bashir-Ali, & Gunel, 2006). Kincheloe, Steinberg, and Stonebanks (2010) suggested that public schools teach against Islamophobia, discrimination, and misrepresentations of Muslims in the U.S. For instance, teachers and students may discuss issues such as the historical context of Islam, the diversity of the Islamic world and its denominations, the contribution of Muslims to the western civilization, and the way the media produces negative stereotypes against Muslims in western societies (Kincheloe, Steinberg, & Stonebanks, 2010; Said, 1997). In addition, social studies teachers may discuss with their students the status of Muslims in the U.S. after September 11, and that Islam is a peaceful religion which can be misinterpreted, like any other religion, and can be misused by militants to

achieve their political goals. Other teachers may include the stories of American prominent Muslims and their contribution to American history and culture.

Other pedagogical ideas might include a critical analysis of the media, cinema, and popular culture and how they produce the image of Islam as monolithic, violent, irrational, primitive, sexist, threatening, unresponsive to change, and lacking values in common with other cultures (Runnymede Trust, 1997). Developing students' skills of discourse analysis may help them to see how the media, through its processes of representational Othering, produces the American political and imperial agendas. Understanding the politics of knowledge and difference, I believe, will make students more critical about discourses of knowledge, their manifestations, and how they might be challenged to achieve more justice at the local and global levels.

I think that teaching about religious diversity and tolerance should not be conducted in a reactionary manner (as happened in Dani's school). Teachers, because of the growing Islamophobia in the U.S. (Esposito & Kalin, 2011; Kincheloe, Steinberg, & Stonebanks, 2010), may develop some more strategic and systematic methods through which they let non-Muslims, and non-believers know more about this religion; its basic principles, ethical rules, major figures, diversity, and history; and its contribution to life in the U.S. Learning about the Other will help Christian students to unlearn their privilege and to develop more understanding and empathy towards their Muslims peers and students who belong to other religious minorities. Also, teachers who are more knowledgeable about these topics will be able, I assume, to support their Muslim students and their needs in a better way.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Interview Protocol for Chapter Two

Interview Questions

- How do you understand and perceive the concept of citizenship education (knowledge, values, skills, and dispositions) in the context of your school?
- What do you think about the social studies curriculum in your school and its effectiveness in preparing good American citizens?
- How do you define being a good Muslim and a good American citizen?
- How well do you feel your students are involved in citizenship issues?
- How do the pictures/posters in your classroom reflect your understanding of citizenship education? What kind of challenges or difficulties (if any) do you face in preparing your students to become good American citizens?

Interview Protocol for Chapter Three

Interview Questions

- Did you choose to go to this public school or what?
- How do you describe your elementary education? What experiences did you like, dislike, and why? What are your best/worst memories of this school?
- Tell me about your transition from Islamic school to public school. What did this mean to you?
- Do you think that your Islamic school has prepared you for the life and study at the public school? How come?
- How do you describe your relationships with other students, your family, your teachers, and your peers in your public school?

- Tell me about your life in the public school? What do you like, dislike, and why?
- Tell me more about the difficulties and struggles that you face in your first year in public school.
- How did life and studying in public school influence your understanding of yourself as an American citizen?
- After spending almost one year at the public school, do you feel that you became more or less religious? Has your understanding of Islam been changed because of your transition to public school? How come?
- Do you have any diaries, personal journals, or written reflections that you would like to share about your experiences in Islamic or public school?
- If you had the choice, would you repeat the same experience of going first to Islamic school and then to public school? Why? Why not?
- Do you have any advice or wisdom for students who might have the same educational transition like yours?
- What have you learned so far about yourself as an American and a Muslim citizen in the U.S.?
- Do you feel you have given a fair picture of yourself in this interview?
- Do you have anything else to add at the end of this interview?

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